Is Abraham as serious about His faith in God as the pagans are about their false gods? (22:1-6)

God’s redemptive plan demands a serious faith that puts God above everyone else in life.

Abraham had seen God be faithful to him and his family. He had already experienced the faithfulness of God in miraculous ways. But here he comes to a critical choice for his faith in God. God, very simply, instructs him to offer his only son as a burnt offering. This was the son of promise; the son that God had used to prove His faithfulness toward Abraham. There was no promise of rescue or blessing; instead, there was just one simple and devastating command. Abraham must of had a heavy heart, but he had an even stronger faith. Abraham obeyed God. In faith, he trusted God for the outcome.

1. Abraham had a faith that allowed him to trust God above anything else, even when he couldn’t know the outcome for sure. Has there ever been a time in your life when you had to trust God above family or friends? Share some examples of when God tested your devotion to Him.

2. In verse 5, Abraham tells his servants to stay behind and that he and Isaac would go ahead and worship and then return. His words imply that both of them would be coming back. This is an incredible statement of faith when his mind had to be questioning everything. Discuss the conflicting thoughts and feelings Abraham must have felt. What were your feelings in your “test” of faith?

3. Is there anyone or anything that's above God in your life? Pray for each other that God would give us all the faith of Abraham to put God first in our hearts, knowing that He desires what's best for our lives.

Will Abraham have faith in God’s faithfulness even when all hope seems gone? (22:7-8)

God’s redemptive plan demands a faith that stays faithful even when all hope seems gone.

Abraham had waited for God to provide him a son for years, and even though Abraham was not fully trusting of God in each and every situation, overall, he believed that God would provide an heir. This makes the reality of this story all the more difficult because the promised child that Abraham received from God is now to be a sacrifice. This request from God no doubt brought questions to Abraham’s mind, but Abraham obeys God anyway and begins the journey that he assumed would end with his son being a sacrifice. God had promised that he would work through Isaac to bring about a great nation. Even though all hope seemed to be lost once God requested that Isaac be sacrificed, Abraham still believed that God would work to bring about his great purposes (Genesis 22:5; Hebrews 11:17-19).

1. Imagine for a moment that you were Abraham and God has told you to offer your only son as a sacrifice. How do you think you would have responded?

2. Have you ever been in a situation where all hope seemed lost? How did you handle the situation? Do you feel that your faith remained steadfast?

3. Read Hebrews 11:17-19: What does this passage teach us about Abraham's faith? How did he find hope in what seemed to be a hopeless situation?
God's redemptive plan is based on God providing what's needed to save His people in this world.

We can only try to imagine what Isaac and Abraham must have been thinking and feeling in this incredibly intense moment in their lives. Isaac was bound and laying on the altar, and Abraham -- who loved his son very much -- had a knife in his hand and a commitment in his heart to follow through on what God had called him to do. But the good news was that this was just a test. God never intended for Abraham to take Isaac's life. God detests human sacrifice (Deuteronomy 18:9-12); God created and values human life (Genesis 9:6-7)! God was testing Abraham and was teaching Abraham something through the test, which was that God is the God who provides! God had promised Abraham that he would have a son of many nations, and when all the odds were physically stacked against it, God provided. God tested Abraham in commanding him to take the life of his son Isaac, and when all hope seemed to be gone, God provided. God saved Isaac's life that day, continuing to reveal His redemptive plan that was all about God providing what's need to save His people in this world. Ultimately, God's redemptive plan would come through a descendent of Isaac's whose name was Jesus, God's only Son (Matthew 1:1-17). Ultimately, God would provide what was needed to save His people from their sins through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross (John 3:16). From the beginning, God's redemptive plan was about God providing what man can't, and Abraham was the first to really learn this important lesson.

1. Read Genesis 22:8 and 22:14. What is the phrase or concept that's repeated three times in these verses? Do you believe this? In what ways have you experienced God's provision in your life?

2. Consider the saying that the Israelites knew that was based on Abraham's experience on the mountain: "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided." Discuss what this means? It says that the provision comes on the mount of the Lord, what does that imply is necessary to experience God's provision?

3. Read Genesis 22:15-18. In verses 16 and 18, what is it that Abraham does that leads to God's reaffirmation of His promise and blessing through Isaac? On a scale of 1 to 10, where is your obedience to God? Why?

4. What an incredible affect Abraham's faith must have had on his son Isaac. Who's watching your faith? Pray for those individuals and then pray for each other. Thank God that all we have to do is obey, and He provides the rest!