

Isaac

by Leonard Ravenhill

The story of Isaac's near sacrifice is a powerful demonstration of Abraham's obedience and trust in God's plan, and it shows the importance of trusting God's will, even when it is difficult or unclear.

Duration: 1:16:14

Scripture: Genesis 22:1

Topics: "Isaac", "Faith and Obedience", "Character Building"

Description

Leonard Ravenhill explores the profound faith of Abraham as he prepares to sacrifice his son Isaac, emphasizing that true character is built through testing and obedience to God. He highlights the significance of Isaac as a type of Christ, illustrating the deep trust and submission both father and son exhibited during this harrowing trial. Ravenhill asserts that God prioritizes holiness over happiness, and through trials, He shapes our character and faith. The sermon underscores the importance of immediate obedience to God's commands, as exemplified by Abraham's actions, and the ultimate provision of a ram as a substitute sacrifice, foreshadowing Christ's atonement for humanity.

Transcript

And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt or God did test Abraham and said unto him Abraham and he said here I am and he said take now thy son thine only son Isaac whom thou lovest and get thee into the land of Moriah and offer him there for a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his ass and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son and claimed the wood for the burnt offering and rose up and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place of far off.

Look at verse 15 and Abraham verse 15 it isn't verse 15 which is it? Verse 13 and Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked and behind him a ram caught in a thicket. So in the first instance he looks forward to see the mountain and in the second place he looks backward to find the ram there in the thicket. We're glad to see you new friends here tonight welcome you very sincerely and hope we can arrange with the police to keep the pianist in town for the next year.

In the last few weeks we have considered these great characters in the Word of God. I can't explain this but recently I was looking at pictures of preachers a hundred or eighty years ago and they're amazing characters even to look at. The physiognomy of those men their faces are as rugged well I wouldn't say as

rugged as Abraham Lincoln he was original he was so ugly it was beautiful.

That's true that's a paradox he has a horrible craggy feature but man he's got character in every line of that face. And somehow it used to be like that with men you could you could see occasionally a woman but mostly men they the character shone so clearly in them. And you know really this is all God is concerned about in your life and mine that's all he's concerned about is building character.

He doesn't care a hang whether you're rich or poor. I don't think he cares much whether you're brainy or not. He doesn't care that you're happy he does care that you're holy.

Not a case of happiness first and holiness if possible but holiness first and happiness if possible. That's God's way and if you're a candidate for it let me flash a red light in your path because whom the Lord loveth he makes a millionaire. That's a new version but that's not what the word says.

Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and then when he's chastened you just to show how much he loves you he scourges you. Isn't that lovely? No Joe's laughing his wife isn't but that's all right. Whom the Lord loveth he chastens.

All right we've considered what? We considered mighty Moses and then we considered the giant Joshua. Who else did we consider? Caleb that's right conquering Caleb. And tonight we're going to think of Isaac and I don't know how to kind of alliterate that whether you would say indefinite Isaac.

He's a very wonderful character. Isaac is the son of a famous father and he's the father of a famous son. You can't do much better than that.

If you were to think of this in physical terms you'd say that Isaac stands with his grandfather 6 feet 4 on one side and his son 6 feet 6 on the other side and he's about 5 foot 1 in between and it looks pretty bad. You know there are almost 12 chapters in the scripture devoted autobiographically telling us about that amazing man Abraham almost 12 chapters. There are almost 12 chapters too on Joseph and almost 12 chapters on Jacob.

And Isaac is usually classified as one of the four of the greatest patriarchs. 12 chapters on Abraham, 12 chapters on Jacob, 12 chapters on Joseph, just about one chapter on Isaac. Now if somebody said to you just write one sentence about Isaac.

Do you know what most of us would write? Well he was once offered on an altar. That's nearly the beginning and the end of the of the story for most people. Well there's a lot more than that to it of course here in the Word of God.

Let's go to the first verse of this chapter. Remember this is a Bible study it's not a sermon. In a sermon you're supposed to deal with the text in you know that goes before and the text after that's the law of homiletics.

You deal with the context if you don't it's a pretext. All right in this first verse of this 22nd chapter it came to pass after these things that God did tempt or God did test Abraham. Now that doesn't sound right.

At least it doesn't to me. After, after what? After these things, after what things? That's the logic of it isn't it? After these, after what things? God did test him? Oh come on you're suggesting God hasn't tested him? He lived away down here in Ur of the Chaldees the most lush area of the whole world. A veritable garden

of Eden and God says get up and go and go right up there and and go around here.

Of course we're used to jets we'd have done it in half an hour. How long do you think it took him to go with bullocks and carts and all the other stuff that he had? Hundreds of miles maybe I, I don't know up by a tributary or part of the river Euphrates else how would he get water? And he goes away there into what we will call northern Palestine and comes down and goes to Egypt where he shouldn't have gone. And then he comes back into, into the land of promise as it was to be the land of promise.

So the first great demand God made of him, the first great choice was get thee up out of thy country and from thy kindred. That's a big thing isn't it? If you've never done it you don't know how big it is. But man when you pull your roots up and you leave everything.

Oh it's alright if Uncle Sam takes you he'll pay you fair. But if you're an evangelist and you get up and I can remember getting on a boat with my wife and family and going from England to Ireland. And then getting on a boat from Ireland and coming to America and landing in New York with just a few dollars no house no thing no.

It's quite a challenge, very enjoyable. As you look back that there were situations at times that were extremely difficult. But God says get thee up out of thy kindred.

And you know it's an amazing act of faith isn't it? I said often he, he could have gone to his wife and said well sweetheart we're going and she's, we're going where are we going? Oh I don't know. You're going and you don't know. Well how far are we going? Well dearie I don't know.

Well how long will it take us to get there? I don't know. Well when we get there what's the climate like? I don't know. Well who lives there? I don't know.

Well how long are we going to stay there? I don't know. What do you know? I don't know. It's just, it's just like that.

I left everything at your command and I came out of Ur of the Chaldees all right that was number one test. What was the number, number two test? Well, well the second test was surely that he had to, he had to say goodbye to his nephew Lot. Remember after they prospered there was strife.

