

J.J.

THE TEST OF OBEDIENCE

Genesis 22:1-19

Genesis 22 : Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

2 Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."

3 Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5 He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."

6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, 7 Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?"

"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.

"The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

8 Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together.

9 When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

12 "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

Pray

INTRODUCTION :

We've talked about prayer last July. Now equally important to praying is Obedience.

Quote : Prayer is never an acceptable substitute for obedience. A.W. Tozer

Illustration : There was this married man who has two mistresses. A friend invited him to church and soon received Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Since he now follows Christ, his friend asked him to give up his two mistresses. The man did and left the two mistresses. But one day, the friend saw the phone number of one of the mistresses on his cellphone. His friend asked, “Are you still seeing Wendy?” The man said, “No.” Then the friend asked, “Then why is her number still on your phone. The man answered, “In case of emergency”

Today, we’ll study again the time when God tested Abraham’s obedience.

Sometimes, God will bring us to a testing that’s really hard.

And one of the hardest tests that God will allow us to go through is when he’s taking away or he wants us to give up something or someone that gives us comfort, joy and pleasure.

Illustration : It’s easy to give up old clothes. It’s easy to give up people who are giving us a hard time. But to give up something or someone that give us joy, comfort, happiness and pleasure, that’s really hard.

Let’s look at how God tested Abraham. God asked Abraham to sacrifice

- **His only son THAT HE LOVES**

your son, your only so, whom you love—Isaac

- **His obedient son**

9 When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.

Remember : Some writers were saying that Isaac was around 20 years old here and not a young boy (*v.6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac,).* **Isaac carried the wood** and Abraham was around 120 (Abraham was 100 years old when he was born.)

And yet he trusts his father so much that he did not even put up a struggle when he was about to be sacrificed.

TEASER : Now why would God bring us to such testing? We’ll find out later on.

This is a test of obedience. And it’s good to see how Abraham obeyed God and use him as an example when our obedience is being tested

I. HOW ABRAHAM OBEYED GOD

- **True obedience obeys immediately.**

3 Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.

We never see here Abraham struggling with his obedience and therefore delaying it.

Quote : Instant obedience is the only kind of obedience there is; delayed obedience is disobedience. Thomas a Kempis

Biblical Illustration :

Luke 9:59 He (Jesus) said to another man, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

Quick explanation on the cultural context : What the man meant here is that the father is still alive but he will follow Jesus once his father is dead so he can get his inheritance first.

Illustration : (From a father) I used to have problems getting my son to clean his room. I would insist that he, "Do it now," and he would always agree to do so, but then he wouldn't follow through; at least, not right way. After high school, he joined the Marine Corps, which is where he is now. When he and I were on the plane together coming home for his leave after Boot Camp, he said to me, "My life makes sense now, Dad. Everything you said and did when I was growing up now makes sense. I really, really understand." "Oh yeah, Dad," he added. "I learned what 'now' means."

In the battlefield, obeying orders immediately is crucial to win the war or avoid from getting hurt or killed.

We have to remember as Christians, we are soldiers of Christ. There's always a spiritual battle going on and it's crucial for us to obey immediately. And sometimes that battle is for our heart.

- **True obedience obeys wholeheartedly.**

4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5 He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."

Note : It took them three days to travel, Abraham could have changed his mind during that time. And then he asked his servants to stay, taking out all possibility for anyone to stop him from following the Lord.

Again, during these three days, you don't see him struggling if he's going to obey God or not.

When we obey God, we need to obey him from the heart. It is without reservation.

Illustration : The padyak obedience is not wholehearted obedience.

When I was young, my mom would ask me to do something in the house or buy something from the sari-sari store (convenience store). Every time I do that, I would be obeying but I would be stomping my feet (padyak) until one time, I did that, my mother would say, "Padyak ka ng padyak, kung ayaw mong sumunod wag mo na lang gawin kaysa padyak ka ng padyak dyan"

As Rick Warren says : God smiles when we obey him wholeheartedly.

This is the attitude of the Psalmist :

Psalm 119:33 "Just tell me what to do and I will do it, Lord. As long as I live I'll wholeheartedly obey" (TLB)

- **True obedience obeys thoroughly.**

9 When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

Remember that the command of our Lord is to *Sacrifice him* (Isaac) *as a burnt offering*. Abraham didn't go to the mountain and brought a lamb, for just in case. He went to the mountain and did not stop there. He tied up his son, lied him on the altar and took the knife (because that's how they sacrifice burnt offerings)

Quote : Often we try to offer God partial obedience. We want to pick and choose the commands we obey. We make a list of the commands we like and obey those while ignoring the ones we think are unreasonable, difficult, expensive, or unpopular. *'I'll attend church but I won't tithe.'* *'I'll read my Bible but I won't forgive the person who hurt me.'* Yet partial obedience is disobedience. – Rick Warren

Look at how Noah obeyed.

Genesis 6:22 Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him. (NLT)

Now why would God bring us to such testing? Let's study first...

So why would God bring us to times of testing? Here it is...

10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

12 "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

TIMES OF TESTING SHOWS IF WE FULLY TRUST IN HIM.

Note : God knows that Abraham has faith in Him but it is needed to be proven through OBEDIENCE

James 2: 20 You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? 21 Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. 23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. 24 You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

At the end of the day, OUR FAITH IS SEEN NOT BY OUR WORDS BUT BY OUR OBEDIENCE

James 2:22 You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did

Illustration : There was this tightrope walker who was about to do his daring act again in front of a huge crowd. He asked the people, "Do you believe I can walk this rope?" The people said, "Yes, we believe." "If you believe I can walk this rope, who is willing to ride my back" The people were silent and then one teenage boy volunteered. So he rode the man's back and both of them crossed the tightrope together. Afterwards, the people milled around the teenage boy and asked, "You're so brave, why did you trust that man?". The teenager said, "It's because that man is my Father."

WHAT IS THE RESULT OF OBEDIENCE?

1. God's miraculous provision

13 Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided."

Biblical Illustration : The story of Peter and the disciples fishing.

John 21: 3 "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

You have to remember they are fishermen, they know the best time to catch and where to catch fish. This instruction doesn't make sense and sometimes we won't understand why God is asking us to do something.

4 Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.

*5 He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?"
"No," they answered.*

6 He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

2. God's marvelous promise

15 The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time 16 and said, "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, 18 and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

Application :

When you are undergoing tremendous testing and God is asking you to give up something, GOD IS REALLY ASKING YOU TO WORSHIP HIM.

Remember, when God was asking Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, THE SACRIFICE IS AN ACT OF WORSHIP because that's how people worship during those days by sacrificing or offering something.

OBEDIENCE IS AN ACT OF WORSHIP.

*1 Samuel 15:22 "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,
as in obeying the voice of the Lord?
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
and to listen than the fat of rams.*

JESUS IS LORD AND OUR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF HIM AS LORD IS THROUGH OUR OBEDIENCE.

Story : Sir Leonard Wood once visited the King of France and the King was so pleased with him he was invited for dinner the next day. Sir Leonard went to the palace and the King meeting him in one of the halls, said, "Why, Sir Leonard, I did not expect to see you. How is it that you are here?" "Did not your majesty invite me to dine with you?" said the astonished guest. "Yes," replied the King, "but you did not answer my invitation." Then it was that Sir Leonard Wood uttered one of the choicest sentences of his life. He replied, "A king's invitation is never to be answered, but to be obeyed."

Luke 6:46 "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

S.G.D.