

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to Hebrews 11

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through the book of Hebrews – a letter that was written to a group of Jewish believers who were seriously contemplating going back to Judaism.

They were ready to give up

They were done

In their eyes, things were much easier following a list of do's and don'ts and adhering to the law than to simply abide in Jesus Christ

So the writer of Hebrews, writes this letter to them to try encourage them to continue to endure – and the way they were going to endure was going to be by faith

And so – for the past couple of weeks, we have been looking at example after example of individuals that the writer of Hebrews that were able to endure, by faith.

So this evening, we are going to take another look at the faith of Abraham

Let's pray...

[Heb 11:17-20 NKJV] 17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, **offered up Isaac,** and he who had received the promises **offered up his only begotten [son],** 18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," 19 concluding that God [was] able to raise [him] up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

Turn your bibles with me now to Genesis 22

I want you to listen to this quote from Charles Spurgeon

Untested faith may be true faith, but it is sure to be small faith, and it is likely to remain little as long as it is without trials. Faith never prospers so well as when all things are against her: Tempests are her trainers, and bolts of lightning are her illuminators.

What Charles Spurgeon is saying here –

He is reminding us that –

whatever it means to know God,

whatever it means to love God,

whatever it means to walk with God,

it is going to involve an evaluation of some kind – it is going to involve a test.

And when it comes to tests, there are two types of people – those that like tests and those that don't like test.

One of the reasons that many people don't like tests is because tests can be failed.

But tests have a purpose in that they can prove something.

[Gen 22:1-3 NKJV] 1 Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."

Stop right here really quick

So, God gives Abraham a test.

Question – did God give Abraham this test because God had no idea where Abraham's faith was? No

God is All Knowing

He is the God of the universe – the God of Heaven and Earth– He knows the beginning from the end.

There is nothing that He doesn't know.

He knew exactly what Abraham was going to do.

So does Abraham's obedience come as a surprise to God? No

The reason that God gave Abraham this test was so that Abraham would see the truth of where his faith stood. So that Abraham would be able to see where his relationship with God stood.

Abraham has this promise – (Isaac)

But does he really really believe it -

2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your only [son] Isaac,

Question –

Was Isaac – Abraham's only son?? No

Abraham was the father of Ishmael through Hagar

So why would God tell Abraham, "Take now your son, your only [son] Isaac

Because this is the only son of the promise.

Look at the rest of the verse -

whom you love,

Btw – you might want to circle the word love here in verse 2 –

And the reason is that it is the first-time love is mentioned in the bible.

The first mention of love in the bible isn't even God's love for His creation (back in Gen

1-2) – it's the mention of a father's love for his son -

and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

Abraham is going to be tested – and the bible teaches that you and I are going to be tested.

And we are going to be tested again and again and again

This shouldn't be a surprise to us -

Jesus warned His disciples and us -

[Jhn 16:33 NKJV] 33 "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Peter in his first epistle rights -

[1Pe 4:12 NKJV] 12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;

We will be tested – it is not a question of “if” – but “when”

For some of us – these trials and tests will seem severe

But what if I told you that God has designer trials that are tailor made for each child of God, to fit their unique circumstances.

Remember, God knows you and me

He knows our life

He knows our heart

He knows our future

And God has designed very specific tests and trials that are very specific to you and me.

The testing that Lot faced in Sodom was very different than the one that Abraham faces here.

Abraham was to take his son – the son of the promise – the one that he waited for 25 years (remember, he received the promise when he was 75 years old) – the one that he raised – btw, this is another thing that we get wrong sometimes. Isaac was not a little child when this happens – he is not a 5 year old, he is a grown man – he could have easily overpowered his dad.

But Isaac was submissive to his father's will.

And Abraham was to offer Isaac as a burnt offering.

3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

After receiving the command – notice, he didn't complain –

The scriptures tell us here in verse 3 that

Abraham obeyed God immediately.

We see it here at the beginning of verse 3 when Abraham got up early the next morning and made the trek to Mt Moriah.

I had you make a note of all the action words

That is a life of faith

It is action and action and action and action over and over again

There is no hesitation on the part of Abraham

But we see a more clearer picture back in Hebrews 11 – where the writer of Hebrews says that Abraham offered up Isaac –

In the Greek – in the tense that is used – it is written as if it had already been done / that it had been completed

But when we read the account in Genesis – we know that Abraham didn't sacrifice Isaac because the Angel of the Lord stopped him

[Gen 22:9-12 NKJV] 9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him.

And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound

Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. 10 And Abraham

stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the Angel of the

LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said,

"Here I am." 12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only [son], from Me."

The moment that God told Abraham – offer your son, your only son – your only begotten son – whom you love

The moment that God said that – Abraham, in his mind and in his heart – Isaac was already dead.

Try to put yourselves in Abraham's sandals –

Verse 4 here in Gen 22 tells us that for three days, Isaac was dead in the heart of Abraham

How in the world can Abraham bring himself, to the conclusion that Isaac is dead?

Here is the thing church –

Abraham came to this conclusion -

That in order for God to be real and in order for God to be true and keep His promises – He is going to have to bring his son back to life.

Was Abraham suffering inside as he made his way to Mt Moriah and as they climbed the mountain – of course he was

Was he anguished – of course he was

Did it hurt? Of course it did

But church – don't lose sight of this - that pain, anguish and suffering were things that Abraham had suffered from before – through previous tests

Do you think it was painful for Abraham to leave his homeland and most of his family to a land he had never seen?

Do you think it was painful for Abraham when he separated from Lot and his nieces and nephews.

What about when he had to let go of Ishmael – that was painful

God uses these things to strengthen our faith in Him.

God uses these things so that we may draw closer to Him.

Spiritual growth is often centered around sacrifice and suffering.

