

Life Lesson 12
Abraham and the Sacrifice
Text: Genesis 22

Introduction

We learned last week about Abraham and his little son, Isaac. At last Abraham had the miracle child God had promised for so long! Can you imagine how happy Abraham was, and how much he loved Isaac?

Perhaps Abraham loved Isaac *too* much. Any time we love something more than we love God, it becomes an idol in our hearts. Maybe that's one of the reasons that God tested Abraham's faith and love in a very scary way!

The Story

One night God spoke to Abraham.

"Here I am, Lord," Abraham replied.

"Take your only son, Isaac, to the land of Moriah. I want you to sacrifice him there to me."

What great horror and sadness Abraham must have felt! To have to kill his son as a sacrifice to God! What about the promise God made that He would make Isaac a great nation? Why should God want him to die?

All these questions must have kept Abraham awake the rest of the night. Yet, he got up early the next morning and took Isaac and the wood for the sacrifice and left for Mt. Moriah. It took three days to get there. What a sad and anxious three days that must have been for Abraham. On the third day he looked up and saw the place he was to sacrifice Isaac.

"You stay here with the donkey," he said to the three servants who had come with him. "The boy and I will go up and worship God. Then we'll come back and meet you here."

Why do you think he said, " *We'll* be back" if only he planned to return? Isaac would be dead. It was because he had complete faith in God. God had promised to make of Isaac a great nation, and God always kept His word. If God said to kill Isaac, He must be planning to raise Isaac from the dead.

Abraham and Isaac left the others and headed for the place of sacrifice.

Isaac said, "Father, here is the wood and the fire for the sacrifice. Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

"My Son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering," Abraham replied.

So the two of them went on, Isaac carrying the wood that was to burn him up, and Abraham carrying the knife he would use to kill his son.

At last they came to the place God had told them to go. Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood on it. Then he tied up his boy and laid him on the wood. He took out the knife and raised it, ready to plunge it into Isaac's body.

"Abraham!" a voice suddenly called from heaven.

"Here I am," Abraham said.

"Don't kill your son," God said to him. "Now I know that you trust Me and love Me more than anything since you haven't withheld your only son from Me."

A noise behind him made Abraham look up, and there was a ram caught in a bush. Abraham took the ram and offered it on the altar instead of his son.

Abraham named the place Jehovah-jireh, which means "the Lord will provide" because the Lord provided a sacrifice there in place of Isaac.

The Life Lesson

God gave this terrible test to Abraham to teach him an important lesson in faith. He gave

it for another reason too -- for your benefit. He meant it for a picture for years to come of how He would provide a sacrifice for His people.

We know that all of us deserve only one thing -- death. Because we are sinners we have earned an eternity in hell. All sin must be paid for, and we can never stand before God until our sins are cleared away. We were totally hopeless cases!

Yet God loved His people so much that He was willing to do what He commanded Abraham to do. He, too, had an only son that He loved very much. He sacrificed His only son, Jesus, on the cross to pay for our sin. We deserved to face God's wrath and judgment, but God provided, Himself, a sacrifice.

Review Questions

What did God tell Abraham he must do?

Sacrifice his son, Isaac.

Did Abraham obey God?

Yes, he left right away to make the sacrifice.

Did Abraham have to kill his son?

No, God stopped him.

What did God send for Abraham to sacrifice instead of Isaac?

He told Abraham to sacrifice the ram (male goat) which was caught in a bush.

Who did God send to be sacrificed for sin instead of you?

Jesus