And the old Abraham says now look if you want that side of the valley take it or take this I don't care which you take. And it says he chose the well-watered plains of Jordan. Of course it was nearest to Sodom too.

He was going to raise his cattle and have a good deal over there. That's the place to go now. And so he, he took the territory.

Well that was another great test for him. There was the test when he, he had to say goodbye to his father. I don't know but if you, if you turn to that 51st chapter in, in Isaiah it says there that God called Abraham alone.

Did he go alone? Is he, we've kind of sanctified these people, we've put halos on them. They were flesh and blood, they were human, they made mistakes, tragic mistakes. You know the classic story about what in England, English history we were taught was the pretender to the English throne Oliver Cromwell.

And he had a huge wart on his, on his face. And one day one of the greatest painters in the country came to paint him. And he painted a magnificent picture.

But he left the wart off. That would have suited the lady. But there was that big ugly wart and when Cromwell came in he said paint me wart and all.

Well you may not like it but I'll tell you what, when the Lord paints you he won't leave the warts off. They might even look a bit bigger. He doesn't miss the warts.

Abraham made sad mistakes, sure he did. And then you remember that after years and years and years of waiting and being frustrated. As I reminded you the other week, he'd listened to the voice of God and then he listened to the voice of his wife.

Which at times is good and sometimes isn't. In this case it ended up in a mess. Oh take one of the servant girls, have a child by her.

She says have a child for me. And the promise was to him. Move my embarrassment, get me out of the difficulty.

And he loved the boy. After all year after year after year, 13 years of age, big stopping boy that loved the country. And his daddy's heart was set on him.

And he prayed a prayer one day. Oh that Ishmael might live before me. And God says Ishmael doesn't count in my book.

And so there was another test when he had to leave Ishmael. But now you see as big as that test was coming out of her of the Chaldees. Sometimes it's even a thrill to leave your relatives.

But they left all the relatives and left all their possessions and they came up. And then after that there's the parting with the father. Then after that there's the parting with Lot.

Then after that there's the parting with Ishmael. And now the Lord says, do you know what, that's not temptation. That's not testing really, which is a better word.

Lord what are you going to ask me to do? He said take now thy son. Now if he'd said take thy son, he'd have said thank you Lord. I've been wanting to get rid of Ishmael.

He's the most bad-tempered, arrogant, rascal that there is around. Everybody hates him, he tears the house up. Came in the other day, there's little Isaac, his nose is all bloody and sometimes his eye is blue.

You see one was a child of the flesh, the other was a child of promise. One was by human effort, the other was a divine gift. And the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.

And Isaac and Ishmael couldn't get on together. And the gentle Isaac suffered far more than Ishmael. One day when the man of God went home, his wife was in a bit of a temper, a bit of anger.

And you remember what she said, it's a very beautiful thing I say. She says Abraham. He says what's wrong now? She says cast out this bum woman and her son.

She doesn't say put him in the basement and feed him, cast him out. He's not going to reign in this house, there's not going to be a seesaw battle every day. Cast out the bum woman, he's the child of the flesh, the works of the flesh, the evil of the flesh is all resident in him.

Get him out of here. What does Abraham say? My darling the Lord will give you grace every day to put up with the old nature, the old man, your devilish temper, and your secret lust. He doesn't say that, he says get him out, get him out, kick him out.

Now that's all right, leaving her of the Chaldees. It's not too bad to bury your father at the age you buried him. It's not too bad to see your selfish, covetous, nephew lot take all the property.

That's not too bad. But now you've got the darling of your heart. This is a miracle child.

My wife was 80 years of age when she bore him, I was a hundred years of age. And so God says very clearly to him, take thine only son. You know when it's repeated in the 11th chapter of Hebrews, it says take thine only begotten son.

Hmm? Don't you think that outweighed all the previous tests he had to take his own flesh and blood? Now I think Isaac is a very beautiful type of the Lord Jesus. And you know immediately this man got a word from God. He didn't say well, well Lord I'm gonna have ten days fasting over this.

You ever try and postpone something like that? You know be real spiritual. Just to prove to the Lord you're spiritual. You know what he did? It says he rose early in the morning.

He got about his master's business. If this is the key to blessing, it's gonna break my heart, but I don't care. Brother Withers this weekend was telling me about a woman that came to him in their fellowship.

And she said you know years ago when we were very poor, our home was like heaven. We had a Bible reading every day. We sang a hymn.

We'd a little church gathering in our home. It was marvelous. Of course we could hardly make ends meet at time, but you know the sweet abiding presence.

It was just as though Jesus sat at the table. I think I've reminded you that the old Quakers, maybe they don't do it now, but every time they sat down to a meal, it could be the ordinary meal of the day or a banquet. There was always an extra chair.

And if somebody didn't know what it was for, some child might say, why, why is there someone else coming? No. No one going to occupy the chair. It is occupied.

I don't see anybody. Well Jesus is sitting there. And when conversation got out of hand, instead of daddy rebuking them, he just looked at the chair.

I wonder how much slander and criticism would die if we'd all got a chair like that. Especially in the church business meeting. Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son.

That's very significant I think. Because in the next verse, it says he put the wood on the back of the boy. Like Jesus carrying his cross.

And there were two men accompanying him. There were two men accompanying Jesus to the cross. But I'll tell you what, these two men didn't see Isaac bound.

Those two men who died on the cross, didn't see Jesus dying. Nobody saw Jesus die. I've been in art galleries around the world.

I've seen every kind of interpretation of the death of Jesus. And nobody knows a thing about it, because God blew the son out. He's of holier eyes than to behold iniquity.

And this is a kind of pre-run of what the Lord Jesus Christ is going to do. Isaac takes the wood on his shoulders. He's bearing the burden.

There are two men going up the hill. But they're only going so far, they're not going to witness the death, as it were of Isaac. Now again, I see a picture of Jesus in this.

That Isaac was led like a lamb to the slaughter. You know, we see pictures usually of Isaac, a kind of a, because it says lad there, in Hebrew doesn't mean he was a boy, a 12 or 13 year old boy. He's a young man.

