Jehovah Jireh-The God Who Provides

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After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you." 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. 5 Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you." 6 Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. 7 Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" 8 Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together. 9 When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. 11 But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 12 He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." 13 And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called that place "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided." (Genesis 22:1-14)

1. Is God Good All the Time?

In church, we often say "**God is good**." The response is "**all the time**." **Is God really good all the time?** What does it mean to be good all the time? Many Christians believe that God is good when only good things happen in their lives. People want health, wealth, safety, and a happy family. However, we often experience difficult times in our lives. We might wonder what God is doing in these challenging times and where God is?

We often find ourselves in a difficult situation just like Abraham in our passage today.

2. God Asks Abraham for a Sacrifice

In Genesis chapter 22, God asked Abraham to take his son Isaac and sacrifice him on Mount Moriah as a burnt offering. How can God ask Abraham to sacrifice his son? For us, it seems unthinkable that God would ask something like this of Abraham. I heard that a woman stopped attending church after she read this story. She was upset and asked, how could a God ask His people to do something like this?

How did Abraham respond to God's command? Verse 3 says, "***Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac***." Abraham did not have an **argument or complaint** against God's command. He gave his instant and unquestioning obedience.

Who was Isaac? In verse 2, God said to Abraham, "***Take your son, your only son, whom you love***." Although Ismael was Abraham's first son, Abraham sent Ismael and his mother Hagar away. Abraham never saw Ismael again. Isaac was the only son who was born according to God's promise. Isaac was not an ordinary child. He was a miracle baby. He was born according to God's promise. So Isaac was so precious to Abraham. He loved Isaac more than anybody else. Abraham would enjoy his son Isaac every moment. God promised that through Isaac all people on earth would be blessed. If Isaac was killed, all of God's promise could not be fulfilled. Without Isaac, there would be a big trouble with God's plan. God was aware of this very well. Yet God asked Abraham to sacrifice not only his son Isaac but also God's promise about Abraham's future generations. God was asking Abraham to sacrifice everything he had.

According to Genesis chapter 18, Abraham was a very righteous and a man of high morals. When he learned about the destruction plan of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham debated with God. He said that it was not fair to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. But for some reason, Abraham did not argue with the Lord about the sacrifice of his son. Abraham traveled roughly 50 miles for three days to Mount Moriah to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering.

When Abraham saw the place in the region of Moriah, he had the two servants that traveled with them stay behind and took only Isaac. Abraham said to his servants. *"**Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you**"* (verse 5). Did Abraham really believe that he would come back with Isaac? When

he was climbing toward the top of Mount Moriah, Isaac asked Abraham, "***Father, where is the lamb for a burnt offering***?" (verse 7) Abraham answered, "***God himself will provide***" (verse 8). Did Abraham believe that God would provide the lamb for a burnt offering? Based on what we guess, the answer would be yes.

3. God's Intervention

On Mount Moriah, Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. Abraham bound Isaac and laid him on the altar. Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son Isaac. At that moment, the angel of the Lord stopped Abraham calling his name twice, "**Abraham, Abraham**." The repetition of the name of Abraham shows urgency. Abraham says, "**here I am**." The angel says, "***do not lay a hand on the boy. 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***" (verse 12). After the angel stopped Abraham to slay his son Isaac, the angel said that God was pleased with Abraham that he fully trusted in the Lord obeying his command.

Abraham looked up and, in a thicket, saw a ram caught by its horns. He took the ram and sacrificed it instead of his son Isaac as a burnt offering. As Abraham said to his son Isaac, the Lord prepared a ram for a burnt offering. This was a happy ending to the scary story of Abraham and Isaac.

4. Why Did God Test Abraham?

Why would God command Abraham to sacrifice his son and stop him before Abraham would kill Isaac? Some say that it is because God knew that Abraham would pass the test. And God wanted Isaac and his future generations to learn a lesson from Abraham. Abraham might lose everything he had. Yet he trusted in the Lord and was obedient to God. And Abraham did not lose hope in the time of crisis.

Another important lesson is that God was faithful to his promises. God revealed Abraham, Isaac and the Israelites that God's promises would be fulfilled no matter what.

Do we know how much this story made a big difference in the lives of the Israelites? The book of Genesis likely completed and came into the form that we have today during the exile. That was the time when the Jewish people had seen the Jerusalem Temple destroyed. They had seen the royal family slaughtered. They were taken into Babylon in chain. There was no more Israel in the world. They had seen their future wiped out. In

that situation they had to ask themselves; can we and should we still trust in the Lord? The answer was “yes, we can and yes, we should.”
They turned to the story of Abraham and Isaac and rebuilt their faith.

5. Conclusion

The Exodus and the Ten Commandments might be considered one of the most important stories in the Old Testament for the Jews. However, in preparing for today’s message, I learned how important the story of Isaac was for the people of Israel. Throughout the history, the Israelites experienced so many failures and destructions. Many times, they felt they could not find hope for the future. Quite often it didn’t look like God’s promises would be fulfilled. Yet the story of Abraham and Isaac reminded them that God’s promises would be fulfilled no matter what.

6. Application

Abraham named the place of the sacrifice, Jehovah Jireh, (“*Yahweh Yireh*” in Hebrew) which means “God provides.” The place is a reminder of God’s grace to the Jews and to all of us.

As Abraham faced the loss of everything, sooner or later we would face the situation when we feel the loss of everything. In that moment, will we trust in the Lord that God would provide?

I know a woman whose husband died of cancer. A few month later, her son died from a car accident. She kept asking, “why?” What do we wish God to provide? The biggest concern for the earliest Christians was death. Paul says to Corinthians, “***Death has been swallowed up in victory.” But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ***. (1 Corinthians 15:56-57). We praise the Lord who provides us with everything we need. We give thanks to God for the gift of resurrection and eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ.

As Paul says to the Corinthians, this is what I would like to say to you this morning. “***Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain***” (1 Corinthians 15:58). Amen.