

God Will Provide

June 28, 2026

Genesis 22:1-14

¹After these events, God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" Abraham answered, "I'm here." ²God said, "Take your son, your only son whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah. Offer him up as an entirely burned offering there on one of the mountains that I will show you." ³Abraham got up early in the morning, harnessed his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, together with his son Isaac. He split the wood for the entirely burned offering, set out, and went to the place God had described to him. ⁴On the third day, Abraham looked up and saw the place at a distance. ⁵Abraham said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will walk up there, worship, and then come back to you."

⁶Abraham took the wood for the entirely burned offering and laid it on his son Isaac. He took the fire and the knife in his hand, and the two of them walked on together. ⁷Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father?" Abraham said, "I'm here, my son." Isaac said, "Here is the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the entirely burned offering?" ⁸Abraham said, "The lamb for the entirely burned offering? God will see to it, my son." The two of them walked on together.

⁹They arrived at the place God had described to him. Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He tied up his son Isaac and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. ¹⁰Then Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to kill his son as a sacrifice. ¹¹But the Lord's messenger called out to Abraham from heaven, "Abraham? Abraham?" Abraham said, "I'm here."

¹²The messenger said, "Don't stretch out your hand against the young man, and don't do anything to him. I now know that you revere God and didn't hold back your son, your only son, from me." ¹³Abraham looked up and saw a single ram caught by its horns in the dense underbrush.

Abraham went over, took the ram, and offered it as an entirely burned offering instead of his son.¹⁴ Abraham named that place “the Lord sees.” That is the reason people today say, “On this mountain the Lord is seen.”



As we begin this time together, please turn with me to Genesis 22. The text begins with these words: *“After these events...”* There are a couple of events that have happened that give us some context for today’s passage. First, Hagar and Ishmael have been evicted, sent into the desert. We recall from last week that God came to Abraham in his moment of great distress and assured him that his first son would be okay, that God would bless Ishmael because he too was Abraham’s descendent. Second, a treaty was signed between Abraham and Abimelech. If you gave time to GPS question three this past week, you are familiar with this story.

Abraham and Sarah first encountered King Abimelech when they settled in Gerar. It was during this time that Abraham tried to pass off Sarah as his sister, resulting in the near cursing of Abimelech and his whole household. In a dream God warned Abimelech, telling him not to sleep with Sarah. This stoked a fear of the Lord in the king. Abimelech gave Abraham livestock and servants when he returned Sarah to him, setting things right between them. Abraham then prayed for Abimelech and his household, restoring their ability to once again have children. After Isaac was born, Abimelech comes to Abraham, seeking to establish a treaty with him. We see the “why” in verse 22 of chapter 21. Abimelech says to Abraham, *“God is with you in everything you do.”* He wants to be on the right side of this God, so he seeks to be on the right side of Abraham. When God first called Abram, the promise was to bless those who bless Abram and to curse those who curse Abram. Abimelech had almost experienced this once already. The treaty would be a blessing to him and his kingdom.

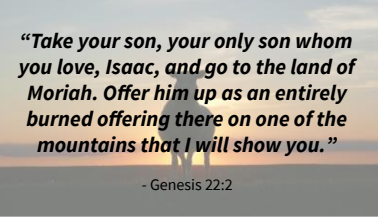
Returning to today's text, we read more of verse 1: *"After these events, God tested Abraham."* Taken at face value, yes, this is a test of Abraham's obedience to God. To be asked what Abraham is asked – it is certainly a great test of Abraham's obedience and his faith. Before continuing in the text, an important question for us to think about is this: What did Abraham know about this "test?" From some of what he says in the text, it seems like Abraham knows how this will work out in the end. If this is true, it is not much of a test. But perhaps Abraham simply trusts God and is acting in accordance with that trust, believing that God will provide a way in the end.

Some would also add an important question to ask about God: What did God know? We tend to think of God as all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-present. But in verse 12 the messenger of God says, *"I now know that you revere God."* Did God not know how faithful Abraham was and needed to run this test to see just how committed Abraham was to God? If that is the case, perhaps Abraham's obedience helped to shape God's actions as the story unfolded.

With this framework in place, let us begin with a word of prayer as we step into this passage from Genesis 22. Let us pray...

