**Origins (pt.2) - wk 13 – The Final Exam**

**The LORD called an unlikely wanderer – leave everything and follow me, and I will make you a great nation that will bless the world!**

**Fast-forward 25 years. Abe has gone through a series of trials, stumbles, and tests, and the promised son is born - Isaac.**

**Last time - The 25-year promise was born - Genesis 21:1-20, Isaac arrives.**

**Today is Abraham’s final exam – one of the 10 tests of Abraham. The biggest one of all. But first, a quick story and test.**

**Genesis 21:22 At that time Abimelek and Phicol the commander of his forces (local tribe leader and his commander) said to Abraham, “God is with you in everything you do. (a pagan could see the hand of God on Abe) 23 Now swear to me here before God that you will not deal falsely with me or my children or my descendants. Show to me and the country where you now reside as a foreigner the same kindness I have shown to you.” 24 Abraham said, “I swear it.”**

**25 Then Abraham complained to Abimelek about a well of water that Abimelek’s servants had seized. (guarding it and allowing people to use it) 26 But Abimelek said, “I don’t know who has done this. You did not tell me, and I heard about it only today.” 27 So Abraham brought sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelek, and the two men made a treaty.**

**28 Abraham set apart seven ewe lambs from the flock, 29 and Abimelek asked Abraham, “What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs you have set apart by themselves?” 30 He replied, “Accept these seven lambs from my hand as a witness that I dug this well.” (the well seized was Abes own well) 31 So that place was called Beersheba, (well of the seven oaths) because the two men swore an oath there. (That location became a reoccurring location and city mentioned often in both OT.)**

**32 After the treaty had been made at Beersheba, Abimelek and Phicol the commander of his forces returned to the land of the Philistines. 33 Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there he called on the name of the LORD, the Eternal God. 34 And Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines for a long time.**

**He lives peacefully among the people in the region. Serving and trusting God – and others knew it and saw the favor of God on his life – as Isaac grew.**

**This story highlights the Abe’s faith in God, God’s provision, the peaceful passage of time and working with others, and a reminder of a not yet promise (his own land).**

**The most important verse in this passage is V.22 “…Abraham, “God is with you in everything you do. The greatest blessing of all – knowing this.**

**May those around us, due to our faithful walk with God, see God’s favor and faithfulness in our life.**

**Ten Tests of Abbraham.**

**1. God tells him to leave homeland to be a stranger in the land of Canaan. PASS.**

**2. A famine strikes the land. He leaves – FAIL.**

**3. The Egyptians seize his wife. He lies - FAIL.**

**4. Abe faces incredible odds in the battle of the four and five kings. PASS.**

**5. He marries Hagar in an attempt to have a son. FAIL.**

**6. God tells him to circumcise himself and family. PASS.**

**7. The king of Gerar captures Sarah. He lies. FAIL.**

**8. God tells him to send Hagar and Ishmael away. PASS.**

**9. Abe responds with humility and grace in response to his well. PASS.**

**10. God tells him to sacrifice his dear son Isaac. The hardest one of all.**

**God’s tests have basically two purposes: (Is 1:25, 48:10, Job 23:10, Mal 3:3, Jer 9:7, Ps 66:10, Pr 17:3, Ps 12:6, Zec 13:9, 1 Pet 1:7, Rom 8:18. Jam 1:3)**

1. **To refine - to do something to us - to burn away selfishness and sin through trials.**
2. **To reveal - to discover something about us - to open our eyes to our weaknesses and character flaws.**

**Testing is a certainty and necessary to evaluate ones mind. This is God growing us mature in him.**

**Now the final exam - Genesis 22:1 Sometime later (Isaac was a teen – some suggest 20-30s) God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. (No mention of conversation with Abe in years. But he faithfully served the LORD – Abe was ready to obey– Here I am!) 2 Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. (the 9th test – Abe sent Ishmael away as if he was dead – Abe went on to have more sons – but as far as God’s covenant – Abe only had one) Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.”**

**V2 is the first mention of the word LOVE (aheb) in the Bible. The love of a father to his son. Sacrifice him as a burnt offering. Meaning, slay him and completely burn him to ashes.**

**The Two Big Problems: 1) How could God ask for such a thing?**

**2) How could Abraham do such a thing?**

**Say what? That’s crazy. That’s criminal. But Abe had grown so close to God in 40 yrs and immediately responded in faith. No arguing, no debate – heartbroken, he obeyed in full trust.**

**Priests of the Canaan claimed the god’s occasionally demanded human sacrifice. Abe might have wondered if YHVH was like that. He soon learns that the LORD God is nothing like those false gods.**

**3 Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5 He said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.” (speaking by faith – he was planning on taking his life, but confident Isaac was coming back)**

**First use of the word Worship in the Bible. Worship (to bow before the LORD) is not always easy or joyful.**

**\*\* Worship without submission is empty.**

**We bring a “sacrifice of praise” (He 13:15, Ro 12:1).**

**God does not seek our songs he seeks our life in submission.**

**6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. (further demonstrating Abe’s commitment to do this) As the two of them went on together, 7 Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, “Father?” “Yes, my son?” Abraham replied. “The fire and wood are here,” Isaac said, “but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” 8 Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together.**

**Walk around room with a young person – what was happening in his mind and emotions. If Abe was ever to fight w/ God this is it He didn’t know how but he trusted God was good and will do it.**

**9 When they reached the place God had told him about, (a proper noun - the place. The mt. Morah, later the temple mount in Jerusalem. In Islam - Dome of the rock – the place Abe / Isaac.) Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. (Get this image – binding him, tears, neck is slit in sacrifices – quick death – 20 seconds)**

**11 But the Angel of the LORD (Christophany) called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. 12 “Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. (I do not require child sacrifice) “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.”**

