

AM Genesis 22:1-24 Abraham's Complete Surrender

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[0 : 00] We're going to read the whole chapter and this is with God's blessing reading his own word for our guidance and asking his spirit to help us as we read these words.

Genesis chapter 22. After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, Abraham, and he said, here I am, here am I. He said, take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.

So Abraham rose early in the morning, sandaled his donkey and took two of his young men with him and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. Then Abraham said to his young men, stay here with the donkey, I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.

And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went, both of them, together.

[1 : 19] And Isaac said to his father, my father. And he said, here am I, my son. He said, behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

Abraham said, God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son. So they went, both of them, together. When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar on top of the wood.

Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham.

And he said, here am I. He said, do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son from me.

And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked. And behold, behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.

[2 : 33] So Abraham called the name of that place the Lord will provide. As it is said to this day on the mount of the Lord it shall be provided. And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, by myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son.

I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of the heavens, of the heaven and as the sand that is in the seashore.

And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.

So Abraham returned to the young men, to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba. And Abraham lived at Beersheba. Now after these things it was told to Abraham, behold, Milcah also had born children to your brother Nehor, Uz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Chemuel the father of Aram, Chesed, Hazel, Pildash, Jildaph and Bethuel.

Bethuel fathered Rebekah. These eight Milcah bore to Nehor, Abraham's brother. Moreover, his concubine, whose name was Reoma, Ebor, Teba, Gaham, Tahesh and Maccah.

[4 : 07] Amen. May God bless to us the reading of his own holy word. On this chapter, this morning, in Genesis chapter 22, and the title of our sermon today is Abraham's Complete Surrender.

And obviously this is a complete surrender to his God. This has to be one of the most amazing, moving stories that we do read in the Bible, especially for those who understand it.

For those who don't, they just simply, they don't get it. Because it hits them with shock and confusion and possibly even anger towards God.

How could God ask anyone to do this? And there's a man called Christopher Hitchens, the late Christopher Hitchens. He is the author of the book, God is not great.

And he saw the action of God here as being unthinkable. How could God ask if there is a God? He said, how could God ask to do such a thing?

[5 : 20] It is inconceivable that God would command Abraham to do such a thing, to kill his own son. But for those who believe and those who understand God, in a sense, in regards to your faith, this is an amazing story of obedience by someone who had faith in God.

Abraham's obedience really is a surrender to one of the highest points of faith in all of history. And God blesses the person who is obedient to himself.

And we see that where he surrenders everything to God. And it's God's goal to bring us all to this point of ultimate surrender in our own lives.

And this is something we'll see as we go through this passage and to relate it to ourselves. Genesis 22 is the first time that human sacrifice is mentioned in the Bible.

It reveals that God is going to require a life to be given in order that sinners will be saved. It's important to note that at this time it was common in Abraham's day for people to give children as sacrifices because the firstborn child in a pagan world, they would sacrifice their firstborn to pagan gods.

[6 : 57] But the truth of the matter of Genesis 22 is Abraham's near sacrifice of Isaac is a prophecy and a picture for us of the sacrifice, the ultimate sacrifice, the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God's son on Calvary and at Calvary.

And this chapter depicts for us the cross of Jesus Christ. And I want you to notice how the chapter begins.

And it's really interesting where it says, After these things God tested Abraham. What things is the writer talking about?

It's Moses obviously who wrote this through the power of the Holy Spirit. What things is he talking about? Well, this is where we see the ultimate surrender.

But it happens after a process of things that happened in Abraham's life. You see, when you put your trust in Christ, we begin on a long process ourselves of surrendering our lives to him.

[8 : 12] When Jim Elliot, who was slaughtered in Ecuador at the age of 27, he wrote when he was 21, One does not surrender a life in an instant.

That which is lifelong can only be surrendered in a lifetime. One does not surrender a life in an instant.

