

Faith Being Tested: Abraham

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[0:00] Genesis chapter 22, we're going to read the first 18 verses, and then we will turn over to Hebrews chapter 11 to read the New Testament commentary on this Old Testament passage.

Come, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah.

Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about. Early the next morning, Abraham got up and saddled 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. On the third day, Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.

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. Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife.

[1:22] As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father, Abraham, Father? Yes, my son, Abraham replied. The fire and the wood are here, Isaac said, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?

Abraham answered, God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son. And the two of them went on together. When they reached the place God had told him about, 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.

Then he reached out his hand, and he took the knife to slay his son.

But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, Abraham, Abraham. Here I am, he replied. Do not lay a hand on the boy, he said. 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.

Abraham looked up, and there in the thicket he saw a ram caught by its thorns, by its horns.

[2:31] He went over, and he took the ram, and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place, the Lord will provide.

And to this day it is said, on the mountain of the Lord, it will be provided. The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time, and said, I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky, and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring, all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.

And please turn over to Hebrews chapter 11. Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 17. We read 17 through 19.

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, even though God had said to him, it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.

[3:53] Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death. from death.

Well, we're doing some mountain climbing this morning on Mount Moriah 4,000 years ago, in what is present-day Jerusalem. And suddenly we come upon a shocking scene.

There's an altar made out of stones. And there's wood piled on the altar, and beside it is fire ready to set to the wood.

A familiar enough scene in itself. Indeed, sacrifices were often made in this fashion. The life of it taken, and then it was burned on the wood to ashes.

But the horrifying thing here is that it's not a lamb on top of the wood, but a living boy. And standing over him is an old man with a knife in his hand, ready to slay the boy and burn him to ashes.

[5:06] What are we witnessing here? A murder? Some satanic, ritualistic cult? No, what we're witnessing is faith being tested.

The living and true God is testing the faith of his servant Abraham. And that's clear from both the account in Genesis 22 and Hebrews 11, that God was testing Abraham.

Would Abraham trust him enough to obey him implicitly, even when it made no sense to him? Now, when God comes testing, it's not that God doesn't know.

Indeed, the very motives of our heart are known to God. Nothing in all creation is hidden from his sight. No, when he comes to test us, it is to show us and to show others what is in us and to strengthen our faith.

You see, believers, God grows our faith by testing it. By testing it. By putting us into circumstances where faith is required.

[6:22] It's absolutely necessary. Where it's called into exercise. So for Abraham, the man of faith, tests of faith came quite often.

That's what made him the man of faith that he was. That's why he's in Hebrews 11, that hall of fame for those who have faith.

So the test came to him to leave home, not knowing where he was going. And by faith, he obeyed and went, even though he didn't know where he was going.

He put his hand into God's and let God lead him whithersoever he wanted. And just when he passes that test of faith and arrives in the promised land, he meets the next test of faith, an even bigger one, because he finds that the promised land is occupied and they're not moving over for him.

And so what does he do? He must live the whole of his life as a stranger in a foreign land, in tents, even in the promised land, the very land that he was told would be his.

[7:33] Another test of faith, you see. And again, after faith's test of waiting patiently for 25 years to see God's promise of offspring fulfilled.

At last, Isaac, the son of promise, is born. And as he grew, Abraham's love for him grew. And now he is told to sacrifice him, the son of promise.

Test follows test for Abraham. And indeed for all of Abraham's children by faith. Perhaps you have been watching an exciting television series and it's got conflict and resolution.

It's full of suspense and you're biting your nails and you're holding your breath. And at last, the problem is resolved and the bad guys are caught and justice prevails.

But just when you think the drama is over and that you can start breathing again, there's another problem. There's another snag. Something else crops up to be resolved.

[8:43] And so you've got to come back next week to see how it will be resolved. Well, life in the school of faith can be like that. You finally get through one problem and you're sailing again with blue skies and then suddenly out of the blue, you're thrown into the next test of faith.