Isn't it amazing, there isn't one word that said to his father, the only question he asked is, well where is the offering? You see, Abraham lifted up his eyes and the Lord said, you see the top of that hill there, Mount Moriah? You see that big rock? Go right there and offer you, your only begotten son. How often do you think he looked at that mountain going up? What do you think they talked about? Just the two of them, when they did leave the servants, what do you think they talked about? Football? Sport? Price of cattle in Sodom and Gomorrah? Mine, I'd like to have followed them with a tape recorder, the last day anyhow. You know, I don't think there's anything more, many times when I've been traveling different countries, I've looked out, I like trains.

And I've looked out and I've seen a man walking down the road with his son. And I've often thought that's a wonderful picture. My dad didn't take me out too much.

I took our boys out when we were in Ireland, that's Martha. We used to go out over the hills and we'd a lake at the back of the house and we'd go around and I liked to get near my boys. I liked to talk with my boys.

You see, our unconscious influence is very often greater than our conscious influence. I've forgotten who it was, I'm not quite sure if it was Martin Luther, some great character in history. And Saturday he usually went for a walk.

One day a student went along and said, Sir, could I walk with you today? And he said, well actually, I'm gonna preach a sermon for the next three hours, but you can come if you like. Oh sir, could I come? So he left the office that he had in the monastery and he walked down the main street and he walked in and out of all the traffic and the sellers of bananas and oranges and all the stuff in the bazaar. And after three hours they went back to the monastery and the preacher hadn't sent a word to him.

And as they were going in, the boy said, well I thought you said you were going to preach. He said, well isn't that what we've done? He said, I carried the Word of God and you carried it. And he said, we walked amongst those people fighting over, as we would say, dimes and dollars.

And we ignored all their jealousies and their pride and we showed them we something better. In other words, he was trying to spill something of his own nature onto the nature of the youth that was with him. All right, they go for three days journey on to Mount Moriah.

Then there comes a place where he says, listen I and the lad will go yonder. And he doesn't say we will come again, but he implies it. He says, and we'll come again to you.

Verse 6 says, Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac his son. And he took the fire in his hand and the knife. And they went both of them together.

And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father and said, my father. And he said, here am I my son. And he said, behold a fire and the wood.

But where is the land for the burnt offering? Oh isn't this lovely. And Abraham said, my son, God will provide himself a lamb. You can read that the other way if you like.

God will provide the lamb for himself. But God himself is going to provide the lamb. Let's jump ahead a minute.

Can you think a big 18, 19, 20 year old boy standing there. Well daddy says, lay down. And he lays down.

And he ties him up with a rope. He says, what are you going to do? He says, I'll show you son. Maybe he couldn't say a word.

Maybe he's talking with tears. And he lifts the big hefty boy up and he puts him there. Well isn't it rather wonderful.

The boy didn't argue with his dad and say, what in the world are you doing? Where's your promise? You told me there'd be a lamb. Where is it? I can't see it. It's a little interesting.

I can't make too much of it. But you know, Abraham's wife isn't mentioned in this chapter. She's mentioned in the chapter before.

She's mentioned in the chapter after. She's not mentioned in this chapter. Why? Because I believe here, he has to personally do something with his authority as a father.

And knowing he has a wife who agrees with him, there'll be no dispute about that at all. But he and the boy have to, it's a revelation of the father to the son. It's as an act of God to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And he says listen, God will provide himself a lamb. And this is really what started me off on this, on this simple study. The submission.

I think all the years of training they put into that boy, came out in those few minutes that he was there tied up on that altar. You know what he said? My father's never lied to me. I don't know how I'll get out of it.

Come on, lay on your back and see a man with a knife over. What would you have said? Blessed assurance. Huh? Would you have been singing that? Hmm? Would you have struck on, you know, nothing, something within me I cannot explain? I guess it would have been too.

But isn't it wonderful? A boy could lie there passively. He's big enough to knock his dad down. He's big enough to ask a thousand questions.

He doesn't do that. I'm convinced that that boy had seen the likeness of God. The communication of God with his father.

And he said my father never lied to me or anybody else. Now I don't know how I'm going to get out of this. But I'll tell you one thing I'm going to keep quiet until God delivers me.

The Lord will provide himself a lamb. You know we think of this in, again in terms of, or it's usually said that it's a type of the Lord Jesus dying for us. Well let me read a verse to you in Galatians 3.8. The scriptures foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith preached before the gospel unto Abraham.

You get that? In a way you and I don't understand God is saying this is the gospel. That what is being done here is a preview of what is going to be done afterwards. He is preaching the gospel to him.

But my son one day is going to come as you've taken your only begotten son. And there's going to be a magic deliverance before long. But my son is going to go right through the process of death.

He wasn't dying merely for men. He was dying for God. That God might justify.

Don't you think the little fellow lying there might have said, well daddy I don't understand this. There's never been a human sacrifice. He'd no books to read.

He'd heard daddy talking about Cain slew Abel his brother. Why? Because Abel made a sacrifice. What did he do? Kill somebody else? No, no, no, no, no.

He offered a sacrifice but it was not a human sacrifice. Isn't God speaking here and saying look all those other sacrifices. There's an old hymn that says not all the blood of beasts on Jewish altars slain could give one guilty conscience, peace or wash away one stain, but Christ the heavenly lamb.

That's the greatest miracle ever. That you take the aggregate sin of the world. Whether it was your sweet sin as a very gracious lady, or it was a lousy vile sin of the underworld and the mafia and all the hellish things that men have ever done in history.

Plus the diabolical sin that put him, that Jesus died for the sum total of sin. I'm going to suggest to you that that day when he laid his son there, that God lifted the veil and said you see at the end of the line there's my son dying on a cross. The same thing is true isn't it of Moses.

Why did he endure? He chose, he gave up a job, a multi-million dollar job. He lived in the most fabulous house maybe the world has ever seen. They washed his feet and they poured ointment on them.

They found him at night with ostrich feathers, they fed him with the finest food and everything. And one day he turned his back and he became a slave. Not like a slave, a slave.

Why? Why did he do that? He chose what rather to suffer affliction with the children of God. He suffered what, for what reason? Esteeming the reproach of Christ. Christ? Did you say Christ? Christ is a couple of thousand years up the road.

Exactly. But you see vision doesn't know anything about distance at all. If God lifts the veil and he sees it, there it is.