They become an opportunity for us to trust in the Lord and believe in the Lord

[Heb 12:11 NKJV] 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Again –

Abraham was 75 years old when he got the promise

He was 100 years old when Isaac was born – so he had to wait 25 years for the son of promise

He was about 120 years old when he was tested here in Gen 22

And he dies at the age of 175 years old

At the time of his death

He has one son - Isaac

And he had two grandsons – Esau and Jacob

This is what the writer of Hebrews means when he wrote that Abraham didn't see all the promises (11:13)

[Rom 4:20-21 NKJV] 20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

Look at verse 19 – in Gen 22

There is something else I want to show you here before we move on -

[Gen 22:19 NKJV] 19 So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

Abraham returns to his two servants –

but notice that nothing is said about Isaac

Did Abraham leave Isaac on top of Mt Moriah????

By the way – most bible scholars believe that the place where this occurs is the place where the temple is built.

So the question is - Where is Isaac???

If you read the rest of Gen 22 and 23 – no mention of Isaac

In fact, Isaac is not mentioned again until his bride arrives – when they bring his bride to be, Rebekah to him.

Again – a beautiful picture of our Lord and His church

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

Turn your bibles with me to Gen 27

Now, before we read the text –

I need to remind you that Lord had revealed to Rebekah the following –

[Gen 25:23 NKJV] 23 And the LORD said to her: "Two nations [are] in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; [One] people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger."

So the Lord made it clear to Rebekah who the son of promise was – the younger, Jacob.

[Gen 27:1-4 NKJV] 1 Now it came to pass, when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son." And he answered him, "Here I am." 2 Then he said, "Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death. 3 "Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. 4 "And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring [it] to me that I may eat, that my soul **may bless you before I die."**

So here at the beginning of ch 27 – Isaac was going to bless Esau.

Esau was his favorite

Esau was a mans man

He was a hunter

He was a man of the fields

While Jacob was a momma's boy

Jacob was Rebekah favorite

So Rebekah wants the blessing to go to Jacob – that is her favorite and also, God had told her that the oldest was going to serve the younger

She over hears the conversation between Isaac and Esau and she tells Jacob – I will cook the meat, you will bring it to your dad and he will bless you

This was a very dysfunctional family

However, there was a big problem

Esau was smelly and hairy guy

While Jacob was the opposite

So even though Isaac's eyesight was bad – they were worried that Isaac was going to catch on

[Gen 27:12-29 NKJV] 12 "Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing." 13 But his mother said to him, "[Let] your curse [be] on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get [them] for me." 14 And he went and got [them] and brought [them] to his mother, and his mother made savory food, such as his father loved. 15 Then Rebekah took the choice clothes of her elder son Esau, which [were] with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. 16 And she put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. 17 Then she gave the savory food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob. 18 So he went to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who [are] you, my son?" 19 Jacob said to his father, "I

[am] Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me." 20 But Isaac said to his son, "How [is it] that you have found [it] so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because the LORD your God brought [it] to me." 21 Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you [are] really my son Esau or not." 22 So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice [is] Jacob's voice, but the hands [are] the hands of Esau." 23 And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him. 24 Then he said, "[Are] you really my son Esau?" He said, "I [am]." 25 He said, "Bring [it] near to me, and I will eat of my son's game, so that my soul may bless you." So he brought [it] near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank. 26 Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near now and kiss me, my son." 27 And he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him and said: "Surely, the smell of my son [is] like the smell of a field Which the LORD has blessed.

Now – when Jacob receives the blessing – he leaves the tent and then Esau wanders in

He came in with the food – he wants his blessing.

However, Isaac at that moment, realizes that he has been duped by Jacob

[Gen 27:33 NKJV] 33 Then Isaac trembled exceedingly, and said, "Who? Where [is] the one who hunted game and brought [it] to me? I ate all [of it] before you came, and I have blessed him--[and] indeed he shall be blessed."

This chapter is full of deceit and lies and failure and difficulty and problems

And yet, this is the chapter that is highlighted in verse 20

In the chapter of great faith

You see church, great faith can be found in the midst of great failure

And what God is highlighting here is not the deception of Rebekah and Jacob

What is being highlighted here is Isaac coming to faith when he discovered that he had actually blessed Jacob instead of Esau.

That is why I had you highlight that Isaac trembled exceedingly –

Because it was then that he realized that he would always be defeated when he tried to resist God's will, even when he didn't like it.

Both Isaac and Rebekah – they were trying to help out God

Much in the same way that Sarah tried to help out God when she handed her servant to Abraham

That is where they failed

That is where they walked in the flesh instead of by faith

So, what Isaac is being honored in verse 20 - is for his willingness to believe God and bless his kids

It was by faith that he did this

He was trusting God with the future of his sons

He understood the promise that if God was to fulfill His promise to the end of the age, then – that included his kids, his grandchildren and continuing on to the generations to come.

I want to finish with this one last point concerning Esau -

[Gen 27:38 NKJV] 38 And Esau said to his father, "Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me--me also, O my father!" And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.

Years earlier – Esau had sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of lentils.

Esau could care less about the birthright – all he cared about was the blessing.

The thing about the birthright – part of the responsibilities of the birthright was that you were the spiritual leader of the family

Esau could care less about that but he still wanted the blessing that came with the birthright

As believers, as Children of God – we have the birthright

We have the responsibility to be the spiritual leaders – to be the salt and light

But unfortunately, many only desire the blessing without the birthright –

They want religion and what that might bring them – but they want no responsibility

[Jhn 15:13 NKJV] 13 "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

not understanding that the blessing comes with the birthright

God will enable us to become the man or the woman He wants us to be

loving people, in Jesus' name

walking by faith and not by sight

And I pray that we will be faithful men and women but that God will make us full of faith

Amen

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'