

Today's Order of Worship

Announcements: Greg Lowery

Song Leader: Joshua Berryhill

Opening Prayer: Ralph Burleson

On the Table: Head - Billy Box
Servers - Eddy Dickinson
Lannie Key
Gary Addison

Closing Prayer: Arlen Foss

Preparing the Lord's Supper Donna York

Weekly Service Times

Sunday

Bible Study	10:00 am
Morning Worship	10:45 am
Evening Worship	5:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study	7:00 pm
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Visit Our Website

www.brilliantchurchofchrist.org

Elders: Deacon: Al Corkren
Leonard Key / David Key
Billy Box / Eddy Dickinson Minister: Greg Lowery

Contact Information:
Phone: (205) 465-9142

Brilliant Church of Christ
930 Main Street
P.O. Box 222
Brilliant, AL 35548

*The Just Shall
Live By Faith*



*The
Brilliant
Beacon*



Abraham’s Sacrifice

By Ryan Goodwin

“Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, ‘Abraham!’ And he said. ‘Here I am” (Genesis 22:1). Also see Hebrews 11:17, in which we are clearly told that the following events occurred as a test of Abraham’s faith. What a sobering thought it is to realize that our faith may be tested at any time! Seemingly out of the blue, the Lord approached Abraham and required of him a sacrifice that all of us, hopefully, will never have to make. Although we will never be commanded to offer our children to the Lord, will we be ready when the time comes for suffering or hardship, and cheerfully respond to God, “Here I am?” When most people are confronted by God – today through the Gospel – they hardly volunteer themselves to God. On the contrary, unbelievers flee the Lord, saying, “I am not here – nobody’s home!” As for Abraham, we should remember that this is not the first and last time that God would test the faith of Abraham. Certainly, being asked to leave his home and his relatives must have tested him. Accepting the promise that his aged wife would have a baby also was a test. Dealing with Ishmael and Hagar, too, tested his patience. Essentially, the promise given to him by God in Genesis 15:18 was a test, for we read in Hebrews 11:13 that he never got to see Canaan given over to his descendants. The land promise would not be fulfilled until many generations later! Instead of grimacing at the possibility of another test, though, Abraham simply remained faithful and accepted what was given him by God. Do we do the same? Given that God has promised so much to us, yet we still must suffer many things in this present life, how many of us sometimes doubt God and loathe the tests that push us to our wits’ end?

In this test we find the culmination of Abraham’s life of faithfulness. After that had been said and done throughout this great man’s life, one more thing was left to do, the same thing that God would do through His own son Jesus Christ. “Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I will tell you” (22:2). Isaac was not Abraham’s only son in the physical sense, but he was the only son promised to him by God. He was the only son who was named an heir of the promises, and who would be the beginning of a line of great and numerous people. Being asked to dispose of this son would be the ultimate test and the greatest sacrifice. It is one thing to sacrifice your own life, but it is another thing to sacrifice, at the request of God, something that is more precious to you than yourself. Perhaps that is something that we forget about this sacrifice. Critics of the Bible question God’s righteousness when they are confronted by this story, arguing that it would have been easier for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac than himself –

THOSE WHO NEED OUR PRAYERS

Faye Cotton: recent scans showed little to no growth, please be praying that some new treatment can be found that will help her

Mary Eddy: she is recovering from knee surgery, please be praying that she makes a full and quick recovery

Barbara Wilkinson: still having problem with infection on her feet, please pray that the medicine she is taking will cure this infection

Bill Foster: surgery went well to replace aorta valve, please be praying that his health will continue to improve

Danny Harbin: recently diagnosed with prostate cancer, please keep him in your prayers

Mable Weeks: recent scans showed no new growth of cancer, please continue to pray that this cancer can be defeated

Cory Davis Holmes: born May 4th with neuroblastoma which has spread to his liver, he is undergoing treatments, please pray for this young child and his family

Denise Kimbrell: has completed her treatments; please be praying that cancer will not return

Sandy McCaleb: has started cancer treatments, please be praying that this cancer can be treated and defeated