That which is lifelong can only be surrendered in a lifetime. And we certainly find that true in the life of Abraham. Don't you find that even today as we think of these things, that there are possibly areas in our own lives, as I think in my own life, that possibly we thought that we surrendered these things over to God.

But yet they have the habit of rearing their ugly head again. And these are the things that haunt us. You see, God is at work in a Christian's life.

The work of sanctification, it is a work. And God is working in our lives. And God sometimes has to take away props that we lean on, so as to totally lean upon himself and just ultimately lean on him alone.

[9 : 35] And we certainly know that Abraham had many a crisis in his life, of which that each one was certainly a test of his faith.

The first was at the very beginning, his call. When he came to faith in God, he had to put a trust in God, in the sense that he said, I want to leave your father, your kindred, your home, and I want you to go to a place that I will show you.

Now, we all know that he was to leave everything behind and trust God, put faith in God. But we know that he didn't do very well. At the start, he took his father and he took Lot and others with him after being told to go alone.

Then there came during life that many tests regards to the famine. He went down to Egypt. He didn't trust God. Remember, he said of his wife, Sarah, that she was his sister.

And he was found out in regards to that. He wasn't willing to surrender all of his life to God. He thought that God could not protect him in these things.

[10 : 44] And there was Lot. Remember him, his nephew. Abraham obviously loved Lot in the fact that he took Lot with him, to follow with him. And he carried Lot in many ways about with him until the time came for them to separate.

Here we find another separation in his life. First of all, his family to lead them in order of the Chaldeans. And now Lot, they had to separate from one another.

And remember, there was also the test. Abraham thinks God was slow in bringing forward the promise so that he would have an heir to the promise of God.

So what did he do? Himself and Hagar had a child. After Sarah saying, why don't you have a child? Because it's not happening. What did they do? They brought things into their own hands, which God did not want them to do.

But yet we see that there was separation there. Remember, Sarah said of Hagar that she had to leave with a child. And Abraham took these things on board.

[11 : 52] And he did them. And all the work of grace going on in his life, in spite of what was happening, in spite of all the things that were in his own life.

Notice there is a common theme of separation. And you see, nothing is to hinder our relationship with God. Nothing. If something stands in the way, then will God not take these things from us?

If these things are too precious for us, in regards to our walk with himself, we are to forsake all and to follow him. Now, when Abraham was 100 years old, the son that God promised him was born to them.

And it was all seemed so impossible that this could happen. And of course, when this child was given, just as we all love our children, we believe our children are a gift from God, and our grandchildren and so on.

We love them dearly. And I'm sure that Abraham was proud of Isaac. After all, he was his spiritual hope. It was through his seed, the child promised by God, that his seed, that salvation would come to his children one day.

[13 : 13] His own hope of heaven was centered on the line of Isaac, and the promise of a redeemer that was to come out of the line of Isaac.

So, judging, I want you to notice the last verse in chapter 21. And Abraham sojourned many days in the land of the Philistines.

He was living in Beersheba. He was going about life. Notice verse 33. Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba. Remember, that's where he was when he went to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah.

He was there for a while. He called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God, and Abraham sojourned many days in the land of the Philistines. So, after Isaac was born, there seemed to have been a time of peace in his life.

Things are going so well that we're rested, we've finally arrived, and God is blessing our time. But it was then, at that point, that God came with the most severe test.

[14 : 22] But it was only after these things. You see, if God had come any earlier, would Abraham have been fit to stand up to God's test?

No, he wouldn't. But after these things, after what you've experienced, Abraham, I am now able to come and put you through this severe test.

And it is only now. Abraham was able to go through this enduring test, and suddenly, the peace that they experienced in life was absolutely shattered.

Notice verse 2. God said, Take your son, your only son, Isaac. Now, he did have another son, but what God is talking about here is the son of promise.

Whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.

[15 : 32] When you read that, and your knowledge of the New Testament, you know that these words meant so much to God himself.

And we'll see that in a moment, because he called Isaac the son whom you love. Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love.

