

Sacrifice Of The Promised One

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Date: 26 October 2025

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles and open them up this morning to Genesis chapter 22.! If you don't have a copy of God's Word of your own, you're welcome to use one in the seat back nearby.

If you don't have a copy of God's Word at all, you're welcome to just take one of those home with you. That's our gift to you. We want you to be able to have and hold and read the Word of God. So Genesis chapter 22, and when you found that, let's stand in honor of the reading of God's Word this morning. After these things, God tested Abraham and said to him, Abraham, he said, here I am. 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 on which I shall tell you.

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 had told him.

[1:09] 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. And so they went both of them together. And Isaac said to his father, Abraham, my father.

And he said, here I am, 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 I am.

[2:13] 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.

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 heaven and as the sand that is on 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 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 has also borne children to your brother Nahor, Uz his firstborn, and Buzz his brother, Chemuel the father of Aram, Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaf, and Bethuel.

[3:41] Bethuel fathered Rebekah. These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother. Moreover his concubine, whose name was Ruma, bore Teba, Gaham, Tahash, and Makkah.

The grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of the Lord endures forever. Father, we pray now, again as we open up this text, as we look to this great example of genuine faith on display. Lord, would you give us faith in Christ this morning? We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. Amen. I got an email in my inbox several weeks ago.

from Ligonier Ministries, and I opened it up to see what they called, quote, the State of Theology Survey 2025. And in it, they surveyed over 3,000 Americans to see, quote, what do Americans believe about God, the Bible, and salvation.

And I'll go ahead and tell you, the results were not pretty. They gave a statement, and then you had to respond on a spectrum from strongly disagree all the way to strongly agree.

[4:57] And it was clear to me as I looked through these results from this poll that our culture is incredibly confused about the Christian faith. It's not just that they're opposed to it.

They don't really even understand what it is. You can filter the results, and even those who claimed to be Christians, evangelical Christians, the results were concerning.

I'll give you just a few examples. Okay, pop quiz for you. Answer these in your mind. Statement, God counts a person as righteous not because of one's works, but only because of one's faith in Jesus Christ.

Strongly disagree. Strongly agree. We ought to know the answer to this one, right? The correct answer is yes. Strongly agree. We are saved by grace through faith in Christ, not by works. And we've seen Abraham believed the Lord, and it was counted to him as righteousness. But sadly, 44% of Americans surveyed either disagreed strongly, or they just weren't sure.

[6:08] They were on the fence. That's highly concerning. Here's another statement. God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

That's a question of which faith is acceptable, or does it even matter, right? Well, the correct answer, of course, would be strongly disagree.

Not any old faith will do. God accepts worship that is according to his word, worship in the name of Christ. But surprisingly, maybe surprisingly, almost half of all evangelical Christians polled, 47% affirm that statement to be true.

God accepts the worship of all religions. That is concerning to me. Here's one more statement. Religious belief is not about objective truth.

Okay? Meaning, it is subjective. The reality of what you believe doesn't really matter. Your truth is your truth. My truth is my truth. Faith can be whatever I want it to be.

[7:21] And of course, the correct response to that statement would be strongly disagree. Right? No. That is false. We actually believe that the things that we preach and proclaim and read about in God's word, we believe that the gospel is true.

Amen? And Paul says, if it's not, if Christ is not risen from the grave, our faith is futile. And we're still in our sins. Well, 68% of Americans and 47% of evangelical Christians got the answer wrong.

It's clear to me when we talk about faith, church, we need to clearly define our terms. We need to understand and we need to make sure everyone else understands what is real, genuine, biblical faith.

Which is why I'm thankful that we've spent the past 11 weeks, now this is week 12, the past 11 weeks walking alongside Abraham, the man of faith as Paul calls him.

And we've seen, yes, of course, Abraham has wavered, he's ebbed, and he's flowed, he's been up, he's been down, he's not been perfect. But, Abraham shows us what it looks like to trust in the promises of God.

[8:42] And that's what faith is, by the way. Faith is, real, genuine faith, is a wholehearted, battle-tested, fruit-bearing trust and reliance upon the Lord.