God is teaching you to walk by faith by often testing your faith. And we don't like that. We like life to be neat and tidy, predictable and manageable.

But God keeps taking us out into the deep water and pushing us out of the boat onto the stormy sea to teach us to swim, to teach us to live by faith.

He puts us in circumstances that make us feel out of our element, in over our heads, overwhelmed, even confused and perplexed.

It's testing our faith. And in our text today, Abraham faces yet another test of his faith. And we're going to see that by faith he passes the test and in doing so, his faith is strengthened, increased, not weakened.

[10:04] Now there are many who admire Abraham's faith. And they say, oh, I'd love to have the faith of Abraham. But they don't want the test of Abraham.

That's kind of like the young man admiring the bulging muscles of men in bodybuilding magazines. Wow, look at that. And then they're invited to go to the gym and work out.

Oh, no, no, no. I don't like exercise, you see. But I sure like to have biceps like that. Well, muscles only develop like that by use, by exercise.

And so it is with faith. Faith must be tested, exercised in order to grow. And God knows exactly best how to do that in Abraham and in you and in me.

Now this wasn't the first time, nor was it the last time, that Abraham's faith would be tested. But I will say that it was by far the severest test he ever faced in his whole life.

[11 : 15] Even in this, we learn something about our God, don't we? As John Owen comments, God often reserves great trials for well-exercised faith.

He doesn't throw the 200-pound barbell on the guy just starting out, but well-exercised faith. That's his kindness to us.

He knows when to bring us our hardest tests of faith. And all those earlier tests were preparing Abraham for this test.

Yet in another sense, we shake our heads and say, how could anything prepare you for this? This, that we've read of this morning. Well, the test came in the form of a command, didn't it?

A command becomes the test. And I must say to you that God's commands are testing your faith. They are. Will you trust him enough to obey them?

[12 : 22] Every command of God is a test of your faith. That issue's always there.

Give to the Lord the first fruit of your income. Oh, but if I gave him the first fruit, I wouldn't know if I'd have enough to stretch to cover all my bills.

That's right. That command will test your faith, won't it? As will every other command. Don't do that. I'm not sure that I could be happy without that.

Well, will you trust that God knows best how to make people holy and happy? You see, the commands of God test our faith. And the harder the command, the greater the need for faith.

Now, what was it about this command that tested Abraham's faith then? It had to be one of the hardest commands that any man has ever received from God. Think of some of the hard commands.

[13 : 24] We've seen them, haven't we? Build an ark. Wow. Wow. Wow. You mean set my plans aside for 120 years? Yep. That's a hard command. Leave your home.

Live your whole life in a tent like a stranger in a foreign land. And if you thought those commands were hard, get this. Sacrifice your one and only son, Isaac, whom you love, as a burnt offering.

I tell you, there are times when I just wonder why that verse is in the Bible. How can it be in the Bible even, we wonder?

Now, what made this command so difficult then to obey? I say everything about it. Everything about it. Think how abhorrent it was to nature to sacrifice another human being.

Abraham knew all about burnt offerings and what was done. But to do that to a human being, when he had been taught that all life is sacred?

[14 : 40] And then there's his love for Isaac. Did any father ever love a son more than Abraham did Isaac? The son of his old age provided much laughter for Abraham, which is his name.

And yet he's called to take a knife in his own hand and to kill his own son that he loved.

And then there was his dear Sarah. I mean, how do you tell her? It was hard enough to tell her that they were leaving. We're leaving home, dear.

Oh, where are we going? Don't know. Just know that God told us to leave home. Now what's he to tell her? Well, dear, the boy and I are going to do some father-son time and then I'm going to sacrifice him and burn him as a slave because God told me.

What did you say, dear? I said, and then I'm going to sacrifice him as a burnt offering because God told me to. How do you ever break that kind of news to your wife?

[15 : 55] From every angle, this was an impossibly hard command to obey. But I want you to notice that the thing emphasized in our text in Hebrews 11 is none of that.

