

Jehovah-Jireh

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Bible Text: Genesis 22

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Tonight we are in the book of Genesis and in chapter 22, Genesis chapter 22.

We are looking at a name of God and probably one that is one of the ones that most of us have heard before, the name Jehovah-Jireh which means “the Lord will provide, the Lord will provide” or “the Lord has provided.” And it is a very important name of God. It is one that really indicates to us the very nature of our God and the things that he does for us who are his children.

In Genesis chapter 22 it says in the first verse, “Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham.”¹ Now some translations it says “tempted,” doesn’t it? Do you have tested or tempted? Pardon me? Tempted? Ok. The word can mean either one and that’s the interesting thing. It is the same word for test and tempt. But we know that God doesn’t tempt anyone. That is not a purpose and a goal of the Lord. So we know that in this case it has the idea of a test, not a temptation. God tested Abraham.

Well, he told him to do something that is very, very strange. He told him to take his only son Isaac and it is interesting when he says his only son because we know that Abraham had another son, right? He had the son Ishmael. But according to God his only real son was Isaac because that was the one—we discussed this this morning—through whom the line would go to the Messiah. So this was the only son, the one who was special in the sight of God.

It is another interesting thing that we have here is that the word for “only” is a word that emphasizes uniqueness. There are two words that are translated “one” in the Hebrew Old Testament. One of them is the word אֶחָד (ekh-awd’) which means one, but has the idea of things being combined to make one. But this is the word יָחִיד (yaw-kheed’) and the word יְחִיד (yaw-kheed’) is a word that means “absolutely one, the only one. There are no other. This is it. This is the only one.”

So God is saying now, “I want you to take your only son and I want you to sacrifice him.”

¹ Genesis 22:1

I want us to think about this. You know, we read it and sometimes we don't really comprehend the depth of what is being asked of Abraham in this particular passage. Imagine this, that in your old age God had given to you a child that you had prayed for. That is the situation with Abraham. He was, in essence, childless or at least Sarah was childless and they were going to have a child and God promises that a child would come. And we know that Sarah laughed about it, "You've got to be kidding. I mean this is impossible. I am beyond the age of bearing children. How could I possibly have a child?"

And yet God's promise—as it always does—led to a fulfillment and, in fact, Sarah had a child, the child Isaac.

Now the child has grown up to some extent and God says to Abraham, "Now this is what I want you to do. I want you to take your son and I want you to go and I want you to sacrifice him on a mountain. That means you are going to take him. You are going to bind him with rope or whatever. You are going to put him on an altar. You are going to take a knife and you are going to kill your son."

Now imagine your own feelings in a situation like that. And the reaction is, "God, you don't really mean that. I mean, you know, this is the son that I was promised. This is the son that you said I would have and you also promised me that through this son there would be this great line where multitudes of people would come, where nations would come. How could it possibly be that after all of that you are saying to me now, 'Take your son and sacrifice him'?"

And yet Abraham trusted God. He believed in him. The Scripture tells us in another place that Abraham would have trusted that God could have raised Isaac from the dead² if necessary, but he would have done what God wanted him to do.

And so he, in fact, took the...took his son and he said, "We are going to sacrifice on the mountain."

And he and his son went and...up into the mountain with him. Let's read a little bit of it. It says in verse three:

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 wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and return to you." And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said,

² See Hebrews 11:19

"Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"³

Abraham's words are very instructive. He says, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son."⁴ And the two of them walked there.

And then we find that Abraham bound his son and he put him upon the altar and it says in verse 10, "And Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slay his son."⁵

This was enough of an indication that Abraham trusted God and that Abraham would do precisely what God told him to do, that if God says, "You are going to sacrifice your son," Abraham had faith that God was going to do something special. Because remember, God said, "It was through this son that you are going to be the father of many nations."

So God was going to provide a line through Isaac. How could that happen if he was going to sacrifice Isaac? Well, Abraham had faith that God was going to take care of all that. That if necessary, Isaac would be raised from the dead so that the line could, in fact, continue.

So as Abraham was stretching forth his hand ready to slay his son we read that the angel of the Lord...Now we have been through discussions of the angel of the Lord over and over again. I am convinced any time the angel of the Lord is there it is God. And here is God speaking. And he called from heaven and he said, "Abraham, Abraham!"⁶

And he said, "Here am I."⁷

"Do not stretch out your hand," he said, "against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."⁸

God then gives to Abraham this incredible blessing that his son will live, but the sacrifice will be provided.

Abraham looked and there was a ram caught in the thicket. God had provided that ram. And Abraham took the ram and he offered him up as a burnt offering in place of his son. And we are told, then, that Abraham called the name of that place the Lord will provide, Jehovah-Jireh, God will provide.