And in our passage this morning, we get to see sort of a case study of what that type of faith looks like in action. We see it played out in Abraham's life here in Genesis 22.

So, let's take a look at the passage this morning and what we'll see is three lessons in faith this morning. This will be our outline if you're a note-taker, help you follow along.

Three lessons in faith this morning from Genesis 22. First, the first lesson we see here is that genuine faith will be tested.

genuine faith will be tested. Look there to verse 1. And just, let's remember where we are here in Genesis.

[9:43] God has promised Abraham offspring. He's promised this miraculous birth. This promised son, Isaac, will come. And we've waited, we've waited, we've waited, we've waited.

And now, finally, some 25 years later, He is here. We saw last week. We ended last time on this absolute high note. Isaac, the child of promise, has finally come.

And you might think, now, finally, after all of this, after everything that we've been through to finally get to this point, now we'll just get to relax. Abraham can just enjoy life and live happily ever after, right?

That's not exactly what happens, is it? Verse 1 says, after these things, God tested Abraham. Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, the one that you've been waiting for for 25 years now, and take him 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.

Okay, just, just put yourself in Abraham's shoes here for a minute. Can you imagine the distress that Abraham is feeling at this moment? the Lord who has promised to multiply his offspring, who has promised to provide this miraculous spiritual birth, now is telling him, now Abraham, it's time to go and slaughter this promised child.

[11:16] Offer him up as a burnt offering, which, as we see in Leviticus, that means you take a knife, you slaughter him, you lay him there on the wood of the altar, you let the blood spill out, you light it all on fire, so that sacrifice, your son, is totally consumed by the flame, so that the smoke lifts up and goes up to the Lord.

Now we see in the law this was an act of worship to the Lord, but never, ever, ever, in all of the law does God tell his people to offer up their children in sacrifice.

The pagans do that, right? This is totally, it seems out of place for the Lord to say this. You can imagine Abraham's distress. On one level, there's this natural paternal distress, right?

Parents in the room, take your son, take your son, your beloved son, the son of your wife, Sarah, and kill him.

And parents, just imagine it, right? How would you feel? The most natural thing in the world is for a parent who want to protect their child and to keep them from harm. Moms, I know that you just, sometimes you stay awake at night, laying down, just worrying about your kids.

[12:37] Not because anything's wrong, but just because that's what moms do. And there's nothing wrong with that. That is, I think, natural. God's baked that into your DNA to want to protect your children.

But there's also, there's spiritual, distress here as well. Think about it like this. Why does God call Isaac, not once, not twice, I think it's three times here in the passage, why does he call Isaac Abraham's only son?

Doesn't he have another kid somewhere? Didn't we hear about Ishmael, Abraham's son, with Hagar? It's not his only son, is it? Why, what's so special about Isaac?

Isaac is the only son of promise. Don't you remember? Isaac is the spiritual offspring of Abraham, the one who will be his heir, the one God has promised through whom all the nations of the earth will be blessed.

Ultimately, he's the one through whom the promised snake crusher will come, the promised seed of the woman from Genesis 3.15. The Messiah, Jesus Christ, will come through the line of Isaac.

[13:49] So on a spiritual level, you might imagine, Abraham might be wondering, God, what about your promises? God's promise of salvation to the world is at stake here in the life of Isaac.

It seems as if God is turning his back on his whole plan of redemption. And to Abraham's eyes, it seems like the serpent is going to win.

sin and death will triumph if this promised child dies. God's promise dies with him. How can this be? You can imagine the distress that Abraham might be feeling. But as we read this, Moses clues us in here to something important that Abraham doesn't even know.

Right there in verse 1, he tells us all of this is a test of Abraham's faith. God tested Abraham.

[14:45] I wonder if you have a category for that in your mind. As you think about the Lord, here's a statement, okay, strongly disagree, agree, strongly agree, neutral, here's a statement for you.

God will test the faith of his people. Do you agree or disagree? If we look at the scriptures, an honest answer would be strongly agree.

