

The God of Isaac

by Robert Constable

The sermon highlights the unique relationship between God and Isaac, emphasizing submission and the importance of receiving God's gifts in contrast to Abraham's active faith.

Duration: 36:53

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:2, 1 Corinthians 1:25

Topics: "Isaac"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that the Christian life is not about trying to copy Jesus or following strict rules, but rather about allowing Jesus to live through us. The speaker encourages listeners to let Jesus make them into what He wants them to be. They highlight the difference between struggling to do our best and losing, versus surrendering to God and experiencing victory and freedom. The sermon also discusses the God of Isaac, who is portrayed as someone who lets others do things for him and has an easy life. The speaker encourages listeners to submit to God and trust in His provision.

Transcript

hospital, he talked to the nurses, and in the course of about a week, he led five of those nurses to the Lord Jesus, and the people in the Boca Raton Chapel were just, you know, just, this is great! Well, I went to see him one day, and I said to him, what in the world are you telling these girls? Make them accept the Lord like this, this is wonderful, I'd like to know what that is! And he said, oh, you know, I asked him, are they sure going to heaven? And so he started then telling me how he talked to the nurses, and I went home, sat down right away at the desk, and I wrote out what he said, and I took it back to him, and I said, now, is this what you told me the other day that you tell these girls? And he read it. He said, yes, I think that's about it. Well, I said, this is too good to let it die, I'm going to have this published by Moody Press, and here it is.

I know it works, and so we brought it out. Now, they put my name on it because I, you know, I did the handwriting. They, I put Soar Sorenson's name on it because it's his story.

I mean, it was he that used this material first. So, we got down to Boca Raton last year. I thought I was going to find Soar Sorenson all enthused about this tract, you know, that he'd written and had his name on it, that everybody was using, and he said, why did you put my name on it? Well, I said, I put my name on it because it's your tract.

You wrote it. I didn't write it. I said, look, Soar, it's a lot easier to hand people tracts like this and say, would you like to read something that I wrote? Everybody's interested in that.

So, I said, do that. He said, it'd be all right if I wrote it. I didn't write it.

I said, well, now, look, I understand that the Apostle Paul had an amanuensis. He had somebody who took his words down. He dictated the words to his secretary, and we still call him the Epistles of Paul.

Somebody else wrote it down. All I was was the secretary. I wrote it down, but you are the one who gave the message.

Well, he said, sounds great, you know, you say it like that, but I get embarrassed about this. I wish you wouldn't hand these around at the chapel. Well, so I had to ease off a little bit, but he called me the other day on the phone.

He was going through Chicago, and he said, where can I get some more of those tracts? And he started to give them out himself now, and he said several of the men at Boca Raton are giving these out all over the place down there, and they are effective if you'd like to have a tract that, you know, you know where it came from. Yesterday, we were talking about the God of Abraham. We said a lot about Abraham, of course, but we were talking about his God.

Remember? Turn to Genesis chapter 21 this morning. We're going to talk about another God. Oh, it's the same God, but we're going to talk about him in relation to another person, and that will make him appear in an altogether different light.

We read the verse yesterday from Matthew with the Lord Jesus, quoted, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Didn't say, I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but the God of each one, because he presents himself differently in the life of each of these men. Now, let's read in Genesis 21, the first eight verses, And the Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken.

For Sarah conceived and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac, being eight days old, as God had commended him.

And Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born unto him. And Sarah said, God has made me to laugh, and all that hear me will laugh with me. And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham that Sarah should be given children suck, for I have born a son in his old age? Boy, were they glad! And the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast in the same day that Isaac was weaned.

I said yesterday that I thought that Abraham was probably one of the most remarkable men in human history. I suppose Isaac was one of the most unremarkable men in human history. Well, maybe not that far.

Anybody who has a father a hundred years old and a mother who's 90 is remarkable for that, if they're not remarkable for anything else. There aren't many people like that, you know. But, Abraham was a . . . Isaac was an ordinary person.

His life was a life of submission. This is not a popular word these days, submission. One time I was speaking on characters in the Old Testament, and among them I was speaking about Isaac.

And Bob Little, whom most of you, I suppose, know, was in the congregation while I was giving this talk. And, I was saying some commendatory things about Isaac, and trying to get some lessons out of his life and all. And, after the meeting, Bob Little came up to me, and he said, that was a very interesting meeting.

I said, well, why did you say it that way? And he said, because whenever I talk about Isaac, I make it out that he was no good. So, he thought that he could present it different ways, you know. But, a way of submission, a life of submission, is not popular, a life of submission.

Now, when we talked about Abraham and his God yesterday, we said that the God of Abraham was the God who wanted to be trusted. That was the characteristic. The characteristic, the corresponding characteristic in Abraham was that he obeyed God.