God of mercy, you led Abraham and he listened to you. Because he listened, he was bold to do things that took great courage and sacrifice. Because he heard, he acted in harmony with your will, and he was a blessing. By the grace of your Spirit, help us to listen to you now, so that as your good news proclaimed, we may gladly hear what you are saying to us today, and follow faithfully. And now, O God, I ask that you would bless the words of my mouth and the meditation of all of our hearts. You are our rock and our redeemer, our Christ and our king. Amen.

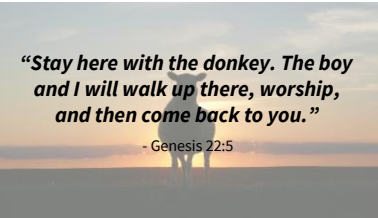
God lays out what we will call the test in verse 2, saying to Abraham, *“Take your son, your only son whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah. Offer him up as an entirely burned offering there on one of the mountains that I will show you.”* This call is reminiscent of his first call to leave his father’s household, also for a *“land that I will show you.”* Imagine what would spin through your head if you were Abraham and God said this to you. If it were me, I would go back through the promises: a great nation, a blessing to the world, a son in old age, send Ishmael away because your descendants will be traced through Isaac. How does sacrificing Isaac make any sense when held up against the promises of God?



“Take your son, your only son whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah. Offer him up as an entirely burned offering there on one of the mountains that I will show you.”

- Genesis 22:2

But just as remarkably as Abram had done many years ago when God first called, Abraham gets up early the next morning, readies the donkey and splits the wood, then heads off with Isaac, two servants, the donkey, the wood, the fire, and the knife – *“to the place God had described to him.”* After journeying for three days, Abraham sees the mountain in the distance. It is here, as recorded in verse 5, that Abraham first shows great faith in God and in God’s provision. Abraham says to his servants, *“Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will walk up there, worship, and then come back to you.”* Stay here. We will be back. We are going to go up there. We are going to worship God. And then we will be back.

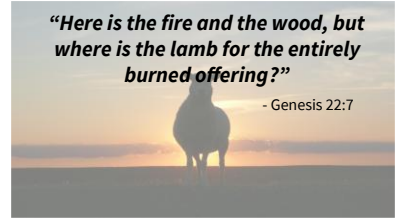


“Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will walk up there, worship, and then come back to you.”

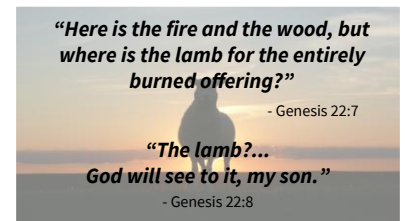
- Genesis 22:5

Now, I do not think Abraham knew exactly how this would all unfold, but I do think that he fully trusted that God would provide what was needed at the right moment. This has been his experience with God all along, even when Abraham was not faithful. God was faithful even when Abraham took matters into his own hands, showing a lack of trust in God.

As Abraham and Isaac walked on together – wood, fire, and knife in hand – Isaac asks this question: *“Here is the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the entirely burned offering?”* What a question. How long do you think they walked before Isaac got up the courage to ask the question? What do you think went through Isaac’s mind as he pondered whether or not to even ask the question?



And again, Abraham shows great faith and trust in God. He says to Isaac, *“The lamb?... God will see to it, my son.”* Some translations read, *“God will provide it, my son.”* The lamb – is Abraham thinking that Isaac is the lamb that God has already miraculously provided it or is he thinking that God will somehow else provide a sacrificial lamb? More on this thought later.



As the story continues to unfold, they arrive and Abraham builds an altar. He arranges the wood on the altar and then... And then... Abraham ties up Isaac and lays him on the altar on top of the wood. Yes, this is hard to read, even harder to imagine. And then... And then Abraham stretches out his arm, knife in his hand, ready to kill his son as a sacrifice to the Lord. At this moment, a messenger from the Lord calls out, *“Abraham? Abraham?”* In response, Abraham says as he has again and again in this story and throughout his whole journey with God, *“I’m here.”* I am here God, ready to leave home. I am here God, ready to believe that I can have a son in old age. I am here God, sending away my first-born son. I am here God, laying my dearly loved Isaac on the altar as an entirely burned offering. I’m here, God. I am here God, right where you asked me to be.

