

All About Love - Part 1

by Robert F. Adcock

The sermon explores the depth of divine love and the cost of faith through the biblical account of Abraham and Isaac.

Duration: 45:45

Scripture: Genesis 22:1-2, Matthew 6:10, John 3:16, John 13:34-35, 1 Corinthians 6:20, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 11:8

Topics: "Faith And Obedience", "Gods Love"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on the story of Abraham and Isaac from the Bible. He emphasizes the faithfulness of Abraham and how he was willing to sacrifice his own son as an act of obedience to God. The preacher highlights the significance of God providing a sacrifice, which ultimately points to Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He also discusses the importance of love and how it should be a defining characteristic of believers, as Jesus said that the world will know his disciples by their love for one another.

Transcript

To thank each one of you for making your way here this morning, I think you've made a wise choice to assemble together with God's people. The best fellowship you can have in the world is with God's people. To be a member of the family of God, to have a Savior that you know that loves you, there's a bond of love that we have one for another.

I don't know of any paternal order, I don't know of any organization that I can think of that can make the claims that we make for fellowship in the family of God. Our Lord said this, I want you to love each other the same way I've loved you. And you know something about how much he loved us.

He gave himself for us. And you know that's what this divine love is all about. It's a sacrificial love.

It goes over and beyond all expectations. And that's that kind of love that's working in your heart and my heart this morning. We love each other because he loved us.

And that speaks loudly to the world in which we live. Because he said, they will know you are my disciples because you love each other. I'd like for us this morning first to turn to Hebrews chapter 11.

Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 8. I think it goes without saying that most of us that read the scriptures and take very seriously what learned from scripture that to be a good witness for God in this world it will cost

you something. And sometimes you can go through scripture and you can pick out characters that are found in the Word of God. And their faith in God was very costly to them.

It cost them something. I think Abraham and Sarah. Abraham and Sarah.

They are two believers that it was very costly, their faith in God. Reading from verse 8 of Hebrews chapter 11. By faith Abraham when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance obeyed.

And he went out not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country. Dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob.

The heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for a city which had foundation to builder and maker is God. Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed and was delivered of a child when she was past age.

Because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one and him as good as dead. So many as the stars of the sky in multitude and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable.

These all died in faith not having received the promises but having seen them afar off. And were persuaded of them and embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country which whose founder and maker is God.

But truly if they had been mindful of that country from which they came out they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country that is in heavenly. Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God for he has prepared for them a city.

By faith Abraham when he was tried offered up Isaac and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. Of whom it was said that in Isaac shall thy seed be called. Accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead.

For whence also he received him in a figure. And now if you will turn back to Genesis chapter 22 and we'll read the account regarding the man of faith. What it meant to him.

What it meant to Sarah. Those that had trusted God. Those that their faith was in God.

They desired to obey. They desired to be a faithful witness and indeed it was costly. When you get to this 22nd chapter of Genesis.

If you've read the early chapters. You're aware that the preparation that was necessary for bringing Abraham to this point in his life. Was one that was ordered of God step by step.

We have the account of him being called out of his country. From among his kindred into a country he'd never been to before. There were a lot of callings in his life.

He was called. God directed him to do something and he did it. When you come to the 22nd chapter.

There's a call and a direction given. That indeed you draw back from even thinking about having to fulfill that kind of call from God for your own life. Sometimes it's hard when we know what God would have us to do and yet we draw back.

The case of Abraham and Sarah. I think just a few weeks ago we were talking about Saul. How he tried to improve on what God had directed to be done.

And that's a sad commentary on our lives as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. To even think that we can improve on what God has directed us to do. But some like to use Sarah and say well she's the one that kind of orchestrated this whole thing.

I think Abraham was in charge. I believe Abraham was the head of that household. And I do believe that he is the one that under her direction of course.

They decided that being late in years and we're told that these are two senior citizens. Ordinarily people that get to that age do not bear children. They do not begin to start a family.

But in this case Sarah decides that time is passing by and we need to do something about this matter of providing for you and I am. God has promised your seed would be innumerable like the sand on the seashore. Stars in heaven.

We've got to do something about this. Sometimes we get a little anxious about the fulfillment of the Lord and we run ahead and do things that perhaps we shouldn't do. In this case they made a mistake and it was costly.

But they recovered and God intervened and here we have an account of what happened after there was perfect obedience to the will of God. They indeed have a son. He is an old man.

He is almost 100 years old. He has a young son. At this point in time his son Isaac is no longer a little boy.

He is a young man. What we are about to read and what we are about to find out about sometimes what God plans and purposes in our lives, it just does not appeal to us. We could rationalize away everything that indeed is a part of what God has planned.