He trusted him implicitly, and that's kind of a God Abraham had, one who wanted to be trusted. The God of Isaac is quite different, and he's quite different because Isaac was quite different than his father. You could never say like father, like son about Abraham and Isaac, because they were not alike at all.

I said his life was a life of submission, and it began that way. I mean, early in his life. Remember, we referred yesterday to the fact that, as a teenager, he submitted to being put on the altar.

He submitted to the demands of God's word, and I like to think of that scene on the top of Mount Moriah when Abraham sat down with Isaac, as I'm sure he did, and he explained to him what was about to take place. He told him about the word of God that had come to him, that had come to him way back in Ur of the Chaldeans, and that had come to him again and again and again in his experience, and that had recently come to him with the demand that he sacrifice his son. That must have been a very, very moving conversation, and Isaac submitted to this.

He submitted to his father. He submitted to the word of God, to the demand that had come, and I take it that any young person who begins his life as a young person with such submission to the word of God that, even though it was to cost him his life, he would submit is off to a good start. Believe me, the problem with most of us is that it takes us so long to get around to submitting to God, but not with Isaac.

Isaac began as a young man to submit to the word of God, even though it looked like it was going to cost him his life, and maybe I overstated the case then when I said his life was not remarkable. I think this is a remarkable thing when you find a young person who is this committed, this devoted. But, whether he was remarkable or not, he was certainly a different kind of person from his father.

Abraham was an originator. He started things. He was the first one that God called to go out to a land that I will show thee, he said, and Abraham stirred up the family and got them out of Ur of the Chaldees, and then got them out of Haran later on, and went where God wanted him to go.

Nobody, you know, he was breaking paths. He was a pioneer. He was an originator.

Isaac never did anything new in his whole life. He was a copier. He was a fellow who did what other people did.

He was a follower. Now, some of us may be able to relate a little better to Isaac than we were able to relate to Abraham. When you hear about Abraham, you are asked to respond and say, yeah, but I'm not Abraham.

But you can't respond that way when it comes to Isaac, you know. It's not nearly so hard to relate to Isaac as it is to Abraham. He was a follower.

You remember when he was just a little boy, and his brother Ishmael, who was by then a teenager, it says Ishmael mocked Isaac. Isaac didn't do anything about this, apparently. He just accepted it.

Of course, his mother did a great deal about it. Boy, was she burned up when when Ishmael started mocking her son, and it made quite a scene in the family. But we don't read that Isaac did anything about it.

It didn't seem to bother him any. Isaac didn't have anything to say about his marriage, either. Now, here's an area where most of us want to have something to say about it.

But not Isaac. He didn't say anything. He was 40 years old by this time.

His father picked out his wife. When I was in India once, I wanted to go up and see the Taj Mahal, and I was staying at a hotel in Delhi, New Delhi. And so, I got a guide, a young Indian university student, and he drove me up to see the Taj Mahal at Agra.

And, in the course of our riding up together, I got into conversation with him. Of course, he's a very fine young man. He's a Hindu.

And, I said to him, Are you married? He said, No. My father hasn't picked me out a wife yet. I said, Hold it.

What do you mean your father hasn't picked you out a wife yet? Aren't you going to pick out your own wife? Why no, he said. My father will choose my wife. I said, Wouldn't you rather pick out your own wife? No, he said.

I wouldn't rather pick out my own wife. My father loves me. He's going to pick out the woman who would be best for me.

And, he's wiser than I am. Oh, brother, was I condemned as I sat there. He's a Hindu telling me this.

And, I thought, Oh, if I only trusted God that way. You know? Oh, man. I said, What if she doesn't like you after you get married? He said, The people in my country aren't like the people in your country.

A woman doesn't dislike her husband. Well, Isaac would rather have Abraham pick his wife. And, of course, Abraham didn't see anybody around the community that looked like he wanted Isaac to get married.

And, I love that scene in the life of Isaac when Abraham was an old man. He was sitting there thinking about this, and he called Eliezer, the steward of his house, and he sent him back to the old country to find a wife among his relatives for his son. That's a great scene.

I can't spend time on it now, but it's a wonderful thing. But, the point is that Isaac didn't ever seem to do anything on his own. Now, you're thinking, aren't you, at the moment, when I say Isaac never did anything

on his own, that this is a bad characteristic.

You know, he has no initiative. I'd like to remind you of a statement of the Lord Jesus that he made in the gospel of John. It's recorded for us in the gospel of John, where he says, I do nothing of myself, but what my Father shows me, that I do.

And, in this wonderful respect, Isaac was a type of the Lord Jesus. You see, submission is not all bad, no matter how our culture has formed us and made us look at things, but Isaac was the kind who let other people do things for him. Everything was hard for Abraham.

