

Sermon for June 28, 2026
"God Will Provide"

Genesis 22:1-14

"After these things God tested Abraham." When I was in school, I hated tests. I'm sure we all did. First of all, it was hard work to study and take a test, and there was always the fear of failing the test.

When I got to college, however, I learned a different view of tests. I learned that tests were a good way of seeing if I had learned what I was studying. This would help me in my learning by giving my teachers an idea of where to concentrate assignments. It also gave me an understanding and confidence in what I knew. Tests themselves could make me think and learn by pushing me. Well Abraham had been walking with God for a long time. All that time he was learning what it meant to be a believer in God. Abraham had made some mistakes but he had learned from them. Therefore, God decided it was time for a midterm.

Why did God test Abraham? Some people think that God wanted to see if Abraham was really faithful. God knows everything, so God already knew if Abraham was faithful. God didn't need to see what Abraham had or hadn't learned like some earthly teacher. God may have known these things, but Abraham didn't. Abraham couldn't see his heart as clearly as God could. Abraham didn't understand what he was capable of through the faith God had taught him. God tested Abraham, not to cause trouble for him or to see if he would pass or fail. God must have known Abraham would pass. God tested Abraham to help strengthen him. God wanted to show Abraham and the world that he had faith in God. This would prepare Abraham for the future. In the process, Abraham would learn something new, not just about himself, but also about God.

So what was the test? God said to Abraham, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and sacrifice him to me." The difficulty of this test is obvious from the request. Not just "Take your son," but "your only son Isaac," whose very name meant laughter, "whom you love." God had promised Abraham and Sarah a child when they were very old, and they had waited a long time for Isaac. Abraham loved Isaac dearly. He was a gift from God. Now God was saying, "Sacrifice him" or "give him back to me." It seemed an impossible thing to ask of Abraham. It would be an impossible thing to ask of any parent. Could he have another son to replace him and give him descendants?

However, Abraham trusted God, so he took Isaac and some wood and fire and set out for the mountain. When they got to the mountain Abraham and Isaac were up alone. On the way up the mountain, Isaac realized something wasn't right. They had forgotten the lamb for the sacrifice. Therefore, he asked his father where it was. I imagine Abraham choked back the tears as he said, "God will provide the lamb for the sacrifice." Abraham wasn't lying to the boy. After all Isaac was the lamb for the sacrifice and God had provided him.

At the top of the mountain, Abraham bound Isaac. Then he placed him on the wood and prepared to sacrifice him in obedience to God. Just as he was about to plunge the knife into the boy's chest an angel called, "Abraham, Abraham, Stop! You have proven your obedience to God and your faith. Don't lay a hand on the boy!" Just then, Abraham saw a goat caught in a thicket. God had provided the lamb for the sacrifice. Therefore, he took that goat and sacrificed it.

"God will provide." That was the lesson Abraham and Isaac learned from all of this. God had provided a son even though Abraham and Sarah were old. Yet when God asked for Abraham to give that son back, Abraham trusted and obeyed. God could provide another son if that was God's will, and Abraham believed that God could provide a way out of a seemingly helpless situation.

I am sure this test strengthened Abraham and Isaac for the trials ahead, and it strengthened their faith. They now knew in a greater way that God would provide for them, and they knew that God would redeem them. Their example has strengthened people down through the ages. God's people need that kind of strength and faith and willingness to sacrifice.

If only people today could learn, that God will provide. People are too concerned with providing for themselves. They think that they are the ones that provide for their own needs. When in reality, it is God who provides, and if we would realize that, then we will have no trouble trusting God.

The ultimate example of God providing for our needs is Christ. The parallels between Abraham's test and Jesus' crucifixion are unmistakable. Like Isaac, we were all sentenced to die. We were all marked for sacrifice for our sins. One Jewish commentator noticed that Abraham placed the wood on Isaac's back and said, "It is like one who carries his own cross upon his shoulder." Like Isaac, we all carried the instrument of our death, our sins, on our backs as a great burden.

We had all been laid on the altar of our sins to be sacrifice in atonement for what we had done, and the knife of judgment had been raised to plunge itself into our hearts, but God cried, "Stop!" Then God provided a lamb to take our place, and the lamb was offered for our sins instead.

Yet, this was no ordinary lamb. It is significant that the Abraham's goat was caught in a thorn bush. After all it was a crown of thorns that was placed on Jesus' head. This lamb was the son of God. God, the all righteous One who provides, gave his son, his only son, whom he loved, as a sacrifice. On Mt. Moriah God provided a lamb to replace Abraham's only son, and on Mt. Calvary God provided his own son to replace us.

God provides on His holy mountain. God gives us all that we need to see us through the trials of this world. All through Abraham's life, God provided for him. Even when it seemed impossible, God provided, and God has provided for us. Even though it meant giving his only begotten Son.

God provides, but we have to accept God's provision. We have to obey God's will. Like Abraham, we have to be willing to give it all up, because we know that all good things come from God. If Abraham had never obeyed God's command to sacrifice Isaac he would have never received the blessing of God's provision. In the same way, we have to be willing to give it all up, if that is what God requires of us.

God provides. Accept that and believe it. Trust and obey. When you face trials and hardships, know that God is providing for you. Simply trust that truth. When you were born again you simply trusted that Christ had died for your sins. That simple faith was reckoned to you as righteousness. You didn't provide the salvation; God gave it to you as a gift. You merely accepted it by faith. Know that God provides for all your needs in the same way. Not by your striving, but by God's grace received through faith.