And I don't know where it was. Maybe it was on the mount. Maybe it was in the burning bush.

Moses somewhere had a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ. And you know once you've had a vision, nobody'll ever, you cannot, I know there are visionaries talking a lot of bunkum and nonsense. But I'm

talking about a vision that turns your life inside out.

Talking about something you spout. You know last Wednesday night praise the Lord I had a vision hallelujah it was wonderful. They say, so what? You can't build doctrine on that.

Have your vision, keep it. But don't come and tell me about it, it won't do me a bit of good. You say you're a cynic, no I'm a realist.

If wanted me to have that vision, God would have given it to me. But you get a vision, I don't know how it's going to come. You may be flat on your belly praying one day in the utmost ecstasy and joy, and just the greatest thrill in the whole world.

And suddenly God will turn you, he turns what? Beauty, he gives us the oil of joy for mourning. Sometimes he gives us mourning for joy. He turns it inside out.

That's the very place where he's got us tender enough to give us the vision that he wanted to give us. And the only way to give you it is to lift you into ecstasy. And then he turns it inside out and says, look at the hell of lost men.

I was saying a few minutes ago, the character of preachers, God in heaven. As God is in heaven, we don't even have the missionaries we used to have. There are areas up the Amazon now.

And I'm not too interested in all this charismatic doing stuff. If it doesn't produce missionaries, if it doesn't produce men that want to take up the cross and die for Christ, well have it, I don't want it. Every time there has been a genuine outpouring of the Spirit of God, there has been a reviving of missionary enterprise.

Every outpouring of the Spirit sees young men come and lay all they have at the feet of Jesus. Oh yes, it must have been something to lie up. I wouldn't like my daddy to have tied me up and his nerves weren't strong enough for one thing I'm sure.

And stand there with a knife over me. Offer than only begotten Son. Let me leave over, pardon me, leap over a chapter here.

Chapter 25. It begins with Abram taking another wife. Oh my my, that must have been an awful thing.

But anyhow. Chapter 4, the sons of Midian, Ephraim and Ephraim and Hanok, Abider and Eldar. All these were the children of Keturah.

Then verse 5, and Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. Now wonderful. He'd married other wives, he got other, he didn't give them a dime.

He gave all that he had to Isaac. Why? Because in time, when Isaac laid on that altar, Abraham was going to take everything he had. Because if he takes your life, he takes everything.

No good dying with a million bucks in your pocket won't help you. No good dying with 50 diplomas on the wall, they won't help you. He says here, here is my son.

But listen you see, if you take my son, you've promised me stars, children like the stars of heaven for multitudes. Man you're not merely putting a knife, a knife through my son, you're putting a knife through my face, you're cutting off all my possibilities, what shall I do? You know, I guess that boy lying there was

saying, you know if anybody should be upset, my dad should be upset, and he's as calm as can be. Maybe he didn't even shed a tear.

I, I've seen my old dad sometimes when he's come out from a prayer meeting, the glory of God was on him. But you know what, there's a strange light in his eyes. I kind of thought I heard him humming a tune there, and he keeps looking up there.

He's saying, your seed should be like the stars of heaven. And I think under his breath Isaac's saying, Lord if, daddy if you can hold on, I can hold on. Oh there's no power like the power of example.

I like his obedience. Daddy says lay down, I'm going to tie you up. He didn't argue, he didn't kick, he just laid down.

Not only his obedience, I like his courage. You see, God says to him, look you thought that when I told you to get up and leave your family and everybody down in Ur of Chaldees, that was a pretty tall order, didn't you? Well son, I want to tell you this, I never start with the biggest, that's always the least. So look out, look out, there's something bigger coming.

And when you get through that, well that was only to get your muscles stronger, so you can carry a bigger burden. And when you get them stronger, I'm going to give you a bigger burden. That's the way it went with Jesus, that's the way it goes with everybody.

If God is going to trust your faith, he's going to test it. Faith, that he's going to be trusted, is going to be tested. And this is the only way God can make character.

As it comes, through discipline. Have you noticed he isn't, on any of these situations, he isn't told to hold a committee meeting. He isn't told to go to church and ask the pastor his opinion.

He doesn't say, well there's a wise sheikh who lives over the desert there, I'll give you three days to consult him, and he'll study the stars and tell you where, what this thing is. He doesn't say that. The Lord comes straight to him and says, you do this or you don't do this, you obey or you disobey.

If he says, let's all do it, oh well that's all right, because if it breaks down, you know what I think? Well I think Brother Herb was a bit sleepy when we were praying that. I don't think he understood it really, and I think he was a weakling. I mean I wasn't, boy I was, I was really teed up.

That's why it's nice when you go pray, three or four of you go pray for somebody, if they don't get healed, you say, well I don't know what happened, because boy if ever I was strong it was me. The trouble is when you go by yourself. Oh brother.

And then you can't say it wasn't him, or it was him, or it was, and as you say, they must have had unbelief, that's all there is to it. There's always a way out if you want it. You can even find a scripture to hang yourself.

Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. I'll tell you what, I don't think for a minute that boy was thinking about that when he laid on his back, and that knife was dangling over him all the time. But again I say, I like his obedience, I like his submission.

Those are the things that make character. You don't need to be too sanctified to get angry. You don't need to be too sanctified to give quick answers.

You don't need to be too sanctified to start rationalizing things. But when the Lord says to you, you do this, and you know he told you to do it. Well that's where the test comes isn't it.

Oh the Lord won't do it. In the weekend when, when God began to work on Abraham, he was obviously 100 years of age. And when he quit working on him, he was 175.

So cheer up, you've a good way to go yet. Well I think I'm going to study the life of Abraham. Oh don't, because he's not going to take you that way.

If the Lord says this, we all go the same way home. You know A, B, C, D. That's what the church wants you to do. You start here, you go there, you go there, you move here, you turn left, you turn right, and everybody ordains what you should do, and you land up like them.

Half dead. Faith. You get up and start walking.

This is the greatest test any man's ever had. There's no, there's no, there's nothing to go on. I mean if, if I could pick up a book and read about a man that was asked to do this, I'd feel a bit more comfortable.

But there's never been an Abraham before. All right you get up and go Abraham. And then the Lord says to the next man, well you're not going to march hundreds of miles.