Remember God at the baptism of Jesus. Remember the heavens opened, the spirit came down upon Christ as if to rest, to rest on Jesus like a dove.

And remember the heavens opened, and God said, This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased. And you see the words where he says to Abraham, Take your son, your only son, whom you love.

Doesn't that not resonate with God? That years later, he's going to be the same, the same thing about this child that was to be baptized, but knowing that this child was to be sacrificed for our sins.

[16 : 42] So these words must have drawn and pulled at the heartstrings of God. But the point is, sometimes, when we think of life, and we think of our own things, and the gifts that God has given us in life, is there a danger that sometimes these gifts become too precious to us?

And when God comes to fellowship with us, well, our hands are full. Lord, I'm busy with my family. I'm busy with my work.

and can't you see that my hands are full? But you see, when God comes to his own, he expects us that our hands are empty so that he can put his hands in ours so as to fellowship with himself.

You wonder if this was true of Abraham that Isaac came so special to him. We cannot say these things. As Watchman Nee, who once said, did Abraham, did Isaac come too precious to Abraham in that when God came looking for fellowship, his hands were full with Isaac.

And he said, Lord, can't you see that I'm busy? But you see, God is jealous of his own. God loves his own. And when God comes, he expects that our hands are empty, ready to fellowship with himself.

[18 : 16] And you know something else that is interesting about this passage is, for the very first time, it seems that for Abraham, he's confronted by a conflict between God's command and God's promise.

There seems to be a conflict here God's command and God's promise. Remember, God promised prosperity through Isaac. But God is now asking him to sacrifice Isaac.

So, how can you resolve a problem like this in your own mind? Sometimes in Scripture when you read the Bible and you're thinking, is God contradicting himself here?

And in regards to faith, what did he have to cling to? It was only God alone. So he could have reasoned through here and the first reason could have been that he could have concluded that God was erratic.

That God doesn't know his own mind. He's saying one thing and now he's asking me to do something else. But was that Abraham's knowledge of God?

[19 : 38] It certainly was not because he knew God and just as he longed for a child, God did come through in the end.

Remember, God promised in the end. And the second reason then, God is not erratic, but the second thing is this, that Abraham saw himself as being finite and sinful.

So, he obviously wasn't sure how all of this was going to pan out. What's going to happen here? I don't know. But in my knowledge of God, I can resolve that God knows what he is doing and he will be able to sort this out.

In due time, God will show me what is happening. Now, this is the harder of the two options to cling to.

Because sometimes when we think, Lord, I don't know what you're doing here. I just seem to be losing faith here. I need you to show me.

[20 : 47] But you see, Abraham's experience of God led him in the right direction. You see, what is faith? Faith is believing in God and then acting upon what God says for us to do.

That's faith. That is faith in God. Whether we think this doesn't make sense to me, but this is what I know what I need to do because I know God.

Well, what's the task made any easier when you consider Isaac? Isaac. I don't know about you, but Isaac seems to be one of the nicest people in Scripture.

Yes, it did seem that he favoured Esau over Jacob, and that is something that should not be in families, favouring one child over another, but remember because the mother looked like Jacob.

So that would have brought tension to the family. But here it seems, as we look at this passage, and as we consider Isaac, and it seems that he just had the one wife, and he just seemed so lovely.

[22 : 00] And this would not have made it any easier for Abraham to sacrifice his son when he was so lovely a person, his character.

His behaviour on this occasion of his sacrifice proves his abundance in humility, because this was not a child.

At this time, because of what we read in verses 33-34, Isaac would have been a teenager at least, even he could have been in his early twenties.

And a person of that age and strength could easily have said, you're not doing this father, some of there's over a hundred, you're not, there's no way this is happening, I'm not going to allow you to do this.

but yet, he was humble, he was obedient, he was resigned to whatever his father said, and I think that shows us his gentleness, all the gifts of holiness in the life of Isaac.

[23 : 06] Oh, he could have resisted, but he didn't. He was willing to do the will of his father. Abraham, the sacrifice had to be done by Abraham.