It doesn't seem to make sense. Well, it's prophetic. That's one thing about it that we have to acquaint ourselves with.

But it is prophetic in that it is a picture to us of something that one day God would do in providing for the likes of you and me in this enlightened day, something by sovereign grace and love that is hard to comprehend. Sometimes you have to pinch yourself a little. You have to kind of jolt yourself to the realization I am a child of God.

How can a man become a child of God? By faith in God. By doing things God's way. And in this instance there is a provision made.

And those of us that already know the end of the story know that one day there came down from heaven above a Savior for mankind. That Savior is our Lord Jesus Christ. And we, as we read this account and as we look at it and as we think about it, we are aware that it is a picture for us of something that would be yet future, but not all was fulfilled according to that divine plan that you and I have become a part of and which we rejoice in this morning.

Our sins are forgiven. A perfect sacrifice has been provided for our sins. It is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

But this helps us. This encourages our heart to know that there was someone even in that day and time that in faith would reach out and embrace and trust God and believe that he was doing what was right and what was for his glory and honor. If he directs it, it is right.

If he directs it, it is right. And we believe that he is right and we accept it. Genesis 22, beginning at verse 1, says this, Came to pass after these things, the things that we just talked about, that God did tempt or test Abraham and said unto him, Abraham.

And he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac. This is the heir.

This is where the promised blessing is to be found. Whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him therefore a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. This seems to be completely out of order with what we are expecting and what our expectations were regarding the promised heir.

But Abraham rose up 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 afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship and come again to you.

And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and he laid it upon Isaac his son, took the fire in his hand and a 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 the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering. So they went both of them together, and they came to the place which God had told him of, and Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, laid him on the altar upon the wood, and Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham.

And he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him. For now I know that thou, fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns.

And Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-Jireh, as it is said to this day in the Mount of the Lord. It shall be seen.

And shall we just bow again in a word of prayer? Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for the privilege of assembly this morning. We thank thee that we have the word of God in hand, and we have the Spirit of God who indwells us and empowers us and gives us the enlightenment we need to take in and to understand, and he empowers us to practice what we shall read and learn from what we have read. Bless everyone present in this room, and grant, we pray thee, that we shall leave here rejoicing in our souls that we are members of your family, and we are those that are counted among those who put faith and trust in

you and the beloved, only begotten Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

In his name we pray, amen. Well, you know, as we open this section here that enlightens us to the actual account of Abraham and his offering of Isaac, it begins with it came to pass that God did set in order what he all the while knew that he would do regarding Isaac. It says that he tempted Abraham.

The word of God says that God tempts no man. God never seeks to lure an individual believer in our Savior into a position of disobedience to the word of God. That never happens.

There is something here that looks rather mysterious, and it is, because God has directed something that at the outset it doesn't appear to be something that you would think God would do. Well, in this case, he hasn't done anything yet. It's a test of faith.

It's a test to find out just what we will do. And in this case, you've heard the story. Abraham came through it with flying colors.

He's one of the faithful. So he was tested, and he proved that he was everything that God expected of him. So this could be a glorious opportunity for him to prove his faith, which he did.

It's a real trial, and there's a tremendous victory here. You want to stand up and shout. You know, if you were looking at this in a movie and you see Abraham standing there, this old man with a knife in his hand, and he's fixing to slay his own son.

And an angel appears, and you say, thank God. The story is going to take a different turn. And it did.

And we see the unraveling of a divine plan and purpose, and perhaps we were a little surprised at the way that it ended. But the Word of God reminds us that God honors those that honor him. And this man, by his faith, was doing what was honoring to the Lord.

And, indeed, his would be a choice blessing because of his faithfulness in carrying out the plans and purposes of God. Someone said this, great privileges involve great trial. You know, those of you that have prepared yourself for a role in life, something that you long to do, perhaps from your childhood.

I knew a friend of mine, he always wanted to be a fireman. As long as I can remember, he wanted to be a fireman. He hung around the firehouse, knew all of the firemen.

When he finally got old enough, they even would let him go along on the fire trucks and things like that. That seemed to be his life ambition, to be a fireman. And he did.

After he graduated from high school, that was the first job he applied for, and not long after that he was accepted, and he became a fireman. It is wonderful to have a goal in life and to decide that you are willing to pay the price, whatever is asked of you, you do it. I wouldn't want to be a doctor.

Thank God for doctors. But my, those fellows, what they go through. To finally one day say, I have finally arrived, now I can, listen to this, practice medicine.

Practice medicine. After all these years, after all this effort, and he is still practicing. Well, we are all kind of practicing, aren't we? We haven't arrived yet.