Indeed, we don't even get a whisper of this problem of you have God commanding Abraham to take the life of another. But notice where the emphasis falls in our text.

The thing that made obedience so difficult for Abraham was that the fulfillment of all God's promises were bound up in this son, Isaac. Verse 17 and 18.

He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, his irreplaceable, unique son. Even though God had said to him, it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.

So it's God's own promise that makes God's own command so hard to obey. The promise that Abraham's offspring would be as many as the stars of the heavens and the sand of the seashore.

[17 : 06] The promise that his offspring would inherit the promised land. And then the promise that his offspring would bring blessings to all the nations of the earth.

A promise that contained Messiah in it. And all these promises having to do with his offspring are to be fulfilled in Isaac.

Not in Ishmael, the son through Hagar. Not in any other son, but this son. As God had made it clear, it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.

There was no question about the promise. But then again, there was no question about the command. Sacrifice your one and only son, Isaac, as a burnt offering.

And when you put the two together, the promise of God, the commandment of God, they don't fit. They seem like a contradiction.

[18 : 13] One running against the other. Would not the death of Isaac be the death of the promise? How can this be?

I don't understand. You see, the difficulty factor of this command was right off the charts. Now this was the test then of Abraham's faith.

And like Abraham, our faith too is made to face what we might call the perplexity of God. The fact that there's much about God and His ways that we cannot comprehend.

Much about God and His ways that leave us bewildered, baffled, stunned, confused, confounded, at a loss to make any sense out of it, perplexed.

You know, that's the word the Apostle Paul used. in his life. Remember 2 Corinthians chapter 4 and verse 8. We are hard pressed on every side but not crushed, perplexed but not in despair.

[19 : 29] Paul was perplexed. He was confused. There were things about his life and ministry under God's leading that didn't make sense. He couldn't understand them.

closed doors to the gospel. thorn in his flesh. Satan hindering him? False accusations, persecutions, sidelining imprisonments and shipwrecks when he was on that ship.

Happened three times to him. He spent a night and a day bobbing like a piece of wood on the open sea. Perplexed. How is this supposed to further the gospel?

Things that left him wondering why and what in the world is happening. We are perplexed. Job knew a lot about the perplexity of God as well, didn't he?

No, we don't like perplexity. We don't like walking in the dark. We want to understand everything and I fear that that causes us to try to domesticate God, to tame him, to make him out to be something that we can manage, something that we can handle, someone that we can understand, that we can figure out and then we come to something that he's doing in our lives and we don't have a clue what he's up to.

[20 : 55] Why this? Why that? How can this be? Why did he take him from me so early? Why did he take a righteous man when they are so rare and needed so much?

Why did he leave such a young family fatherless? Why this chronic health problem when I could serve the Lord so much better without it?

Why this nagging depression that won't go away? This troublesome relationship, this change in my job, this lingering problem And there's no answers.

The heavens are as brass. We are as those walking in the dark who have no light. faith bumping into the perplexity of God.

Finding out up close and personal that he is far above us, infinitely above us. His understanding no one can fathom. And if you've walked with God for any length of time, you must confess that there are times that leave you scratching your head with Isaiah and asking, who has understood the mind of the Lord?

[22 : 17] No, because his ways are higher than our ways and his thoughts are higher than our thoughts and more higher than two feet. No, as high as the heavens are above the earth, that's how high they are above our thoughts and our ways.

so much higher that you can never figure them out. He cannot be contained in the puny box of your mind and who would want a God that could be?

An infinite God contained by a finite little mind. No, it is not and it is not to be and it leaves us bewildered, baffled, perplexed.

I wonder if some of you here are meeting the perplexity of God. Children of light walking in the dark. That's exactly where God led his man of faith into a head-on collision with the perplexity of God.

God has promised so much through my son Isaac, yet now he tells me to sacrifice him as a burnt offering. Would that not destroy the promises making the fulfillment impossible?