God said, take your son. He couldn't have said to Eliezer, God is asking me to do this, Eliezer, I can't do it, will you go and do it for me?

He couldn't do that, because you see, Abraham, it is your hand that needs to grip the sacrificial knife. I am asking you to do this.

Everything is designed to make the trial so severe, and Abraham didn't argue. The next day, we see in verse 3, notice what it says, so Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac, and he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and arose, and went to the place of which God told him.

Isn't it interesting, what you read there, is that he cut the wood. Now, that is a menial task, something that you could have asked the two boys that were going with him to do, but this was no ordinary wood.

[24 : 33] This was wood that his son Isaac was to lie on in the altar, so he would have looked for something, that at least, that the altar would be comfortable for his own son.

He didn't consult, it doesn't seem to say to us that he consulted Sarah or Eliezer in regards to this. This was something he was to do himself, because they could have persuaded him, you're out of your mind, what?

you're going to sacrifice our son? You see, he couldn't allow his faith to be weakened in any way, and sometimes that's something that we need to remember when God calls us to do something.

We need to be resolute and have our eyes fixed on Jesus only. We cannot allow anyone to help us to waver away from what God is wanting us to do.

How life circumstances had taught Abraham. You see, after these things, life's experiences in the past is a huge school teacher to those who are in faith.

[25 : 56] We are being taught each day by God. And if these things help us in life, us to learn from our mistakes, and to lean more and more on God as we go on, I'm sure that the older you get, just like I am, you find yourself so hopeless, were it not for your faith in God, simply resting in him, because I don't know it is him.

They went on a three day journey, and to be honest, can you imagine this journey, three days, you could basically say that Isaac was dead to Abraham.

Well, God's asking me to sacrifice him. So for three days in his mind, my child is to be dead. But what is interesting is that on the third day, he was to receive his child back as if to be.

I often think of that journey, what it must have been like. There would have been two evenings under the stars, and I don't think Abraham would have slept.

Do you? As you think, God said, and as he looked up at the stars, God said that your seed and your offspring will be as numerable as all these stars.

[27 : 28] Oh, how Lord is that going to be when you are now asking me to take my son, my only son, to sacrifice him. How can this be?

When they arrived, as we read in our passage, he asked the two servants to stay behind, that they would go on. Then Abraham said in verse 5 to his young men, stay here with the donkey, I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.

He is referring to them both, returning. But how? How are you going to return? You are to sacrifice your son, but yet we will return, he is saying here.

And notice what happened next, and Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac, his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife, so they went, both of them, together.

Abraham took the wood and lays the wood on top of Isaac's back, and he took the knife and the fire himself. The fire signifies judgment, judgment, and the knife speaks of the execution of that judgment, of the sacrifice of his son.

[29 : 01] And then verse 8 tells us as well, repeats, so they both of them went together. Isaac was to smite with a knife, and his son was to be the victim, and they walked in peaceful converse together to the altar.

Isaac did not struggle, he gave himself willingly, he even asks in verse 7, and Isaac said to his father Abraham, my father Abraham, my father, and he said, here am I, my son, he said, behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?

And notice Abraham's faith, God will provide for himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son. So they both went together, both of them went together.

In peaceful converse to the altar, Isaac was bound by his father, he didn't struggle, he laid him on the altar by his father, and the victim was willingly bound on the altar, verse 9, when they came to the place which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac, his son, laid him on the altar on top of the wood.

you know, I often think as he laid that wood, I wonder if he lingered, if he lingered just to see if God was going to come to the rescue, just to spend more time wondering, is God going to come to help?

[30 : 53] You see, this was a real crisis moment in Abraham's life, life. But we read that Abraham's hand was stayed. Verse 12, he said, do not lay your hand on the boy and or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.

How could he go through with it to that point? It was because of after these things. things. It is after these things.