You're going to stay here and build an old ark and let everybody laugh at you for a hundred years. I think that took more faith than running away. I mean animals can't laugh at you.

They may get out of kilter a bit, and you have to jump over a hedge and get them back, and you have a few problems with them. But after all that, but when everybody comes says, hey old timer. Man you wouldn't imagine.

We've been down to Egypt. We had a great time. And you're still mucking nails in.

You still believe there's going to be some holes in the sky, and holes in the earth coming up, coming down, meet each other. You see it's easy to read the whole book and just swallow it isn't it. I was reading again today about, about Joshua.

When God said to him, take the Word of God. And, and what did he say? Read it? No he didn't. Our trouble is we read the Bible.

Doesn't do us any good. Why not? Because he says meditate in it. Meditate in it.

Did you ever say to somebody, uh did you look at so-and-so? Yes. Did you see? No. Well you've done that many a time haven't you? Came down the road.

Did you, uh did you look on the road? I, I was going, coming down the road this morning. I saw a disabled car the side of the road. An old Oldsmobile.

And I said, you know that looks like so-and-so's car, but surely it wouldn't be there. Now somebody else might have gone by and not noticed. You can look at a thing and not see it.

You can look at somebody and not notice what they're wearing. You can listen to somebody talk and not hear what they're saying. And one of the lost arts in the Church of God is meditate.

Thou shalt meditate therein. That's why I say sometimes, I enjoyed the ladies playing very much. But you know, the, the fact that some hymns are fast, some are slow.

You know, you, you sing stand up, stand up for Jesus. Well you don't sing it like some of the old slow things you sing at a funeral. There are different paces.

There are different ways that they, that the, the music comes to us. There are different ways the word comes, but we meditate in it. You know, I, I get lessons at least.

I try to from lots of things. And when I travel by train often, I used to look at the cows going up, so you know, so through the further states, further north, Michigan or over to Wisconsin, the dairy farm, and all the marvelous herds. You know, I see them chew, chew, chew, chewing away, and suddenly one old lady sits down.

Down she goes. And I'd turn and watch, and you know, before long all that herd, nearly all the herd sat down. And then they started working, or they do.

It's like watching a congregation in church, all chewing gum. What's she doing? Well if you drove those cows straight into, into the place where you milk them, as soon as they sat down, you get very, very low grade milk. Hardly worth drinking.

She's got a double stomach, and she regurgitates what she swallowed, and she chews it, and she masticates it, and she gets every conceivable thing out of it. Well that's why the Word of God says, meditate it. You, you find this same thing about Isaac.

Sure here he's a, he's a marvelous kind of docile character. He, he, he does this. Daddy says, take that wood up.

Says, yes dad, take it. I never knew this hill was so steep. But he doesn't grumble about it.

He's got a burden. He carries the cross as it were. He goes up the hill.

He doesn't argue about it. His dad says, take hold of that rock. Yeah, what are we going to do? Put it here.

Let's get that one, put it here. What are we doing? Building an altar. For what? We're going to have a sacrifice.

He didn't say that. What did he say? It's amazing the word sacrifice isn't there. It says worship, but you can't worship without sacrificing.

That's why most of us would rather run to every meeting that it's possible to get to. We enjoy the meeting, rhythm and fun, and clap our hands, and have a whale of a time, and never meditate. In other words we don't masticate that truth.

He carries the wood. He helps to build the altar. Say did you, did you ever, I mean it's great, it's great building altars.

As long as you're not going to be sacrificed on them. Did you ever build an altar you were going to be sacrificed on? I remember a few years ago going up to Hudson's Bay. Heard about it at school.

I was glad to go, and I preached to the Chippewa Indians, and some of the wonderful Eskimos there, and whatnot. And the pastor there was a poorly dressed man. He dragged his leg, everywhere he went dragged his leg.

He had four little girls. They all wore bridesmaids dresses, because the skirts were so long they trailed behind. But the missionary, the kind people gave them, you know, the due for the missionary.

I mean I couldn't wear it, not my color, but due for missionary. And then as much as you gave it to the missionary, you gave it to the Lord. Even if it did have a hole in it, all right.

So everything that came to that man, Christmas gifts, birthday gifts, children's gifts, he put it into the church. He made the church better. He bought them a new heating system, and sure they needed it.

Freezing deep with ice outside. And we had quite a good meeting, and and he said, Brother Ravenhill, only one more meeting. And I said, right.

Well, what will you do then? Oh, oh tomorrow, he said, I'm going to get on my little scooter, and there's a tribe of Indians, and I know that after the caribou, there's a herd of caribou, and I'm going after them. I said, how are you going? He said, get on my motorbike. He'd had a, he'd had a ski at the front, you know, and his wife said, oh he muffles up over his ears, and he wears goggles.

He said, you know the last time he came home last winter, he went straight over the roof of the house. There was so much snow, he missed the house. He, he, he saw the little chimney pot there, but there were other chimney pots, and he went right over the top of the house, and then when he went back, he looked back, and he saw something, some trim that he mounted.

There's my house. See, I don't go out of the house for a month or more, except just scrape through the, and pull some snow in, so we can cook with the water. And he said, Brother Ravenhill, I'm going, I'm going after some Indians.

And I said, great. Uh, he said, I lost my job here. You lost your job? Mm-hmm.

When I came, I dug this work really out of the, really out of the tundra. I started with a few Indians, and then a few others came in, and a few others, and now we've a nice gathering. But he said, uh, they had a business meeting last week.

They voted me out. When I came, I was a healthy man, but I got, I got polio while I was there, and I have a withered leg. And he said, I drag it everywhere, but I can still get it over the motorbike, you know.

And he said, I'm, I'm going down the track tomorrow, about 200 miles, down the railroad track. There's no road out. Ah.

I said, but it's snowing. He said, no, it's not bad. I said, where do you sleep at night? You know.

Well, I didn't know what inns there were, you know, Holiday Inn or Quality Coats. I said, where do you sleep? He said, in the forest. In the forest? Yeah.

Oh, David Brainerd did that 200. Are you really, do you really mean that? Yeah. He said, you know, I live down in Minneapolis, and when I was home, I got one of the new sleeping bags.