The messenger tells Abraham to stop what he is doing. It is now that God says, *“I now know that you revere God.”* I now know that you will do anything for God. I now know that your love of God is greater than your love of Sarah, greater than your love of Isaac, greater than your love of anything, greater even than your love of self. Knowing Abraham’s love of God, it is then that God provides. Abraham looks up and sees a ram caught in the underbrush. God has provided the lamb for the sacrifice.

Many years later this will again play out, not on a mountain in Moriah but on a mountain just outside Jerusalem. The son will carry the wood for his sacrifice on Golgotha. The Father will provide what is needed as the son becomes the lamb, offered for the salvation of the world. Even when there was great cost to the Father, we see that God will provide what is needed at the right moment.



My friends, our God continues to provide. God remains with us today, faithful and ready to provide what we need when we need it. Even in situations that seem unfathomable and in moments when it feels like there is no way forward, when we trust in God, when we are willing to take a step of faith, we can trust that God will provide. Sometimes the provision comes as it did with the ram caught in the underbrush – in a miraculous act of God. And sometimes the provision comes simply through the people of God being who we are called and gifted to be. Yes, sometimes the provision comes when we hear a cry or see a need and respond as God equips and prepares us to respond. In these cases, sometimes we are the miracle.

It is possible for us to see and hear and respond only when our love of God and neighbor exceeds our love of self. This is as true for us as it was for Abraham in today's story. The story is really about Abraham's willingness to give up what was most important to him – in order to fully serve his God. But Isaac is also involved in the sacrifice. It is his life that is being laid on the altar.

At times, when God asks much of us, it is not just our person that is affected. In our Genesis 22 story, yes, Abraham is asked to offer a sacrifice, but it is really Isaac that is asked to make the biggest sacrifice. For most of us, though, when we think about what we're holding back from God, when we are wrestling with that thing that is more important to us than God, it is a personal moment. What we are wrestling with, what we are struggling to give up, what we are being asked to sacrifice, it is something of ours. It is not someone else's. It can be a variety of things: our pride, our need to be in control, our resources, our time, our energy that God is asking us to use or to give up for the building of the kingdom of God here in this time and place. To give that thing, the first step is surrendering it to God. This is often a hard step for many of us to take.

The reality for us all is the same reality that Abraham faced. Just as God tested Abraham, so too does God test us. And I believe that God tests us for the same reason that God tested Abraham: to gauge our faith, to see where we are in our relationship with God, to help us grow in our faith. With all of us, there are things we need to let go of, things we should let go of, in order to more fully love God and neighbor. Some of these things are the things that we think we cannot live without. In this sense, the battle feels like it must feel for an addict trying to give up an addiction. It might even feel as gut-wrenching as being asked to offer up your child on the altar as a sacrifice.

But this giving up, this sacrificing, this surrendering to God – it brings us life and not death. When we let go of that thing, we can become more faithful to God. When can we offer more of self to God, we can love God and neighbor more deeply. Loving as God calls us to love, we experience life in more powerful, more impactful, more meaningful ways. And so too do those who we share life with. Stepping up and stepping forward in faith, we will come to know what Abraham came to know: God will provide. God will make a way.

Yes, God asks us to be willing to give up those things that hinder our walk with God, that lessen our love of God and of neighbor, that keep us from experiencing the miracles of God. What do you need to give up, to surrender, to offer to God so that you may experience life more abundant? The question is asked because, in faith, we know that God will provide. As we seek to grow closer to God and to one another, loving and serving more deeply, may the Lord our God reveal to each of us the ways that we can hear and respond to God's call on our hearts and lives. May it be so for you and for me. Alleluia and amen.

Grow, Pray, Study

- 1) *Grow*. Think about the things that inhibit your ability to fully love God and neighbor. What do you need to give up or surrender to increase your ability to love?
- 2) *Pray*. Do you need Jehovah Jireh – the God who provides – to provide something in your life or in the life of a loved one? Spend some time prayer for God to respond.
- 3) *Study*. Re-read Romans 6:12-23. How can you offer yourself, a “slave of God,” as a “slave of love” this week, as you seek to live a holy life?