God often throughout the scriptures, he tests the faith and tests the obedience of his people. You might think of the wilderness wanderings in the book of Exodus, Exodus chapter 16.

God tells Moses, I'm going to rain down bread from heaven for you. The people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day. Why? That I may test them, he says, whether they will walk in my law or not.

Judges chapter 2, you go there, God says he's left some of the nations there in the land, he didn't drive them out, in order to test Israel by them, he says, whether they will walk in the way of the Lord as their fathers did or not.

[15:57] Strongly agree. God often tests the faith of his people. And you know, here's where we come up against a common cultural misunderstanding about faith.

Some would tell you that faith is just a means to better your life. Right? Have you heard teaching like this before?

That faith really is just kind of a way to twist God's arm and get him in your corner. If you have enough faith, then hard things shouldn't come into your life. Right? If you have faith, God ought to just bless you, bless you, bless you.

He wouldn't do anything bad to you. Right? Some would even tell you that if you just have enough faith, you'll be healthy, you'll be wealthy, you'll be happy, you'll be healed of sickness, you'll be blessed financially.

Friend, I hope you realize by now that is an absolute lie. God will never tempt you. That's Satan's job.

[17:03] But God will certainly test you. God will never bring a trial into your life to destroy you. That's Satan's job. But God will certainly use all sorts of trials in order to refine you and to prove your faith.

If you say you have faith in Christ and friend, you better prepare. You can expect that faith sometime or another to be tested. God may take away what is precious to you in order to test you. God may put you in a hard situation where you just can't see the end of it. You don't know a way out. You're not sure when this is going to end, how it's going to turn out, in order to see, do you still love me?

Do you still cling to me? Do you still obey me even without your health? Even without your job security?

Even without the approval of your family and your friends? Even without your riches? Even without your sense of control over how things are going to turn out in your life?

[18:16] God may remove these things from you in order to test you. So Peter tells us, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

But rejoice insofar as you share in Christ's sufferings, that you also may rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. God will test your faith.

The question is, what will he find? Will he find a faith that's genuine, that's strengthened by resistance training, or will he find fair-weather faith that only trusts the Lord when things are going well?

So we see first Abraham's faith is tested. Second, second lesson here on faith, genuine faith will be manifested. Genuine faith will be manifested.

There's another cultural misunderstanding about faith, and here's what it is. Some would tell you that faith is entirely private. This is a personal thing.

[19:23] Don't mess with my faith. That's my faith. You can't call into question my faith. My faith is invisible. You can't see it, right?

And in one sense, yes, that's correct. I cannot see your faith. Only God can see into your heart and know and see your faith, but what the Bible tells us is that that invisible faith, if it is genuine, will

always in time bear visible external fruit in your life.

Invisible faith will work itself out in your life. It will be manifested. manifested. And we see that here in three key ways with Abraham. Look there with me starting in verse 3.

The first way that we see his faith manifested here is in obedience. We cannot see Abraham's faith, but what can we see? We see his quick, prompt, obedient response to the word of the Lord.

You know, we spent some time thinking about his distress, imagining his distress, but really, that's all we can do. We can just imagine it because the scripture doesn't let us know any of what he's thinking or feeling.

[20:40] It just simply moves right to his response of obedience, doesn't it? God says, sacrifice your son. What does he do? Verse 3. Abraham gets up early in the morning.

No delay. No putting it off. He saddles his donkey. He takes two of his young men. He takes his son. He cuts the wood. He goes to the place of which God had told him.

On the third day, Abraham looks up. He sees the mountain. He's had three days. Now opportunity to turn back, but he's not turning back. His faith is manifested outwards in obedience.

I'll just say it another way. Flip it around. Obedience is the necessary fruit of genuine faith. James says it like this in James chapter 2.

Faith without works is what? It's dead. He goes on to say it's useless. What's it worth if it doesn't work itself out?

[21:40] What is faith if you can't see it in your life? It's dead. It's useless. And then he goes on. He says something kind of confusing in James chapter 2. I wonder if you've ever noticed this. James chapter 2.