Now the word Jireh comes from a Hebrew word that has the idea "to see" or "to see to it." And it is the idea that the provision will be made. So here where we read this it means that God is definitely going to provide. The essence is that God provided this covenant. It

³ Genesis 22:3-7

⁴ Genesis 22:8

⁵ Genesis 22:10

⁶ Genesis 22:11

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Genesis 22:12

is very, very clear as we go down a little further in the passage God says this. He says in verse 16:

By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son, indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.⁹

Now the interesting thing is, this is just a recounting of the promise that God had already made. This, in fact, is God confirming his covenant to Abraham.

Do you remember back in Genesis chapter 12 we have the original giving of this great covenant? In Genesis chapter it says this in the first three verses.

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."¹⁰

What's he saying here? He is saying, "I have a special plan for you, Abraham."

Now this, you have to understand, is a time before Abraham had even left his old land and had trusted God to go to the land of Canaan.

Isn't it amazing—I think it is—that God placed such requirements on this man Abraham? In the first place he said to Abraham, he said, "I want you to leave this land that is yours and go to a land that I am going to show you," in Genesis chapter 12. He says to him, "You don't know where that land is, but I am going to send you there. You are going to go there and I am going to establish my covenant with you."

Well, I would have taken that as something absolutely amazing. Imagine if God would say to you, "You are going to leave Savannah where you have lived. You have done well in Savannah." Abraham was a very wealthy man in Ur of the Chaldees. Imagine that you have a business here and it has grown and you are a reasonably wealthy person and God says to you, "Now, you are going to leave this. You are going to give up everything that you have here and you are going to follow me to a place that you don't know about."

Now in our day and age that would be difficult because I guess we pretty much know about every place. But imagine this. Abraham had never traveled. He didn't know where Canaan was. He had no idea what he was going to encounter. The only thing he knew

⁹ Genesis 22:16-18

¹⁰ Genesis 12:1-3

was God said, “You are going to leave the land of your birth and you are going to go to a new place.” And so trusting God he left. I think that is incredible faith. I really do.

Then in chapter 22 he says to him, “Now I have something else for you. You are going to take your son and you are going to offer him as a sacrifice.”

God expected a lot of Abraham. He expected a high degree of faith, a faith that can hardly be imagined. God has never expected anything quite that great of me. I doubt whether he has expected anything quite that great of any one of us. But he expected it of Abraham.

God confirmed his covenant.

But I want you to notice something in verse 14 that is very, very interesting. Listen to the word that...the words that are used here. “And Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide [Jehovah-Jireh], as it is said to this day, ‘In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.’”¹¹

Now this is a very important statement because I want you to understand that history and archaeology leads us to believe that this mountain in which Abraham took his son and where he offered him as a sacrifice to God—and God stopped that sacrifice—this is the same mountain in which many, many years later the Lord Jesus Christ was sacrificed on the cross of Calvary. And it says here in this passage, “In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.”¹² What’s the it?

Well, God was talking about a sacrifice here, the sacrifice of Isaac. Well God is telling Abraham that in this very place something special is going to happen and a sacrifice is going to be provided. The ram wound up being the sacrifice for Abraham instead of Isaac. But in that very mountain the Lord Jesus Christ became the sacrifice for the sins of his people.

Remember that John the Baptist one day—we read in John chapter one and verse 29—said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”¹³

First of all we see that God confirmed his covenant. He did that with Abraham. Secondly we see that God provides a sacrifice for sin just as he provided the sacrifice for Abraham in that day, he provided the sacrifice for sin in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.

There is something else that God provided. There is something else that God provides. In this wonderful passage we also that he provides the power that we need to fulfill his purpose. I want you to think about that.

¹¹ Genesis 22:14

¹² Ibid.

¹³ John 1:29

Can you imagine what it took for Abraham to offer his son? I have a hard time imaging it, honestly. I have a hard time imagining it. But God gave him the power and the ability to do exactly what God told him to do, exactly what God was requiring of him. We need to fulfill whatever God's purpose is for us. By God's grace it is not to offer one of our children as a burnt offering, but it is to do his will in everything.

The wonderful passage that we read last week on Sunday morning in Romans chapter eight—I am going to read this again—in Romans chapter eight it says this in verses 28 and 29.

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son.¹⁴

That's God's purpose for us. God's purpose is that we be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ, that we begin more and more to be like Christ. That is what he wants in our lives and that is the goal that he sets before us. That is why he sacrificed his Son.