It is what life throws at us. It is what we go through in life and it is what we learn in life that when God comes with a test, then Abraham was ready for that.

We notice that Abraham looked up in verse 13 and Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked and behold, behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by the horns and Abraham went and took the ram and offered it to him.

Can you imagine him untying Isaac? Isaac? I am sure I am sure that both of them cried with joy by the fact that he received his son back again and asked they tied the ram to offer it up as a burnt offering.

[32 : 25] Yes, there had to be an offering. There had to be a substitute. But this was notice. It was a burnt offering instead of his son.

A burnt offering instead of his son. Just to now last wee while of our sermon, I want you to turn to Romans chapter 8 and verse 32.

And consider these words. He who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

And I want us to compare what happened in Genesis 22 with what God did with his son. Abraham chose the wood.

God chose the cross from all eternity. It was on the cross that Christ was to die.

[33 : 35] God chose that wood. The way of salvation could be no other way for us. Three days, Isaac was as if dead as they traveled to the mount, Mount Moriah.

As far as Abraham was concerned, he received Isaac back on the third day as if. What about Jesus?

Jesus was dead and it was on the third day that he rose from the dead, received back to life.

Remember God's agony of the cross was for him not just for three days, not for three years or three thousand years.

It was spoken about in eternity past that his son would die on the cross of Calvary for sinners like us. This being the ultimate sacrifice for our sins.

[34 : 43] We read in verse six that Isaac carried the wood. we are told in John chapter 19 verse 17 that Jesus carried the wood as well, the cross, for a time until he fell in his exhaustion and Joseph of Arimathea took the weight of the cross to carry it for him.

We are told that Abraham had the fire and the knife. we read in Zechariah chapter 13 and verse 7, Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the one who stands beside me.

It was God who had the sacrificial sword so as to punish his own son. Jesus said in John chapter 16 verse 32, I am not alone because the father is with me.

Both of them went together to the altar of sacrifice. We know that God shut man out at the cross in the darkness.

Abraham told the young boys to stay behind. This is something that God has to do alone. From the twelfth hour, there was darkness over the whole land as God dealt with his own son at Calvary.

[36 : 27] And remember even when you think of the covenant that God made with Abraham. Remember a deep sleep came over Abraham after cutting the pieces in two for the sacrifice.

But he couldn't participate. God had to deal in the darkness as he walked between the pieces and saying let this happen to me if it were that the covenant would be broken.

This is God doing it alone. And in the darkness of Calvary God is dealing with Christ his son as he bore our sins on the cross.

God stayed the hand of Abraham but there was no one to stay God's hand at Calvary. There was no one to say do not harm the boy.

In the moment of Isaac's greatest need God came to him to his rescue but the son of God's greatest need God could not come.

[37 : 42] He wasn't there. There was nothing but the darkness and the pain that he felt as he was forsaken. Why my God my God why have you forsaken me?

And as we read in Romans he that did who did not spare his own son remember it was Abraham who bound Isaac to bear the sacrifice he had to bear the sacrificial knife just like Zachariah said awake oh sword awake oh sword that was God's judgment remember what God did was to put the flaming sword on the entrance to Eden so as to stop to the way to the tree of life by a cherubim here the sword is awoken against his son and he himself is bearing that sword as his son bears our sins before him was God the father passive and the death of his son no he wasn't passive

Jesus said you could have no power against me unless it was given to you of my father you would have no power it is the father that binds up the son it is the father's hand that falls on his son you see by refusing to spare his son he now spared us and Isaac and they were able to return to the young men so what these thoughts as we come to the Lord's table together you know as I was driving down today I was just thinking there are moments we simply cannot get over what God has done for our salvation so drove through the beautiful

Galloway hills if that's what you call them I'm so unfamiliar with your area but to see the God who created these hills and to see what he's done so as to win us back for himself the words of the hymn and when I think that God is son not sparing gave him to die I scarce can take it in that on the cross my burden gladly bearing he bled and died to take away my sin may God bless these thoughts to us I