He talks about this story. He says, Was not Abraham our father justified by works? When he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?

Now, our ears ought to perk up a little bit when we hear that, right? What did he just say? Was not Abraham our father justified by works?

Hold on just a minute. Justified by works? Now this is Reformation Doctrine 101, isn't it? We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, according to the scriptures alone, to the glory of God alone, and maybe the reformers never read James.

No, they read James. James isn't telling us that Abraham was declared righteous on the basis of his works. We know he believed and that was counted to him as righteousness, right?

[22:49] What he's saying is that that faith was now confirmed and demonstrated and seen and manifested externally in works of obedience.

To quote a reformer, we are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone. In other words, it is always accompanied by the fruit of good works.

Martin Luther says, we do not become righteous by doing righteous deeds, but having been made righteous, we do righteous deeds. The order is important here.

Do you see it? His faith is manifested in obedience. We see a second way. Faith is manifested here starting in verse 5. Faith is manifested in confidence.

Look there to verse 5. Abraham, he's about to head up the mountain. He talks to his young men and look what he says to them. He says, stay here with the donkey. I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.

[23:51] Did you catch that? Anything seem off to you about that? I and the boy will go worship. We will go, we'll go up, we'll worship, and we will return.

What in the world is he talking about? Is he not about to slaughter this child? He's ready to go, he's got the wood, he's going to the spot, he's got the fire, he's got the knife.

How in the world can Abraham say, we're going to go, we're going to come back? This is the confidence of genuine faith. Again, what did we read this morning from Hebrews 11?

Hebrews 11 helps us here again, doesn't it? Hebrews 11 verses 17 through 19. It says, by faith, Abraham when he was tested offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, through Isaac shall your offspring be named. He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. Abraham knows two things here, doesn't he?

[25:03] For one, he knows God has promised that Isaac will be the heir. God has promised that through Isaac shall your offspring be named.

God's promised that. He's staked everything on this. God's promised blessing to the world through Isaac. God's promised ultimately again the Messiah through Isaac.

He knows God's promise and he knows now God's command. Sacrifice Isaac. He doesn't know how those two things work together. How could he? How can he reconcile these things in his mind? He can't. He does not know how this is going to turn out. But he is confident that no matter what happens up there on that hill, God will not turn his back on his promises.

He figures that even if I have to go through with this, if necessary, God is able even to raise this child from the dead. God will not turn his back on his promises.

[26:07] Church, this is faith. And we see that confidence again in his conversation with Isaac. I mean, you talk about an awkward moment, right? The parents have an awkward conversation with their kids.

Verse 6 says, Abraham takes the wood, he puts it on Isaac, he takes the fire, he takes the knife, and now Isaac is starting to notice something's a little off here, something's missing. He's looking around like, dad, we got everything we need except one thing, and where's the lamb?

How does Abraham respond to his son? What does he say? He looks at his son not knowing how far he's going to have to go with this, still not knowing exactly how this is going to turn out, but in confidence, in the confidence of faith, he says, God will provide for himself a lamb, for the burnt offering my son, God will provide.

I see his faith is manifested in obedience, it's manifested in confidence, and now a third wave here, we see faith is manifested in willingness, in willingness, you could say, in readiness.

Look there to verse nine. And they make their way up the mountain, Abraham builds the altar, he lays the wood in place, he sets everything up, he takes his son, he lays his son there on the altar on top of the wood, he reaches out his hand, he takes the knife ready to slaughter his son, and at the last moment the angel of the Lord calls to him from heaven and says, Abraham, Abraham, and he says, here I am, do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing that you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.

[28:05] Of course, God is omniscient, he already knew, he knows everything, but now he sees Abraham's faith manifested Abraham's faith manifested in obedience and in confidence and in willingness now to sacrifice even that which is most precious to him.

Christian, do you have faith like this? Are you genuinely willing to do anything the Lord commands you to do?