It wasn't just so that we could be saved and we could say, "Well, I am not going to hell. I am going to heaven." It is way beyond that. He wants us to become like Christ.

Well, he tells us that he would freely give us all things that we need. Isn't that what he says in this same passage in Romans chapter eight and verse 32? He says, "He who did not spare His own Son..."¹⁵ Just the way Abraham did not spare his own son, God didn't spare his own Son. But, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?"¹⁶

He is going to give us that which we need so that we can be conformed to the image of Christ. He gives us the ability to live a life for his glory, the ability to live a life that will honor him. He gives us the Spirit of God to dwell within us so that we can have the power to live for his glory.

Now when it speaks of our being conformed to the image of Christ we need to understand that in Hebrews chapter four we are told that the Lord Jesus Christ is like us except for sin. In Hebrews chapter four, if my page will turn, it says beginning with verse 14:

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.¹⁷

¹⁴ Romans 8:28-29

¹⁵ Romans 8:32

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Hebrews 4:14-15

In other words, Christ is like us. And as he is like us, we are to become more like him.

Now how is Jesus like us? Well, he knew what it meant to hunger, didn't he? He knew what it meant to be hungry. You know, he could have avoided that. He could have come to earth with a body that did not need food if he wanted that. He could do anything. But he allowed himself to become hungry so that he would be like us. He had a need to drink just as we have a need to drink. And he would drink water just as we need to drink water. The Lord Jesus Christ was one who would tire as we tire. He, in every respect was like us except that he did not sin.

Now God says that it is for us to become more like him. It is for us to make our lives to be more like the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, how do we do that? You know, I think he is telling us in a wonderful way at the end of this fourth chapter of the book of Hebrews, he says in the last verse, "Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need."¹⁸

Do we have a need for the Savior? Do we have a need for his grace and his ability to become more like him? Now the answer: Yes, we do. We do constantly. And he says that he has what we might call in our world an open door policy.

You know, isn't it kind of neat if you have a boss who has an open door policy? I have had both kinds, by the way. You know, I can remember in the army a chaplain is supposed to always have access to the commander. And I have had commanders that that meant all I had to do was walk up and knock on the door and I go in. That's all there was to it, that, you know, if I want to talk to the colonel, I go talk to the colonel. As long as he was not actively involved in a meeting or doing something else I could get in to see him, no problem at all. I have had others for whom an open door policy means, you know, make an appointment and, you know, we'll find a time to get together.

Well, the Lord Jesus Christ is telling us we don't need an appointment. We don't need to say, "All right. When do you have time? Is it, you know, Tuesday at four o'clock? All right. That's when I'll be there."

It doesn't work that way. Any time we need him, he is there. Any time we need help, he is there.

How do we come closer to the image of Christ? We do it by turning to him and asking for his help. And we can be assured of one thing. He is Jehovah-Jireh. He is the Lord who provides. And he will provide everything that we need.

Well, what does he expect of us? He expects us to be willing to sacrifice our Isaac. Now I don't know what that means in each one of our lives. The most precious thing that

¹⁸ Hebrews 4:16

Abraham had his son Isaac. And so God said, "That is what you are going to have to be willing to give up." The most precious thing, God said, "You will give that up."

But God in his matchless grace worked it out so he didn't have to.

What is it that we may need to sacrifice to be like the Lord Jesus Christ? I don't know. Does it mean that we would have to be willing to give up all the money that we have for the glory of God?

He probably won't make us do that, but is that what we have to be willing to do?

Do we have to be willing to give up the comforts that we have and say, "Lord, well, maybe you want to send me somewhere to a mission field?"

God may not do that, but we have to be willing.

Whatever is the most precious thing to us, we need to say, "Lord, if you want it, it's yours. I am ready to give up anything that I might serve. And the one thing I know is: You are Jehovah-Jireh. Just as you provided for Abraham, you will provide for me."

Some of the things that we need to consider in our lives are: "Lord, how do you want me to serve? Are there areas in the church that you would like me to be involved in that I am not involved in now?" Maybe we need to ask God that. And maybe we need to ask the Lord, "Are there things that I am not doing to serve you that I need to do?"

I don't know what those things might be. You know, I pray, "Lord, what do you want me to do? Where do you want me to go in my life? What do you want me to preach about and talk about?"

And God, I believe, answers me by way of directing me to certain portions of the Word of God. What are the things that God wants you to do? Whatever they are, that's what you need to be doing. What is it that he wants you to give up? What is the Isaac in your life? You need to turn it over to him and say, "Lord, if you want it, it's yours."

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for your love and goodness and thank you for all that you have given to us. You are the God who provides and, Father, we know that your provision is perfect for each one of us. Thank you, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.