[23 : 34] What's going on here? And so we see faith being tested. That's our first main point. The last point is faith passing the test.

And that's no small thing when we've seen the test, is it? Faith passing the test, faith obeying the most difficult command. Verse 17 says quite plainly of Hebrews 11, by faith Abraham when God tested him offered Isaac as a sacrifice.

There you have it. Sacrifice your son Isaac as a burnt offering. And the answer of scripture, by faith Abraham when God tested him offered Isaac as a sacrifice.

He obeyed. He triumphed over the test. He did it. He offered Isaac. And someone says, now doesn't the writer to the Hebrews know how the story ended?

That at the last minute God intervened and said, stop Abraham, stop. Don't take his life and provided the ram in his place. Yes, he knows all about that as the rest of Hebrews 11, 17 through 19 shows.

[24 : 47] But here he's showing us how God looked upon this scene. How did God look upon this event? Well, in God's eyes, Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice.

He did obey. How so? Because Abraham's intention was fully to do it. He had made up his mind and he was in the very act of doing it.

So though he didn't quite finish the deed, it was as good as done in God's sight. Indeed, it would have been done had God waited two more seconds. to intervene and stop him.

And so the Lord, because he sees what Abraham was doing and would have done, accepts the willingness for the deed. Is that not incredible?

Abraham sacrificed his own son of promise. is a sacrifice. know how. How in the world could Abraham bring himself to do this?

[25 : 54] The Bible answers in those two words that are the theme song of Hebrews 11, by faith, by faith, by faith. By that wonder-working, active principle of faith.

By faith, Abraham sacrificed Isaac, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. sacrifice. So here again, we meet with faith, enabling a man to obey the hardest commands.

Faith, enabling a man to do the hardest duties. Faith's power to move a man to do what he otherwise never would have done. Which is to say that without faith, Abraham would have stayed home with his son Isaac and with his wife Sarah and never would have gone and sacrificed him.

No, it was by faith that he obeyed. Now let's look at this faith. First of all, we see faith remembering. Faith remembering. His faith was strengthened by past incidences of God's faithfulness to him.

And by now, Abraham had a lifetime of experiences to draw from that showed him that God is able to do all that he had promised, and God is faithful to do all that he had promised.

[27 : 09] Many times before, he had stepped out by faith on God and found God faithful over and over. He had done this. He's 100% of the time he met me with faithfulness.

And believers, you too have a diary of God's past faithfulnesses to you. to draw upon in your trials of faith. It's not the first time you've been tried.

It's not the first time you've been baffled. And you have found God faithful. You didn't know how you were going to make it, but you trusted and cried to God for help, and you made it.

You made it. you found him to be an ever-present help, and you found him good to his promise, and you found his grace was sufficient for you. Jesus, Jesus, how I trust him, how I've proved him or and or.

You've proved him over and over. Now, remember those past incidences of God's faithfulness throughout your lifetime.

[28 : 24] Maybe adding to your diary the experiences of your believing parents and grandparents of the faithfulness of God to them, and then add to that the experiences of Abraham, because you too, believer, are a son of Abraham.

This is your history. This is for you to draw upon God's past faithfulness in your family. And so with Abel and Enoch and Noah and Moses and all these examples of faith, that's why they're recorded here.

This is your diary of past faithfulness of God to the family of God. It's for us to help us in our trials of faith to know what God has done for all who have ever trusted in him, to see how faith in God can move a mighty mountain, to see that faith in God has never once in all human history been disappointed.

God's past faithfulness to his word was a great encouragement no doubt to Abraham for this greatest trial of faith and it ought to be in yours as well. Make use of it. Remember. Faith remembering. So armed with faith, what does Abraham do? Here we see faith obeying.

[29 : 43] he simply obeys at once and leaves the consequences to God. And we don't know whether he slept well that night. That's left for conjecture.

But we do know this, that very early in the next morning he was up and at him packing, arranging, and was off. He was off without any delay.