**God knows everything! Why does it say that? A revealing to Abe of what God already knew. Now you know – that I know - you absolutely trust me. Revealing what was hidden to Abe.**

**13 Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram (male lamb) caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. (Yehovah Yireh = mount provision – indeed the LORD provided a lamb. Lit. the LORD did it!) And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.”**

**The word provide is where the word providence comes from. For God sovereignly takes care / provides for his people and plan.**

**15 The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time 16 and said, “I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely (1) bless you and (2) make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. (his descendants and the redeemed) Your descendants will (3) take possession of the cities of their enemies, (the nation of Israel) 18 and (4) through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, (The Messiah) because you have obeyed me.”**

**19 Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.**

**Ten Tests of Abbraham. His final Exam! 10. God tells him to sacrifice his dear son Isaac. The hardest one of all. PASS.**

**6 out of ten. (60% - barley passed)**

**The Two Big Problems:**

**1) How could God ask for such a thing? God knew the outcome!**

**2) How could Abraham do such a thing? Abe trusted God’s outcome.**

**Abe trusted God!! Hebrews 11:17 By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, 18 even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." 19 Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.**

**There was never before a resurrection. Abe had nothing to go on, but God’s goodness and power. God can do anything He wills!**

**This story tells us not only – what happened and what will happen – but also what God wanted from Abraham and what God wants from us**

**What God Wanted Then – And Still Wants Now: FAITH**

**Faith Substitutes:**

* **Faith is not - Intellectual Approval**

**I think it is possible that God is there and that Jesus rose again.**

**Do demons believe in Jesus? Yes. Do you expect to see them in heaven? James 2:19 - You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that - and shudder.**

* **Faith is not - Just believing**

**Do you believe in Jesus, rose again, the son of God? Means little**

**For many Jesus is like UFO’s and bigfoot - do you believe in them? Yes. Does it affect your life, not really - I just believe it.**

* **Faith is not - Positive Thinking / or a good attitude**

**Rangers down by two – just gotta have faith - Cowboys, down by 20 – God we need a miracle!**

**Don’t get me wrong, positive thinking is better than negative thinking and does affect your day, game, & outlook.**

**But positive thinking is not faith.**

* **Faith is not - Risky Living**

**Just go out and so something stupid and expect God to rescue you.**

**Proverbs 22:3 - A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it. (Don’t assume wild ideas or a big challenge is God)**

**Abe was not living risky – he was walking in Faith.**

**What God’s looking for - What is Faith?**

**1. Faith trusts God enough - to do what He says**

**Trusting God’s word: even when it seems strange, unreasonable, hard to do, scary, uneasy, old fashioned, or uncomfortable you trust God’s word. It’s what God wanted then and still does now.**

**Imagine Abe and God talking – Got it God, I believe it - but never moves on it – it is faith that moves us to action.**

**James 2:18 But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19 You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! 20 Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works…**

**Anything short of doing what he says to do – is costume jewelry faith (fake). We have a whole culture that lives like that.**

**No matter who you are or background, God will always be saying - do you trust me enough to do what I say?**

**2. Faith trusts God enough - to let go of what you value the most**

**Abraham’s test is our test : Many say, “God is important to me.” But truth is God doesn’t want to be “important”; he wants to be most important (More than job, school, boyfriend, a spouse, even children).**

**It is the test of the First Command and greatest commandment.**

**There is a mountain of absolute surrender for us all to climb!**

**I hear the words of Jesus, (Mt. 10:37) Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me - Abe trusted God enough to let go of his most important relationship.**

**Just as Abraham was tested you will be tested – What do you treasure the most… will you let it go? God will either bring it back to life, or bring something better**

**\*\* Abe had to learn to trust the promiser more than the promise itself.**

**The power and the authority of the promise is not found in the promise itself but in the one who makes the promise. That is why the promise is so reliable and trustworthy.**

**We don’t just have faith – we have faith in the LORD God.**

**Our Test:**

* **Can you trust God enough to embrace what you can’t see?**
* **Can you trust God enough to give up control of what you cherish?**
* **Can you trust God enough to release control of that situation?**
* **Can you trust God enough to let go of what you value the most?**

**Abraham was given a sighting - Jesus showed up – as a Christophany and as a type – a glimpse – a sighting of the cross and resurrection.**

**Jesus responding to accusers - John 8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."**

**God was giving us through Abraham a glimpse of the savior!**

**Sightings of Jesus: The Top 12**

**Isaac Jesus**

**The long awaited promised son The long awaited promise Son**

**A miraculous conception A miraculous conception.**

**The beloved only son of a father The beloved only son of the Father**

**Carried his sacrificial wood Carried his sacrificial wooden cross**

**Bound by hands and feet Bound to the cross by hands and feet**

**Sacrificed by father’s hands Sacrificed by the Father’s hands**

**Sacrificed in Moriah Sacrificed in Jerusalem**

**Willingly complied Willingly complied**

**A lamb was provided as sacrifice The lamb is provided as the sacrifice**

**Figurative Resurrected 3rd day Resurrection on the 3rd day**

**(Isaac was dead to Abe on**

**the third day and resurrected!)**

**God provided at that place God provided Jesus at that place**

**The son Isaac “disappears” The disappearance of Jesus until he until he is united with his bride is united with his bride**

**(Isaac will not appear again**

**until Genesis 24:62, when he**

**meets Rebekkah.)**

**God wants to meet you on the mountain – Just as Abraham was called to follow – Jesus calls us to follow Him. Will you let go, will you give up control, will you follow, will you walk with Him, will you trust?**

**At the mountain / at the altar (the cross) we must take we cherish the most - and lay before the LORD.**