But indeed, when you do have tremendous privileges set before you to achieve greatness, there will be trial and testing placed in your way. And I think we have no question about Abraham passing with flying colors. I know I, you project yourself in this picture and you think about how you would have reacted after you've heard those words.

Take your son. In this instance, your only son. Well, he had another son, Ishmael.

This is the one I want right here. Isaac. He is the son of promise.

You and Sarah instigated that situation that produced Ishmael. This is Isaac. This is your son.

It doesn't seem that Abraham even appeared surprised by what God had asked him to do. There's no indication of that. A man rises up early in the morning, goes about the business of doing exactly what God asked him to do.

Listen, that's blind faith. Blind faith? He's just doing what God asked him to do. But he's doing it.

Do you think he told Sarah what he's going to do? I would have wondered. Sarah, I'm on a mission. God has instructed me to do something with our only son, Isaac.

I don't believe he'd have got out of the yard. She'd have tackled him for sure. It just seems that way to me.

His obedience was something that, to me, is so challenging. It was speedy. Unhesitatingly, it appears to me.

And complete. He had one desire and heart, and that was to do the mind and the will of God. Got up early in the morning, took care of the business at hand.

Everything was made available for a sacrifice, and he knew that that sacrifice would be Isaac, his son. Seems like three days would be a long time. How would you like to have that on your mind? For three long days.

You ever spent a sleepless night just because something was going to happen the next day? I don't know if Abraham could, when they camped at night, if he could sleep or not. Don't know. You only project how you feel into this picture, and you say, I doubt if I could sleep.

The other thing was, there's no indication that those that were traveling with him knew that anything like this was going to happen. They had no idea what his mission was. So he's in it all alone.

Not even Isaac knows what's going to happen. One man, a man of faith, that man Abraham, it wasn't something that was done in a hurry. He had plenty of time to think about it.

But on that third day, the place that he was going to offer the sacrifice, it came into view. He's a rather calm individual, isn't he? I mean, he's standing strong. I don't know, but if you are able to project yourself into this picture the way I have at time, I don't believe I could be that calm.

And I wouldn't be surprised if I hadn't already shared with one of those fellows that were along. I'm going to take you into my confidence. But I'm on a mission, hard.

I want you to pray for me. But Abraham took all the things that he had prepared for a sacrifice, and that included a knife. And that knife is to be used for a specific purpose.

And that knife is to be used to end the life of his son. Now, now, Isaac must have had some thoughts about, you know, I'm getting a little concerned here. I've gone along quietly.

I've had some thoughts. But, you know, we've gotten real close to where I believe that there will be the offering of a sacrifice. And I haven't seen any sacrifice yet.

Little does he know he is a sacrifice. He is a sacrifice. I don't think that ever crossed his mind.

But he does say, Father, my father. And Abraham said, I'm here, son. He said, I see the fire.

And I see the wood. Where is the lamb for this sacrifice? Where is it? That's a touching question, isn't it? How are you going to tell your own son? Is he going to open up now and say, son, you are the sacrifice? You are the sacrifice. He still keeps all within his own heart.

Everything is between him and his God. And he wasn't going to let his feelings and his emotions get carried away with this and become the master of his faith. My faith in God is steadfast.

What he asked me to do, I must do. Come what may. So he says, my son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.

Still doesn't tell him. Isaac is really being put to the test, too. Little does he know.

But these are prophetic words. You and I read this, and we know what he's talking about. And as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, I know what he's talking about.

God will. He must. He must provide a sacrifice.

There is no animal that walks the face of the earth that can fulfill that place of the sacrifice for our sin. There's only one. It's the Lamb of God that can take away the sin of the world.

You know, John the Baptist, when he saw the Lord Jesus one day, behold, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. The world didn't know that. Prophetically, it's already been announced.

God will provide for himself a sacrifice. Praise God. Oh, beloved, thank God this morning.

God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. God has provided for himself a sacrifice, a lamb. It's got to take place.

You might say, well, stop this story here. Let's get on with it. Let the film roll.

Abraham took the knife. He means business. He's a man of faith.

You say, I couldn't do that. Neither could I. I don't believe, I don't think I could get drunk enough or have enough dope in me or anything else that I can think of that would make me take a knife and plunge it into my son. Just something about it that you just, your whole being rebels from even having to think to do that.

Well, that's what God did for us. And that's what Abraham is fixing to do. I'm kind of looking forward to this myself.

Abraham! Abraham! And when Abraham responded and said, here I am. Here am I. I'm here. You might have said, I don't like where I am.

I don't like what I'm fixing to do, but I'm going to do it. But that voice from heaven, that angel that had arrived on the scene said, don't lay your hand on your son. Don't do any harm to him.