You know it is when we linger, when we take the command of God and we're sitting in church and some word of God hits us and we know I've got to change and bring my life into line with that command.

It's when we linger and Monday passes and Tuesday and Wednesday and that conviction is gone. No, no, we dare not linger. We must obey at once, up and at once, obey and that's faith, obeying. And immediate obedience of faith pleases God and honors him as worthy of being followed anywhere. But what about all the problems with this difficult command?

[30 : 49] How is God going to fulfill his promises, Abraham, if you sacrifice Isaac? And it's almost as if Isaac or Abraham says, well, that's his problem, not mine.

That's not my problem. Duty is mine. Consequences are God's. It's God's to command. It's mine to obey. And he is quite capable of picking up the pieces of my obedience to him.

So he demonstrated his complete trust in God by obeying the hardest commandment, even though it seemed to cost him the very joy of his life, even when it seemed to fly in the face of God's promise, and we don't even hear him questioning God about these things at all.

So far from shaking Abraham's faith, this test strengthened his faith. Because it drove him to lean entirely upon his God.

His power, his faithfulness, and just to leave it to him to work out the details of why and how and wherefore. he puts his own understanding beneath God's and obeys.

[32 : 10] Don't need to understand how he's going to bring this together. I just need to obey. And that's the kind of obedience that pleases God. By faith, he obeyed.

In those hard commands of God that make great demands of you, are you willing to leave the consequences of your obedience to God? Oh, but if I obeyed this command, it could cost me this. If I obeyed this command of God, it could lead to this and that and the other thing. No, faith just trusts God with these consequences and gives itself to duty, to obey no matter what.

God is more than able to deal with all of that. And as I believe that, faith frees me to obey the command. If I believe God is sovereign enough, strong enough, loving enough, wise enough, faithful enough to deal with the consequences of my obedience, I am freed.

You see. You see the freedom in faith. It frees us to obey the command. Here's a free man. What has freed you, Abraham? By trusting God.

[33 : 21] God is able. God is faithful. I can safely obey. He'll deal with the rest. And he trusted the Lord by faith.

And it's this kind of obedience that proves that our faith is genuine and not the phony faith of many professing Christians. You know, James quotes this very incident in James chapter 2 and he does it to say that obedience of Abraham, that proved that his faith was saving faith.

And not useless faith. That obedience that just casts itself upon God by faith, that shows that his faith was real and because of it, it was credited to him as righteousness.

Read it in James 2 on your own. It seems like in obeying God's command, one had to reject God's promise. It seemed like an either or.

Either I believe the command of, or obey the command of God or believe the promise that I can't do both. Abraham says, why not? He believes both.

[34 : 42] He takes both. He holds on to both. And even in obeying, he refuses to stop believing the promises of God. And here we see faith reasoning. Faith reasoning. Verse 19 says, Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

Now see if you can follow me with the logic of faith. This is the way faith reasons. Point one, God has promised that my offspring through Isaac will be many.

Point two, God has commanded me to sacrifice Isaac even though he doesn't have any offspring. Oh, I get it.

Conclusion. Therefore, God must, that must mean that God will raise him from the dead in order to keep his promise of many offspring through Isaac since dead men don't beget children.

Abraham reasoned. He calculated, he thought, and he came up with the conclusion that God could raise the dead.

[35 : 55] Now that rolls right in one ear and out the other with us, but this is incredible because that had never, ever happened before.

Abraham had never seen, much less heard, of someone raised from the dead. But then, Hebrews 11, 1, faith is certain about what we do not see, isn't it?

He reasoned that God will do something altogether new rather than to let his promise fail. We have a reference to this, I believe, in Genesis 22 and verse 5.

You remember, after the three-day journey with the two servants going along, Abraham then said to the two servants, you stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there.