It zips right up to my neck, and it has a little roof over the top. He said, all I do, he said, I get down, I kick the snow. I have to sleep in my boots, you know, but I kick the snow off.

And then I get in, I zip this thing up, and lay down, and pray, and he said, oh boy, I sleep, I never had any trouble sleeping. So the bears come around occasionally. I said, well, what do you do when the snow gets deep? Oh, he said, I often wake up covered up, covered up with snow.

I shake it off, but he said, sometimes it gets, you know, 18 inches, two feet. Then he said, I knock at the door of one of the Indians, and he said, they say, yeah, you can come in here, because he says, there's no bedroom, no facility. Mother sleeps up at the wall.

The five, six kids sleep here. Daddy sleeps nearest the door. I sleep behind Daddy, and he said, when one turns, you all turn, you know.

Close fellowship. And I said, well, I said, I understand you put everything you've received in the last five years into this place. He said, that's right, that's right.

Every penny I've got, he said, we've got Christmas gifts, birthday gifts, anniversary gifts, and I've spent it all on this place. And he said, they voted me out. I said, I think that's great for him.

I said, I think it's great from this standpoint. It proves, uh, what, uh, Isaac did. He built an altar, and he knew when he built it, he was going to be sacrificed on it.

I remember the first time I came to the States, 1950, I met a missionary, and he'd come from a certain country where there wasn't too much hostility, and I said to him, well, what do you really hope to do? Well, he said, Brother, Brother, my first desire in this group that I have now, I have a group, is to make myself expendable. I want to get out of the way as soon as I can. I want to build them up in the faith so they're strong enough, and I can appoint elders, and then I'll move on and go to another place.

I want to make, I thought that was a very noble thing. You see, it's easy to build an altar that somebody else will be sacrificed on, but when you put all you have into it, and you build it as zealously as your enemy was going to be put on it, if you have one, and you say, I know what's going to happen when I get this altar built, that's the end of it. That takes obedience, it takes submission, it takes courage.

Abraham lifted up his hand. Previously he lifted up his eyes, now he lifts up his hand, and just as he's going to bring that hand down, the Lord says, stay thy hand. What do you think Isaac felt like? Never mind his dad, missed it by a hair's breadth.

Ah, ten seconds more. Oh, you say I'd like the thrill of deliverance? Well, there's one way to get it. Go to the valley of the shadow of death.

Be a sacrifice. You think God hands thrills out? Oh, we've got so many people who are always praying, Lord fill me, and Lord thrill me, but they don't pray, Lord kill me. Well brother, if ever he takes you to the altar, and the knife is going to be pulled, and at the last minute he delivers you, you'll never forget that as long as you live.

I guess Isaac could have said, Dad, it's all right, if you want to go get a drink, I can just lay here for another hour. I'm really enjoying this. I knew it was coming.

Dad, I've been banking on your word. You told me that the God who rolls the stars along speaks all the promises. I knew, but I didn't know, just know when it would happen.

But oh, immediately that voice said, stay thy hand. What did he do? He looked, and he saw the hand. He looked, and he saw the hand.

The Lord says, now turn around and look. And there was a ram caught in the thicket. I guess I told you before, preaching in New Zealand, where an old farmer came up to me, and he said, you missed something in that message.

I said, I missed something in every one. What was it? Well he said, about the ram caught in the thicket. What about it? Well he said, it wasn't there when they built the altar.

No, no. It wasn't there when he was wrapping his son up in the, in the, in the uh, in the robe. No.

And it wasn't there when he lifted his hand up. It wasn't. No.

And it wasn't there when he brought his hand up. It wasn't. No.

It wasn't there. Well when was it there? It was there, immediately the voice said, stay thy hand. Well I said, I never noticed that.

He doesn't say all that in my Bible. Does it say it in yours? He said, well, not really brother Abeniel, but you see, I, I'm 70 odd years of age. I've been a shepherd for 50 years, and I know all the tricks of sheep.

What did the Lord say? He said, look in the thicket, there's a ram. A ram. Big old boisterous ram.

I've seen rams so big you could ride them. And when they get angry, you talk about the wrath of the Lamb. When they get angry, they're capable of killing people.

They're capable of all kinds of terrible things. And he said, I know that that, that ram wasn't there for 30 seconds. I said, well that's nice to hear that, now prove it.

Well he said, I'll tell you why. Because he said, if a ram gets caught in a thicket like that, and he realizes he can't get through, he's trying to get through, but the, the thorns are catching into his, into his wool, and he can't get through, and his horns are stuck. He can't get through, and he pulls, and he can't get back.

He said, suddenly he'll get mad, and he'll do one of two things. What will he do? Well either, he said, he'll pull till his horns come off, or he'll pull till he uproots the tree. But he won't stay bound.

Well I said, I don't know what you're trying to tell me, but I'll tell you what I've got out of that. That the Lord never provides the ram until the last split second. He'll test your faith.

Come out of Ur of the Chaldees. Oh thank you Lord, that's the biggest thing I'll ever do. Lord says, cheer up, you've got something far bigger than that coming up.

And you get a further up the road, and he says, well you thought that was amazing? Wait a minute. It's not too difficult to get rid of your, your old part. Not too difficult to get rid of Ishmael.

Uh, not, not too difficult to uh, say, well I don't mind lots having all those riches, but take your flesh and blood. You see, there's no way out. This, this boy is the terminus.

He, he's everything in him. There can't be any children like the stars of heaven for multitude. Isaac is the only begotten one.

Are you prepared to give me the darling of your heart? And he says, yes Lord. And he, he stayed his hand. Do you know why? Because by that time, while others would have said that, you know, that's going to weaken his faith.

You know, Abraham says, well Lord it's okay now. Go, go ahead. Because I've got news for you.

As soon as I kill him, I'm going to say in the name of Jehovah who raised heaven and earth, rise up and walk. Well then the Lord says, no good me letting you kill him, because you're going to beat me anyhow. That's what he's going to say.

Read Hebrews and see if that isn't right. After all, if he, he considered, he considered Sarah's womb was as dead as King Tut. Sarah's womb is as dead as that death chamber right in the middle of the central pyramid of Sheops.