Let me ask it another way. Is there anything in your life that you would not be willing to offer up to the Lord? Is there any part of your life that you just want the Lord to kind of stay out of?

Do not touch this, please. God, I love you, but please don't mess with my Sunday mornings. That's the only me time I get. That's football, that's fishing, that's time off work.

I'll catch up on a sermon later on a podcast, YouTube, whatever it is. Just don't touch my weekends, God. God, I love you, but please don't touch my money.

[29:27] Don't ask me to give it away. Don't touch my treasures. God, I love you, but please don't mess with my plans for my life. Don't mess with my job. Don't mess with my retirement.

Don't mess with my plans. Don't mess with my future. Friend, do you realize that when you put your faith in Christ and follow him, that means everything is on the table.

All the chips are in. And when you trust Christ by faith, when you put your faith in Christ, you bring everything to him, you lay it all at his feet, and you say, this is yours, it's not mine.

You take this, you do what you want with it, everything that belongs to me belongs to you first and finally and ultimately. If you give it to me, it's yours, you use it as you see fit.

The parents, do you realize that includes even your children? Abraham here is willing to offer up his only son, the son whom he loves.

[30:33] You see how that's repeated over and over? Your only son. Why? Because he knows ultimately this child belongs to God. Parents, do you realize that your children ultimately don't belong to you, they belong to the Lord?

We have these dreams that we tell our kids all the time. I'm preaching to me right now. We tell our kids all the time, you're going to grow up and be best friends, we're all going to still get along and you're going to buy the house right next door and we're all going to live on this compound and see each other all the time.

If the Lord does that, praise God. There's nothing wrong with that. Are we equally okay if the plan of God is that your child goes to be a missionary in a dangerous place, to risk their life daily to spread the gospel?

South Sudan, are you okay with God not following your plans? Christian, do you realize that everything in your life is His, it is offered up to Him?

Paul says in Romans that you yourself are to be offered up to Him as a living sacrifice. This is your spiritual act of worship, He says. Your time, your money, your job, your family, your home, your heart, your everything is His.

[31:58] We gotta stop hedging our bets. And you know, anything that you're not willing to offer up to Him, you know what the Bible says that is? It's an idol.

How easy would it have been for Abraham to make an idol out of His precious Son? You know, anywhere that your heart says, I am not willing to obey the word of the Lord, you can be sure that there's an idol there competing with God for your heart's devotion.

What might that be for you? What are you not willing to offer up to the Lord for His use? Jesus tells us in Matthew chapter 10.

Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Are you willing? So we see faith will be tested. Second, it will be manifested. But third, third and finally, we see here genuine faith in Christ.

[33:14] Genuine faith in all the promises of God. Third, will be vindicated. One more common misconception about faith from those who don't know the Lord.

They think ultimately faith is pointless. At the end of the day, none of it matters. You believe in something if you want, if it makes you happy in this life, that's fine. But ultimately, what's the point? It's not really tied up to anything real. It's just kind of fairy tales and make believe. So you believe what you want, but it doesn't matter. But we know that in the end, praise God, in the end, our faith in the Lord will be vindicated.

Look there to verse 13. Abraham has demonstrated faith in the Lord, and now it says Abraham lifts up his eyes and behold, behind him is a ram caught in a thicket by his horns.

Abraham goes and takes the ram, he offers the ram up as a burnt offering instead of his son, so Abraham calls the name of that place the Lord will provide.

[34:26] It became sort of a proverb in that day, on the mount of the Lord shall be provided. his faith in God and his confidence in his promises was vindicated in this moment.

He was right to trust in the promises of the Lord. His obedience and his willingness, even his sacrifice, all of it, all of it was worth it.

Now I don't know, we're not told what those two men down at the bottom of the hill thought about Abraham, right? We don't know how much they knew about his plan, but I could imagine that if they knew what he had planned, they would think he was absolutely crazy to say, hey, we're going up, I'm going to slaughter him and we'll be back.

Right? They would write him off as insane. No way, you're going to go offer your son as a burnt offering, you're just trusting the Lord to provide, you're crazy.