We will worship and then we will come back to you. We will come back to you. Since it was his plan, his intention, and we saw him faithfully carrying it out to go there with Isaac and sacrifice him, then he must have reasoned that after he had sacrificed him, that God would raise him to life from the ashes in order to keep his promises concerning an offspring.

[37 : 21] So we, the both of us, will be coming back to you. He reasoned that God's able to raise the dead. He figured that this would be no problem for God to raise him from the dead.

Romans 4, 17 says Abraham believed in the God who raises the dead and calls those things which be not as though they were. this is the logic of faith in him. Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or even imagine.

Imagine that. Someone raised from the dead. My God is able. And he would rather do that than to fail on his word. I mean, it's no harder to raise Isaac from dead ashes than to initially raise him from a dead womb of Sarah and a man who was as good as dead.

Me, Abraham. And so by faith, by faith, by faith, he reasoned. This isn't where just human reasoning goes.

No, by faith, he reasoned that God could raise the dead. And we're told, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back from the dead. He did receive him back from death.

[38 : 38] As we said, Isaac was already as good as dead to Abraham. For those three days that he was journeying in Abraham's mind, he's a dead man, he's a dead boy, I'm going to sacrifice him when I get there.

And so to have God step in at the last second and spare his life and provide a ram instead was like receiving him back from the death, from death. He was as good as dead to me, and I've received him back, figuratively speaking.

We come then to faith rewarded. Abraham's faith honored God by obeying him. His faith is now honored and rewarded by God. As he gives Isaac back to him as it were from death, God is faithful, God is good.

And Abraham's joy must have been even greater than when he was first given this son of the promise, to have him now, given back to him from death after this great trial of faith.

And because the son of promise was not cut off, the promise itself was not dead in the water, the stars will have their counterpart in Abraham's offspring as promised.

[39 : 54] So God rewards Abraham's obedient faith and he renews the promise to Abraham. And he adds an oath to confirm his faith.

I swear by myself, God says to Abraham, because you have done this and not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore because you have obeyed me.

By faith, by faith, faith is rewarded. And so the trial was endured, the difficult command was obeyed, the blessing obtained from God, and it was all by faith.

A faith that was tested, a faith that was exercised, and a faith that triumphed, was rewarded. And so everyone wins. Abraham has his faith made stronger because of the test and receives his son Isaac back.

And God is thereby honored and glorified and pleased with his faith. And we, you and I, are given another example to spur on our faith to lay hold of God who is able to do all that he's promised and

is to be obeyed in everything he commands.

[41:15] Now most have seen in this episode a picture, a type of God the Father giving his one and only beloved son, Jesus Christ, as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah, Mount Moriah's cross.

Indeed, back when the printed copies of God's word were scarce, and people didn't have the privilege of reading Genesis 22 like we did this morning.

Martin Luther was reading this chapter in family worship, and his wife Katie, perhaps hearing it for the very first time, blurted out. I can't believe God would command Abraham to sacrifice his son, his own son.

God would never do that with his son. And Luther said, but Katie, he did. He did.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, his irreplaceable unique son, up to the death of the cross as a sacrifice for sinners.

[42:30] And when he came to the place of sacrifice on Mount Moriah, there was no one to spare him at the last sentence second. There was no animal substitute to take his place, for he was the Lamb of God.

He was the sacrifice that all those animal sacrifices pointed to. We can't cleanse from sin. Only that Lamb of God can. And now here he is, the Lamb of God, and there is no sparing him.

God did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all. Romans 8 and verse 32. And the father was not a mere spectator to this sacrifice, but was the very one striking him.

Isaiah 53, 10, for it pleased the Lord to crush him. It pleased the Lord to cause him to suffer.

It was the Lord that then pierced him for our transgressions. It was the Lord that crushed him for our iniquities. It was the Lord that punished him to bring us peace.

[43:42] The Lord wounded him that we might be healed. God really did sacrifice his own son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of Abraham and Isaac.

And in his death, it looked like all the promises concerning blessings going to the ends of the world as if it was over with. How can the promise be fulfilled now that Jesus is dead?