No woman of 80 can have a child. It's unreasonable. She's dead.

Man, all he had to do was go back and say, hey, don't get discouraged Abraham. You started off with death, didn't you? He kept saying the old lady's dead, the old lady's dead, the old lady's dead. She's no good, I don't know what's going to happen.

Well, if God could touch the womb of that woman, it was dead. You're dead right. She was dead.

Listen, there's no, no limitation here. I'm able out of this dead situation to bring forth life and bring forth deliverance. You see, God may go around a long way before he gets us where he wants us, but boy, he'll get us there.

I can imagine Abraham having some battle, sure enough, but he says, listen, son, if you want to know why I never lied, I'll tell you why, because God never lied to me, and I'm his child, and I live where he lives, and every word I say is true, and every word he says is true. And you know what? Well, he's given us a piece of territory. They haven't inherited it all yet either, and he says it's every bit yours.

Because that's what the scripture calls, it calls this man Isaac. It says he was the heir, he was the heir of all that Abraham had. And I read to you in that 25th chapter where he didn't give anything to any of the other relatives.

Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. Let me read the scripture for you, in case you've forgotten it. It might cheer you up.

The spirit beareth witness with our spirits that we're children of God. Isn't that nice? Wait, wait, this is the cream on top of that. If children, then heirs.

If heirs, heirs of God. If heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ. That's nice.

Oh, I'm sorry, but there's no punctuation there. I mean, no period. The next part says if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.

Suggesting there's no suffering, then Abraham sure there was. I wonder why I didn't tell his wife. I think it was too much for her to take.

Galatians 3, 8 says this, the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith preached before the gospel unto Abraham. I quoted that to you. And he shall all nations be blessed.

Isaac tested and tried. Learning lessons as a young man that you'd think he'd never forget. But he had his cloudy spots too.

His father ran away when he got into a tight situation. Like father, like son. Isaac ran away when he got a tight situation.

Abraham had a beautiful wife. And a man said one day, hey, that lovely blonde, is that your wife? No, no, she, she's my sister. She's my sister.

Do you know Isaac did the same thing just a few years after? When the king saw his wife, he said, oh, that very beauty. Is that your wife? No, she's my sister. Immediately, he was in trouble.

Let's skip just the end of the chapter a minute. The story. Yeah, God says, I'll work this out all right.

You'll get your families. You'll get the nations of the earth. Remember, his wife had two beautiful children.

And he changed the law. My dear wife and I have a friend. And he insists that the greatest section of wealth always goes to the firstborn.

It doesn't a number of times in the scriptures. And in this case, it says again, that the elder shall serve the younger. All right, Isaac's an old man.

His eyes were grown dim. And he's had a lot of experience. Sure he has.

In verse 20, where is it? 28. Verse 28 of the 25th chapter of Genesis, it says this. Very simple.

Nothing in it is there. Isaac loved Esau because he did eat of his venison. Isn't that something? The only reason, the only explanation we have that he loved his son Esau is that he made better meals.

He made better hamburgers. He could fry them better. And he brought tragedy to the home.

What did Noah get into trouble for? Wine. He liked wine apparently. He got drunk, he got into trouble.

Think of the characters you have. We haven't time. Time has gone.

I know that. But, this man loved his son's venison. And later he says, listen I, I, I, uh, I, I, I want some venison.

And you remember how he, he went out to get it. His daddy says, take your bow and your arrow and your sling and you get me something and make this savory venison that my soul loveth. And I'll give you the blessing.

But do you remember too, that his brother sold his birthright for a dish of that stuff too. Isn't it amazing what people, how easily they'll be cheated of spiritual life, spiritual blessing. Oh, Abraham's wife didn't have any trouble with wine like Noah.

She didn't have any trouble with, like Isaac. She didn't like, she didn't like savory venison. You could sway every bit of it in the country.

Wouldn't have moved her. But she was an impatient woman. She must get the thing done.

Therefore she intervened in the divine plan and upset the balance of nature. And tonight we're scrapping with hundreds of millions of Arabs that we didn't need to have. There isn't a computer in the world can tell you the consequence of one sin.

Thy one man's sin, disobedient sin, entered into the world. I told you many times I like to play that piece of Messiah. Wish I could play, but I, I do pretty good.

I play. Everything I play is by handle. But um, I like that part of Handel when it, when he says since by man came death.

And then suddenly it says by man came also the resurrection from the dead. God said you ruin man. God, God says to Satan you ruin man.

You used him as a weapon to curse the earth. By, there's a man coming. He's not going to escape death.

The third day Abraham's taking his son away. Not so in the case of the Lord Jesus. He's already been through the valley of the shadow of death.

He's tasted death for every man that will trust in him. And he rises up on the resurrection side more than conqueror. I'm going to tell you as I'll answer to God.

The church hasn't discovered that yet. We're so busy in the upper room. We used to be.

Now we've left that for the supper room. We're so fooling about and clapping our hands and having a whale of a time that we've no care, time to carry burdens. Find out what God is saying.

We don't open the bookstore Sunday. So don't come and buy books on Sunday. You won't get them.

You can buy something tonight. I think we've got David Wilkerson's book. Second, haven't we, Second Nineveh? The manager doesn't know, but somebody phoned me and told me they're in the shop this afternoon, got Second Nineveh.

Okay. So I want two copies after the meeting tonight because I want to read it. You know, there are not many people.

The people that have cursed David Wilkerson over his vision, most of the folk were in his own group. Well, that's scriptural. It ought to make him dance for joy.

A man's foes should be those of his own household. Your own domination will kick you upside down. That's why I'm not in one.

But that's what happened. Would you think that a man so glorious as Isaac, with all that was involved, and remember how he got a bride, hmm? You know, I said that we, that he went up on the mountain. If there hadn't have been some other chapters, I'd said he's still there.

Because there's no report about him coming down anyhow. He went up on the mountain, a type of victory. And he sends Eliezer, a type of the Holy Spirit, to look for a bride.

Well, I've had some jobs to do, but I've never had that, thank the Lord. I've buried a lot. A lot of people I'd like to bury too, but I've never had to look for a bride for somebody else.

That would be a job. Remember how he went? How the man went? You know, seven times, find them, do your homework. Seven times Isaac is found at a well.