You realize we hear the same sort of things today. as you share your faith with others, you really think the Lord Jesus is coming back?

[35:36] Are you serious? That's what you believe? You think that something that somebody did 2,000 years ago has any bearing on your life right now? Are you serious?

You're crazy. We say, yes, I do. So much so that I would be totally lost without it. I have no hope apart from what Jesus has done for me.

All my trust is in the gospel of Jesus Christ. In fact, we see such a clear picture of it here, don't we? All throughout this passage, we see a picture of the gospel.

Church, our faith, our trust, is that Christ Jesus, like Abraham, was truly and totally obedient to the word of the Lord.

Not just once, but for an entire life, he passed every test, not just for a moment, but for a lifetime, a perfect record of full and total obedience to the Lord, and he obeyed in our place where you and I have failed.

[36:45] Our faith is that Christ, like Isaac, was the only begotten son of the father, who ascended the hill with wood upon his shoulders, headed to sacrifice.

While Isaac was near to death, Christ Jesus actually, truly died. And for a moment at the cross, it seemed as if the salvation of the world was lost. This God man is dead.

The serpent has struck this promised seed of the woman. The plan of salvation has failed. Praise God, like Isaac, in a truer and better way, rising from the grave, Christ crushed the serpent's head. Our faith is that Christ, like the ram in the bush, is the substitutionary offering for the sacrifice. He is the lamb who was slain from before the foundations of the world. We believe by faith, God sent his son to die in our place.

[37:55] The gospel, our faith, is in the good news that the Lord has provided a substitute for us. Isaiah 53, this is around 700 years before Jesus was born.

Isaiah prophesied this, the plan of God, surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace.

With his wounds, we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Our faith is that Christ is the perfect substitute that we need for our salvation. Apart from him, we are lost.

[39:05] Abraham gets a small picture of this, doesn't he? He gets this foretaste of the gospel. He put his faith in the promises of God and his faith at last was vindicated.

He sees I was right to trust in the Lord. I was right to believe in his promises. I was right to stake everything on the faithfulness of God.

To reaffirm that in his heart, the angel of the Lord, once again, he doubles down again on these promises. By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you.

I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand is on 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.

His faith was not in vain. Christian, your faith in Christ will be tested in this life.

[40:17] But praise God, one day the risen Lord Jesus will return and your faith in him will be vindicated. It will be proven to not be in vain.

every sacrifice will be worth it. Every act of obedience will be worth it. Every offering unto the Lord in this life will be worth it.

Every test will be worth it to the praise of his glorious grace. He will come and we will see him face to face. Fran, how would you describe your faith?

Is it strong? Is it weak? Is it anchored to something real or is it some just loose, undefined practice that's distanced from anything real, any objective truth?

Is it mixed? Do you trust some in yourself and some in God or by God's grace? Do you fully trust in all the promises of God for you in Christ?

[41:28] Do you trust Christ to be your perfect substitute? Do you have by the grace of God wholehearted, battle-tested, fruit-bearing trust and reliance upon the Lord?

If not, friend, what keeps you this morning from putting your faith in Christ? The State of Theology survey ended with two key questions.

The first, do you agree Jesus' death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin?

37% of Americans disagreed. 22% only somewhat agreed. The final question, do you agree only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior receive God's free gift of eternal salvation?

43% said no. 22% somewhat agree. I think it's clear, church, we have work to do, not only to solidify our own faith in Christ and make certain of our full devotion to Him, but also as we proclaim this message to our neighbors, family members, to our co-workers, to all those near and far, that we be clear on what we mean when we say we have faith in Christ.

[43:09] You too are called to put your faith in Him. Father God, would you give us faith like Abraham, faith that is obedient and faith that is confident in all your promises, faith that's willing and ready to offer up anything and everything, even that which is most precious to us, Lord, that we would give it to you, knowing, Father, that you've not withheld what's most precious to you.

As you've offered up your only Son for our salvation, Lord, we pray, God, that we would respond to you now by worshiping you as you deserve. We pray in Christ's name, Amen.