But as Abraham received Isaac back from the dead, figuratively speaking, God the Father received Jesus, his son, back from the dead, literally speaking.

And so because the promise seed of Abraham lives, the promise is still being fulfilled as salvation blessings are going into all the nations of the world.

They've reached our shore. They've come to us. The promises were first made to Abraham, fulfilled in our Lord Jesus, the seed of Abraham.

[44:55] Not one good word of promise has fallen to the ground, but those promised blessings are only yours by faith, my friend, for it is whoever believes on him that shall not perish but have everlasting life.

It is by faith that you receive the gift of everlasting life through Jesus' own sacrifice and resurrection. Trust in him today.

Abraham trusted him with everything, didn't he? And he found himself to be the gainer for doing so. And you trust yourself to this Savior and you'll find yourself to be the everlasting gainer, receiving eternal life instead of eternal torments.

believers, what is your attitude towards the testing of your faith? When a trial of faith crops up on Monday afternoon, what's your response?

What's your attitude toward it? Do you consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kind because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance and perseverance, maturity, and so on?

[46:07] You see, what is your attitude? We're not to seek tests from God. God will see to that and he'll pick just the right ones for you.

We're not to seek them and neither are we to shun them because they come from our kind heavenly father. Rather, we are to welcome them and embrace them knowing that they've come to do us good, to trust ourselves to God, the sender, and plead that we might grow in grace, grow in faith through this test of faith.

Your faith is constantly being tested, brothers, sisters. You know that? Did you notice the tests of faith this week? Did you identify? Did you say, this is a test?

I see that. Or did you just see the problem and you forgot? No, this is a test and I'm to receive all these difficulties as a test of my faith.

And let me ask you, are your tests as severe as Abraham's? Are your duties demanded as difficult as his? Is your obedience more costly than his?

[47:26] No. Then learn from Abraham. Let him teach you something. It was his faith in God that enabled him to live as he did.

Learn from him that your faith in the same God will enable you to endure hard trials, to bear patiently with that test of faith, to respond obediently to all that he said, and to receive wonderful blessings from God.

The same faith and the same God who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. But without faith, your trials will seem too much for you.

Without faith, you'll sink in despondency. Without faith, God's commands will seem too hard and too costly and not worth it. But with faith, you'll obey and you'll trust and you'll stand.

Some of you bumping into the perplexity of God, I don't understand. I'm going through a patch of the trail that's right through the woods and it's dark and I can't see light anywhere.

[48:37] Abraham faced such and he triumphed by faith. You willing to let God be God? Let him be that sovereign God we worship this morning and just to follow him, however dark the way, however perplexing the road, just to obey and leave all the consequences to him.

Abraham says, fall in behind me. Let's go. We can trust him in the dark. Job agrees. He knows the way that I take even when I don't.

So Abraham joins the ranks of that great cloud of witnesses calling to us. Keep running the race with perseverance. That race marked out for you.

He shouts to us. Run on, brother. With your eye on God's power and faithfulness. Keep trusting and obeying, sister. Though you don't understand what is happening.

Simply take him at his word. You can blindly follow him anywhere he leads. I did and he never led me astray. Let's pray.

[49:44] Lord, it is not Abraham that stands as the hero of this episode, but you, the God of Abram.

And so we would praise you that there is enough faithfulness and enough power and enough sovereignty and wisdom in you to make a man not balk at your command to sacrifice his own son. We thank you that you are that kind of a God. Would you teach us to cast ourselves upon you in our perplexities, in our bewilderment, in the face of hard commands that seem so costly of some joy to us and we fear will come out losers.

Would you teach us like Abraham to cast ourselves upon you? And for the one who is fearful that trusting you to be a savior will end in disaster, would you come and give the gift of faith to rest their soul on Christ, this wonderful Lamb of God sacrificed for sinners.

We ask in his name. Amen. Amen. Amen.. Thank you.