It was hard to leave his city. It was hard to leave his family. It was hard to get away from It was hard to offer his son.

These were difficult things. Everything was easy for Isaac. He never had a hard time in his life.

Everything was easy. He was born rich, and he had everything. You know, I said we can identify with Isaac.

Maybe you can identify with him at this point. I can't. I wasn't born rich, but he was, and so he had everything that a rich man's son could have.

Look at chapter 26 for a rather surprising view of his life. Chapter 26 and verse 6, and Isaac dwelt in Gerad, and the men of that place asked him of his wife, and he said, she is my sister, for he feared to say she is my wife, lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebecca, because she was fair to look on. He couldn't even sin with originality.

His father had done this twice. He's quite a different person. And then you remember that Abraham, as he came into this country, had dug well.

He dug wells. Isaac never dug a well. Isaac opened wells.

It says he opened the wells his father had dug. He didn't even start a new well. He used his father's well, and then, as he moved about, and the people in the community took the wells away from him, his servants came to him and said, this is getting to be too much of a good thing.

Let's stick up for these wells that your father opened. Let's not let them take these wells away. And then Isaac said, oh, don't.

Relax. If they want the wells, let them have them. You know, we don't identify here either, do we? Just let them have them.

Let them go. That's all right. Let them take the wells, if that's what they want.

Then he moved over to another place, and opened another well. And finally, he came to a place where he opened up a well, and it says the people in the community let him alone. And what did Isaac say? He said, the Lord has made room for us.

See, he was just letting the Lord run the thing. If the Lord wanted these people to have these wells, let him have them. It's great to hold things that loose, you know.

But if the Lord wants them, or the Lord wants to let us lose them, okay, that's the Lord's will. In his time, the Lord will make room for us. We are living in a day when everybody is hanging on to his own rights.

We live in a day when we talk about our rights. And I suppose we all think we've got certain rights, but let me suggest to you this, that a Christian has one right, and that is the right to be called the sons of God. That's the only right we've got, but it is the greatest right a man could possibly possess, and how little we value it at.

How very little sometimes we take advantage of the one right we've got to live in the world of men as the sons of God. We forget that, but that's our one right, and I don't read in the word of God that we have any other rights in this world. It was the British poet Kingsley who wrote these words, who would sit down and sigh for a lost age of gold when the God of all ages is here? And this is what we're at to do.

We're at to hang on to our rights when the giver of all rights is ours. Now, in old age, this has sort of caught up to Isaac. He was always, you know, submissive and submissive until he began to get old.

And when he got old, then he began to have his own ideas. You people wouldn't know anything about this, but some of us that are getting close to 100, we know what this is in our lives. And he thought that he was going to work it out so Esau would get the blessing.

You know, he sent Esau out to get him some venison to bring him in a good meal, and then he was going to bless Esau. But God didn't want Esau blessed. Esau had no use for God.

God had determined his blessing was to be on Jacob, not Esau. But, uh, Isaac had his own ideas. So, you know what happened is all of Isaac's ideas got upside down, and God overruled.

Jacob got the blessing, not Esau. God help us as we get older not to lose our sense of submission to the word of God the way Isaac began to lose it as he got old. God overruled.

God does overrule in our lives. He will have his own way with us. You know that even at his death, Isaac was buried in a tomb his father had arranged for.

He didn't even arrange for his own burial. He didn't arrange for anything for himself. Abraham had to go out alone, and this is hard, and isn't it? It's hard to stand alone when everybody else takes a different course.

But this is the way Abraham had to do. He had to face God's demands. This is difficult.

Isaac, on the other hand, well, I'm not sure we like this, but all he had to do was enjoy God's provision. He didn't have to respond to any demands of God. All he had to do was enjoy his provision for him, and it was a great provision.

In chapter 25 and verse 5, we are told this, and Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. No labor, no toil. Abraham attained to something.

Isaac inherited all he had. Well, so much for his relationship to his father. I want us to think about his relationship to God, because it was the same kind of relationship as he had with his father.

Look at chapter 26 and verse 2, And the Lord appeared unto Isaac, and said, Go not down into Egypt. Dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of. Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and I will bless thee.

For unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swear unto Abraham thy father, and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws. And Isaac dwelt in Gerard.

Now, this is the same promise. Not one new item in it. The same promise that God gave to Abraham.

Here's this man Isaac getting it, too. All the same assurances, and he's getting it not on the basis of what Isaac was, but on the basis of what his father was. Because your father obeyed me, I'm going to do this for you.

Not because you obeyed me, but because your father obeyed me, and because I promised it to your father. That's why you're going to get this. You can drop down a few more verses to verse 24, in chapter 26, and the Lord appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father.

Fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed. Why? For my servant Abraham's sake. Not because of Isaac, but because of Abraham.

So, Isaac's life was a life of bestowal and acceptance. God giving, Isaac receiving, and the God of Isaac is God the giver. The giver who gives, and gives, and gives again.

The God of Abraham was the demander, the God of Isaac is the giver. The one who comes out and gives everything to us. Now, I suggest to you that we need to learn how to receive, and that's why we're given the life of Isaac.

Do you know this is one of the hardest things in the world is to receive? It's very easy for us to give gifts. It is not easy to receive gifts. Often we are embarrassed when things are given to us.

We're never embarrassed when we give something to somebody. Receiving is not natural with us. It is the same difference as in the New Testament there is in Romans 7 and Romans 8. In Romans 7, Paul is talking about the man who is struggling to do his very best and lose it, and in Romans 8, Paul is talking about the one who quit struggling in good receptive, and that's the difference.

In Romans 8, it's the God of Isaac that Paul is writing about. Now, we know what the God of Abraham wants. He wants our trusting obedience, but we don't know how to get there until we know the God of Isaac.

We need to know the God of Isaac, because victory, life, and salvation are all gifts. They're all bestowed, and perhaps this is why so many people in the world find it difficult. You know, a lot of people in the world would be glad to be saved if they could work it, if they could work for their salvation.

They would be willing to do anything if they could work for it. They don't want to receive it as a gift, not even from God. It is hard to receive something as a free gift, and so the world, in general, turns away from the free offer of salvation because they'd rather work for it.

They'd rather get it on their own terms. They would rather deserve it. The Christian life is not striving, either.

It is not thinking to make ourselves Christians, nor to make ourselves better Christians. We need to learn this. We received our salvation as a free gift, not because of anything in us, not because we deserved it, not because we did anything, but because God loved us on exactly the same basis upon which Isaac received everything from his father.

His father loved him, so he gave him everything. Our father loves us, and he gives us everything, and he doesn't want us working for it. He will not have us working for it, and so not only is our salvation a free gift, our sanctification is a free gift, too.

This is given to us, but we've got to learn to take it. We have to learn to receive it from God, and to be grateful for it. The Christian life is no more something we earn or attain than is our salvation, and I suggest to you that the nature of our new life is to love God, to value prayer, and to esteem the word of God.

You don't have to work at this. If you have the new life from God, it is perfectly natural. You don't have to work to love God.

You don't have to work to value prayer. You don't have to strive to esteem the word of God. If you have the life of God, these things are perfectly natural to you in your new life.

Oh, it's against the old nature. We still have the old nature, so there's a conflict that's up within our personality, but it is perfectly native to our new nature. Now, Isaac's question when he was going up Mount Moriah with his father is the key to Isaac's life.

Do you remember what he asked his father as they went up to make this sacrifice on the top of Mount Moriah? My father? Yes. Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the offering? What was the answer? God will provide. God will provide.

We come to many situations in our lives when we have that question. You know, how am I going to do? How's this going to work out? How's that going to work out? We need to hear from Abraham the answer. God will provide.

God will provide everything we have need of. Everything demanded by God of Abraham is provided by the God of Isaac. We don't have to bring any of it up, and the distinctive feature of true Christianity is that it compels us to receive, it compels us to receive.

We are not true Christians if we think we've got to work for everything we get. We don't. God wants us to have it free, and he'll give it to us.

All we have to do is reach out and take it. In 1 Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 25, we've got time. Let's look at it.

1 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 25. We'll begin the reading here, because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For you see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not to bring to naught things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence, but of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, that according as it is written, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord."

He doesn't want us working for these things.

You know, we're going to think ourselves pretty good if we could work for our sanctification, and become holier than other people, wouldn't we? We're not holier than anybody else on the basis of anything you do. Holiness is given to us of God. Sanctification is a gift from the Lord.

Wisdom is a gift from the Lord. These things are given to us, and according to this passage, they're given to us so that we will not have fake ideas about ourselves. They're free gifts.

All we need, and all God has, is ours in the Lord Jesus. It doesn't say that we're to copy him, or to copy anybody in his steps. This is the idea, the concept behind the book, in his steps, is to try to do like Jesus did.

Don't try so hard, you know, just let Jesus do it in your life, and then I hope I can do it in my life. Don't be a slave to rule. We so easily want to put ourselves under bondage, and be slaves to rule.

The Bible doesn't ask us to do that. Just let the Lord Jesus live his life in us, and in ways that we do not understand, he will minister through us to the lives of other people, make of us what he wants us to be. And you say, well, yeah, but will it work? Will it work? Well, of course it'll work.

We read you Romans 8 too, For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

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