

# GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

## Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide

### THE LORD PROVIDES A SACRIFICE

#### Genesis 22:1-18 (SB 03.27.2022)

#### Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

God in his infinite and mysterious wisdom sometimes leads us to do things that don't make sense to our finite minds. It is only after some time removed from the event or decision that we can see His purpose in it. God does not always act how we expect or prefer that He would. Genesis 22 is a vivid and well-known example of this. Nevertheless, we should not avoid difficult passages such as these because God is pleased to reveal Himself and His purposes in them. In this specific passage, God's command for Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac seems not only strange but also morally atrocious. Yet, here we are given a glimpse of the gospel itself: blessing and salvation will come to the world through a son of Abraham, one who is offered up as a sacrifice. Let's get into our study...

1. What spoke to you from Pastor James sermon this week?
2. What is the most difficult sacrifice or decision that you've ever had to make?
3. What is it like to be tested? What kind of emotions do you go through when you pass?

#### Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

#### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 22:1-10

Abraham's ultimate test of obedience to God is described in 22:1-18. God used this event to affirm the sterling character of Abraham's faith by giving him the incredibly difficult task of sacrificing his son Isaac. Pagans in Canaan during the OT period regularly practiced child sacrifice by making them pass through the fire (2Ki 16:3) to give them as food to their gods (Ezek 23:37). With this command God was asking Abraham to demonstrate that he was as committed to the Lord God as pagans were to their gods.

1. Why do you think people struggle with passages like these in the Bible? How can we keep ourselves from feeling embarrassed or ashamed about parts of the Bible that are not pleasant or endearing to our culture?
2. What is most shocking to you about Genesis 22 and God's command for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac? Has God ever shocked you with one of his commands in Scripture and/or with a life situation?
3. Given Abraham and Sarah's experience with barrenness and God's earlier promises to them, why would this command come as a shock?
4. Which details in verses 1-10 indicate that Abraham was obedient to God's command?
5. How do verses 5 and 8 indicate that Abraham believed that Isaac would somehow survive the burnt offering?

#### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 22:11-19

1. Why would God wait until the last moment to intervene in order to prevent Abraham from killing Isaac?

## **BREAKTHROUGH!** in 2022

2. What does God's providing a ram as a substitute indicate about His character and grace? Why is God within His rights and justice to require Isaac's life?
3. What does God's statement to Abraham in verses 16-18 say about His role in bringing about God's earlier promises to him and for the world (e.g., Gen 12:1-3)?

### **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ HEBREWS 11:8-12. 17-19; Romans 4:16-25, James 2:20-24**

1. In light of these New Testament passages, what does the Abraham-Isaac story tell us about the nature of the gospel and salvation?
2. According to Hebrews 11:17-19, how does the Abraham-Isaac story point not only to Jesus' sacrifice but also to His resurrection?

**God's promise is by faith, so that it may be guaranteed to both Jews and Gentiles who believe. If it were by law, no such guarantee would be possible. To make it certain, therefore, the promise was according to grace. Abraham was also promised to be the father of many nations. Abraham believed in the God who created everything from nothing and gives life to the dead.**

#### Applying God's Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

Evidence that Abraham believed God could raise Isaac from the dead (Heb 11:17-18) is found in his comment, "we'll come back." Abraham carried the most dangerous elements of the sacrifice—the fire and the sacrificial knife—himself, perhaps as a sign of his protective love for Isaac. Ignorant of God's command and surprised that his father would forget the most important element in an animal sacrifice, Isaac asked Abraham where the lamb was. Abraham's faith-filled response was that God Himself would provide the lamb. As the Angel of the Lord who had the Lord's authority, the divine emissary delivered a second message (v. 12), this one in the first person. Because Abraham had passed the "priorities test" by obeying God and not withholding his only son, the Lord would indeed bless him with offspring, victory, land, and goodwill. Little did Abraham realize about 2000 years later God would indeed provide "Himself" as the Sacrifice by becoming a man and dying on a cross!

1. Read Hebrews 11:17-18. Why does Abraham have such extraordinary faith in God?

God wants us to be people who are always in a "yes" position—He wants us to trust Him, to lay everything down, even when it doesn't make sense. This is why Abraham's story is still told today. When we see the faith of Abraham, that he was not willing to withhold his son when God commanded, we're reminded of how God has also done the same. He has not spared His own Son for us. He gave Jesus to die for us, so we could be saved. And if God is not willing to withhold the One He loves most, there is nothing that we, as people who are loved and saved by Him, can hold back when He commands.

2. What is God calling each of you to lay down? Be specific.
3. What are some ways we can encourage one another to trust the Lord and surrender to Him unconditionally?

**PRAYER – Thank God for the example of Abraham and this picture of God's own extravagant love in sacrificing His Son to save us. Pray that God would give us the faith to believe that His plans are better than ours, even when it's hard for us to see or understand.**

*"Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about." (Gen. 22:2)*