A well, a well, a type of life. Found his wife by a well. Well, well.

And then he goes on, and he sends a man out, and she's in a field. And you know what? He was a man of prayer, because he was meditating in the field at night. He was worshipping God.

He was saying, when I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast done. And suddenly he says, what's that? A camel coming? And suddenly he says, Master, Master! Well, we've found the most gorgeous bride for you. You know, she's like the bride of Christ.

I said to Martha the other day, I said, hey sweetie, look, there's the old bookshop. The old bookshop used to be living wood. I said, yeah, they haven't got much of a job.

They make things for the bride. We're making the bride. But anyhow, we want to be part of that glorious bride.

All the church won't be his bride. I don't believe that for a minute. Think every backslider will be part of the bride? Better read the scripture, the sweeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth was to believers.

Not very popular. Won't find that in a popular magazine for sure. But going back, Isaac has sent camels loaded with jewels and everything else.

And when he says, Lord, give me a sign. Yes, this lady says, could I water your camel? You look very tired. And she says, I'll give you a drink.

I'll even water your cattle. And, and if you're right to go into our house, we've lots of propander and so forth. And he says, well, I'd like to come.

And he goes out and you remember the party met him and took him home in triumph. And then he began to tell the girl, your master's like that. Is that right? Yes.

And you know what? He wants you for his bride. Oh, well, I'm not, I'm not really rich and I'm not talented. No, but you see, you've got one qualification that he demanded.

I have, yes. You're a virgin. You're pure.

How many pure people do you think there are in the church of God today? Pure in heart. Think God, Jesus is going to take some of the lousy folk in church today. They can do miracles and stand on their heads and yet they're full of jealousy, pride, anger, selfishness, lust.

Name it, you've got it. This darling, beautiful girl. And they went and told her parents and they said, yes, it sounds very good.

And he certainly must be a wonderful man. I mean, man, that, that bracelet of gold's worth a fortune and that thing you clipped in her ear. And he says, well, I've got, what was it? 17 camels loaded.

I couldn't show you them all tonight, but man, if you saw this stuff. And you know what? I couldn't even tell you, the half hasn't been told. And they said, well, yes, we're going to consider it.

We're going to have a family committee meeting about it. And well, darling, you wouldn't want to go. She said, yes, I want to go right now.

No, no, no. Stay, stay at least 10 days. No, I'm going.

You know what the scripture talks? What's that little scripture that says, whom having not seen ye love? She'd never seen him and she loved him. She heard so much about his character. She said, if I have to leave my house, if I have to leave everything I have, if that's the man, listen, he's got my heart, he's got my body, he's got my love, he's got all that there is of me.

If she'd known it, she'd have sung it, love so amazing, so divine. And Isaac's meditating in the field. And when she saw it, and immediately saw her, he loved her, and immediately she saw him, she loved him.

Now that's the thrill of the middle part of the story, but oh, the end is bad again, isn't it? An old blind man, cheated, deceived. And all because of what? Because, well, would you like it in the smooth, sweet, King James version? Well, I'll tell you, he's a belly worshiper. They like to eat.

Oh, we, we, we lamb based people who drink, we don't say much about folk who eat. If eating made us, made us as drunk as drinking, some of us would never be sober. But, excuse me, but that, you see, there was a wise, wise old Scotsman, I finish with this, an old Scotsman called Alexander White.

He gave us the greatest Bible characters, I think, that have ever been written. And he had a slogan. His slogan was this, when you're out, or when you eat, never, all in capital letters, never accept a second helping.

Secondly, always leave the table with an appetite, and then you'll never be without one. That's pretty logical. Say whether you agree or not, that's pretty logical.

And thirdly, he said, when you bow your head, include in your prayers, you thank God for the food, Lord, and this is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Let me not defile it with gluttony. You know, in the early church, gluttony was one of the seven cardinal sins.

You can't violate even your body, it'll, it'll kick back sooner or later. I remember being in a Christian Missionary Alliance church in Louisville, many years, 20 years ago, I guess. One night, a lady tumbled out to the altar, she was a size.

She is the most symmetrical woman I have ever seen. If one of the stewards had got her up and rolled her, she'd have gone down the aisle. She was five foot this way, five foot this way, five foot this way.

She was fat and she came out and she cried and cried and cried. And the pastor said, would you go? I don't like to go to that lady. Would you go? And I said, lady, look, you've been here about an hour.

And the scripture says there's a time to do everything. There's a time to weep and a time to refrain from weeping. Now quit.

What's your trouble? What's your problem? Well, it isn't really my problem. I said, well, what are you here for? I'm here for my pastor. Oh, has he got a problem? She said, yes.

I said, what is it? He's too fat. Oh, dear soul. I thought, well, what are you? She was as fat as a proverbial pig.

I don't think preachers should be fat. I hate to see a man with a big tummy, particularly a young man. Well, I said, that may be true, but listen, you better put your own house in order first.

Oh, you look so sad. You enjoyed some of the meeting and here I spoil all your lunches now, eh? No, I'm just telling you what, Alexander, what when that man died as an old man at 70, he was lean, he was quick, he was alert. You see, your body makes demands on your mind.

Your body makes demands on the physical heart. So, there's your, there's your slogan. Never ask for a second helping.

Oh, your grocery bills are going down. And never fail to leave the table without an appetite. You'll always have one when you have to go back.

And when you pray, thank him for the food. Thank him your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost. And Lord, help me not to defile it with gluttony.

That's a horrid note to leave you on, isn't it, for two weeks. But I'll see you all and I'll say, well, you've all been dieting while I've been away, eh? You really look good. All right, we're going away tomorrow.

And two things I always say. I go as Christ's ambassador, he called me. And secondly, as a representative of his fellowship.

And I'm never ashamed of it. When I am, I'll tell folk. When I'm ashamed of you, I'll sure tell them, I will.

But I know you'll share by prayer. And this is what, what happens. I get a chance next week to preach to a few hundred preachers.

And the next week we'll be in an assembly of God church. One of the best I've ever been in. The best assembly, not the best church.

No, it's one of the best churches. Very godly man. And we look forward with real joy to getting back.

Lord, we thank you tonight.

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