Edward Skinner: has been recently diagnosed with cancer, please pray that this cancer will be treatable

Kay Dodd: has started treatments and will take them through November, please be praying that the treatments will defeat this cancer

Charles Gay: has a brain tumor, attends the Cleveland congregation, please pray for him and his family

Upcoming Events

Today	Bible Bowl {Tidwell Chapel}	2:00 pm
Tonight - Thursday	Vacation Bible School	6:30 – 8:00 pm
July 23 rd	Tri-County Singing {Here}	2:00 pm

THOSE WHO NEED OUR PRAYERS

Samuel Walker: having some heart problems, please be praying that he will receive help for this problems

Rebert Corkren: diagnosed with lung cancer, please be praying that he will receive the help needed defeat this cancer

Jan Franks: problems with a collapsed knee, please be praying that he will receive the help he needs

Pam Burkett: (Kim’s sister) is fighting breast cancer, please pray that she can receive treatment that will defeat this cancer

Larry Metcalf: has been diagnosed with lung cancer; please pray that he can receive treatments that will defeat this cancer

Danny Berryhill: will have back surgery July 18th, please be praying that the surgery will be successful

Wayne Burleson: will have an implant placed into his brain to help control tremors that he is having, please pray that this treatment will be successful

Dewayne Wilkinson: has a fungus growing on his lungs, please pray that with treatment this fungus will be cleared from his lungs

that this is not a true test of character. Yet how many of us would gladly give up our own lives to save our child’s? How many of us would have a much harder time being obedient when obedience requires us to destroy the manifestation of a lifetime of physically unfulfilled promises? No other sacrifice would have been greater than this, and that is the point that should impress us. In whatever way it was difficult for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, it was incomparably more difficult for God to sacrifice Jesus!

“Offer him there as a burnt offering” is a phrase used to signify the completeness of this sacrifice. “The ‘burnt-offering’ is the type of sacrifice best suited for this purpose, because it typifies complete surrender to God” (Leupold On The Old Testament, Genesis Vol. II, H.C. Leupold, 621). In a flame, every particle becomes consumed and expended – even the smoke itself seems to rise from the body and toward the heavens. This was not a paltry or trite request by God, but one that required a total commitment. After the sacrifice, Abraham would not even be left with the body of Isaac to bury. Even in our own lives, God asks us for total commitment (Matthew 19:21).

“So Abraham rose early in the morning” (22:3). Would you rise up early to perform this kind of service to God? The fact that he does not delay in his obedience is telling of the kind of submission he had for God. We need to remember this example and hasten to the work, never procrastinating or avoiding our responsibilities. What does it say about us when we are late for church on Sundays? Or when we dread responsibilities in a Bible study? Or when we are not quick to jump on evangelistic opportunities? If Abraham could rise early to offer his own son, how much more should we look forward to and hastily perform our duties for God?

“And went to the place of which God had told him.” We have here a very specific command from God (to go to a mountain that would be revealed), which is obeyed in a specific fashion (he went to the exact place). There is no room here for interpretation of opinion! Abraham could have easily complained to God about the long journey, claiming that he knew of better mountains. His first though could have been, “Well, if I’m going to be asked to offer Isaac, I should at least be able to do it on my own terms.” Does this wisdom find itself manifested today? Indeed, many Christians finds Biblical worship boring, old-fashioned, and tiresome. The mentality, therefore, is that if one is going to have to worship God, why not at least make it entertaining, or more convenient? Also notice from verse 3 how Abraham prepared for his journey. He did not assume that God would cancel on him, or change His mind – rather, He was willing to go the whole way and brought every tool and supply necessary to put his son to death.

“On the third day, Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance” (22:4). It took three days to travel to the place where this offering would take place. One can only imagine the feelings that must have been going through Abraham’s mind as he walked alongside his son toward Moriah. The fact that God gives him three days to think about this test shows us that, at times, we may have a long time to consider a tough decision. The problem with too much time, though, is that it leaves the door open for doubt, fear, anxiety, and regret. Obedience to God must be based on faith that is stalwart regardless of the situation (Philippians 4:11-12). Our faith should be able to survive a very painful three day journey, just as Abraham’s did!

“Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and return to you” (22:5). The faith of Abraham is amazing! He makes it very clear to his servant that both he and Isaac would be returning from this journey. Truly, Abraham understood that the Lord always provides a way, and that He has the ability to even bring people back from the dead (Hebrews 11:19). At this point (22:6-7) in his life, Isaac is not a small boy anymore. He would be an older teenager, probably stronger and faster on his feet than Abraham. He eventually realizes that neither of them had brought along a lamb for the sacrifice and asks his father about it. Again, with his faith on his sleeve, so to speak, Abraham asserts, “God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” We can learn a lesson about these two men. Both Isaac and Abraham had faith – Isaac could have fled at any point. He could have overpowered his father. He could have tried to find a wild animal to offer as a sacrifice. He could have argued or tried to reason with Abraham. In the same way, Abraham could have lied to Isaac, or he could have told him to flee. But both of them walked on with the knowledge that their faith was the only answer to the moral quandary.

“Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood” (22:9). The feelings were going through Abraham’s mind are simply inexpressible in words. He has been asked by God to sacrifice his own son, his only son that had been promised to him by God, the son he had waited for his entire life, the son he loved, the son who had obediently followed him to a mountain top and allowed himself to be bound - most of us will never face such a trial! “[Isaac] must have acquiesced to his father’s purpose, and thereby evinced his faith in the Divine commandment” (Pulpit Commentary, Vol. I, Thomas Whitelaw, 284). Again, Isaac could have easily resisted his elderly father had he chosen to – but like the obedient son that he is, he simply accepted Abraham’s directive and trusted. Children, even teenagers and young adults, should see the example

of Isaac and realize that we do not always understand the decisions of our parents. We may not see what they do, or have a faith that is developed as theirs, so it is imperative that children trust wholeheartedly, and see these difficult times to the end.

“And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son” (22:10). Even until the last moment, neither Abraham nor Isaac appear to be struggling against the command from God – Isaac in that he is not fighting, and Abraham in that he proves he would be willing to go the entire way in obeying God. This is not unlike the sacrifice of Christ. Both Christ and the Father completely agreed upon the plan of salvation, carried it the entire, and did not fight it or doubt themselves once the deed had been done. Like Isaac, Jesus Christ was “led as a lamb to the slaughter” (Isaiah 53:7). When we consider God’s commandment to Abraham, we must realize that the Father would never ask a man to do what He is not willing to do Himself – that is, God proves His infinite, perfect, and complete love toward us by giving His own Son without requiring us to do the same (Romans 8:32). We do not need to die on a cross, or carry the burden of sin to the grave, because Jesus already did.

Just as Abraham is about to kill Isaac, though, an angel of the Lord stopped him (22:11) and lauded him for his faith (22:12). “Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in place of his son” (22:13). Almost immediately after proving his faith, the words of verse 8 come true – God did provide a lamb for offering. This should help all of us see that it is not the sacrifice itself, nor is it the death of the animal, that pleases God. After all, He says in Micah 6:6-8 and Isaiah 1:11 that He is not interested in those offerings if they are given in pretense or in arrogance. It is not a sacrifice that God is interested in, but in the attitude behind – in the humility, in the faith, in goodness, in the understanding of God’s mercy. God can provide for Himself lambs and bulls and goats. He does not need us to sacrifice those things. It is faith that He wants; the kind of faith that was displayed by Abraham.

“And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh” (22:14) or “the Lord will provide.” What a fitting name that is for this place! The angel now proceeds to bless Abraham and assure him that his descendants will be many (22:16-18). This is interesting because God had just commanded Abraham three days before to sacrifice his son, and is now calmly and confidently reassuring him, reaffirming the promises He had made numerous times before. Truly, the Lord provides even when it seems that all hope is lost and He always keeps His promises!

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