You've passed the test with flying colors. You know, I wish I could say that about my life, that every time God had put a trial in front of me, a test of any kind, that I passed it, I would have to sadly say, I failed a lot of times. You know, just like John, he finally made an excuse this morning.

He wiggled out of that. See, he didn't bring himself to take the full responsibility for what he had said and done. That's us.

That's the way we are. But this man meant business. And I'm so thankful that God's not asking you and me today to take and offer but one sacrifice for sin and to accept but one sacrifice for sin.

And it's a man that died on the cross, the Lord Jesus Christ. And he did it in fulfillment of God's plan and purpose. And he could say prophetically, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No man will ever come to the Father but by me. He counted it all joy that he could fulfill the plan and purposes of God. He did the will of God.

You see, God was here all the time. God is a witness to all that we do in response to what he asked us to do in the Word. And this life that we live down here is filled with so many things that put us to the test as far as our Christian character is concerned.

Our faith. Are we really of the faithful? That's an honor roll of faith there. Abraham's right in there.

He and Sarah both. God will provide. He has provided the Savior.

And we can tell the whole world. Jesus paid it all, all to him we owe. Sin had left a terrible stain.

He washed it white as snow. Well, out of all of this, Abraham has something in the way of a commendation. The angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and he said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing.

Has not withheld thy son, thine only son. You were willing to convince God that you really meant business and you would carry out his will perfectly. That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is upon the seashore.

And thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. You know, this was all by covenant relationship. God had promised that in Abraham nations would be blessed.

He had also been told that those that curse you, I will curse. Those that bless you, I will bless. All of this is a part of a divine plan that God wanted to be carried out.

So Abraham returned unto his young men. Probably didn't even know a thing had happened. It's confined to some people of faith.

This is not about people that accompanied him. This is about a man and his son. This is about a man of faith, a man that God put his hand upon and tested.

And he's before us this morning, and it's a strong reminder to each one of us that indeed doing the will of God is all important. And every time I think about that, I think about the Lord Jesus. I sat around the Lord's

Supper this morning, and as I was meditating upon that, I thought about what he said.

I read Luke 22 there. He's about to drink of that cup, that cup that is filled with bitterness, that cup that is filled with the wrath and the judgment of God against poor sinners. And he's willing to drink of that cup.

He's willing to take my place, your place. God laid on him the iniquity of us all. You know what he said in view of that? Is his holy soul shrank back from all of that? He said, but thy will be done.

It may not be pleasant. That's what we're sometimes called upon to do. We always think of ourselves as being heroic in the way we handle things, but sometimes we're a flop.

We don't really fulfill the will of God. We compromise, but there's no compromise here, and it's a perfect picture to us of how we can be rewarded for our faith. And our Lord Jesus Christ has been rewarded.

He's the King of kings and Lord of lords. At the very mention of his name, every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that he's Lord, he's God, and he came down to this place, and he died under the penalty of our sins, and he saved our souls. And I say, thank you, Lord.

Thank you, Lord, for being faithful. Thank you for dying for my sins, for the sin of the whole world. This is something that I read, and it sounded just in line with what we sought to say this morning.

My God and Father, while I stray far from my home in life's rough way, oh, teach me from my heart to say, thy will be done, thy will be done, Lord. If thou shouldst call me to resign what most I prize, it never was mine. I only yield thee what is thine.

Thy will be done. We've been bought with a price. It's the precious shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We're not our own. We were purchased with a price. We belong to him.

Thy will be done. Our Heavenly Father, we give thee our thanks and praise today for bringing us together, rejoicing in our souls that we know our sins are forgiven. You've provided a Savior for us, and we thank thee and praise thee and worship thee for it, and help us, Lord.

Help us to be faithful. Help us, we pray thee, to honor thee. Just as our blessed Lord did.

And can we each say in our own hearts this morning, oh, blessed Lord, thy will be done. We ask all of this in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

And John has the hymn. Number 355. I'm going to ask you to stand as we sing the first and the last stanzas of this hymn.

As Bob was speaking this morning, I was thinking of something that we were talking about yesterday morning, how often men of God, like Abraham, is exemplified by his faith. And yet there were many times that he failed. But some of the times when he really showed what he was made of, as far as God was concerned, were times when we would think that that was a good part of his life.

Sometimes we go ahead and fail most miserably when things are going well for us. It's not when we're undergoing pain, when we're undergoing adversity, where we draw close to God. I mean, our first thought is pray for me.

I'm sick. Pray for me. I'm facing an operation.

Pray for me. I'm going through a hard time. But what about when everything seems to be going fine? Do we depend on God the same way? This song says, simply trusting every day, trusting through the stormy way, even when my faith is small, trusting Jesus.

That is all. Let's stand and sing the first and last stanzas, number 355.

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