



Hebrews 11:17-19

By Faith Abraham Forsook All Sun, Nov 16th 2008

Begin today – with a Pop Quiz

- Been working through Hebrews 11 – hall of faith – see what remember
- Match the person or people to what aspect of faith their lives illustrate
- **Us****Knows** what we could not know otherwise
- **Abel**.....**Obtains** Right standing with God
- **Enoch**.....**Pleases** God, without faith we cannot
- **Noah**.....**Fears** and acts on God's warnings
- **Abraham**.....**Follows** without knowing
- **Sarah (& Abraham)**...**Accomplishes** impossible
- **Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob**...**Waits** for heaven

Began with a Pop Quiz for two reasons

One – helped remind you of what we have seen – what faith does, is

Two – introduces what Abraham goes through today – Test

- Understand – God tests us...notice the “when” – it is a when in you & me
- God tells us the same thing in **James 1:13** – it is a “when”
- God tests us – not to harm us, not to tempt us – **James 1:13**
 - Temptation is to sin...testing, is not – not aimed at failure
- Why then does God test us?

In education, tests, quizzes are needed

- Education system today is flawed...about grades, not learning
- Quizzes, Tests – to be real have to be “pop”
- Point of a test – not torture...but to inform, let know where are
 - Some – feeling overconfident are brought up short by a test
 - Some – feeling under confident are encouraged by a test
 - Some – rightly knowing themselves, are confirmed by a test
- Not supposed to be about grades (cramming for a test and forgetting)
- So, again, God tests us...it is a when

Today, we get to see God testing Abraham Let us turn to Gen 22

- Read the whole account...talk about

I. Amazing Picture

1. First thing – almost criminal to be in Gen 22 – and not point this out

- a. Not only criminal, but distracting...some seeing, hoping will point out
- b. Perhaps the most powerful thing about this chapter, not the point of Heb 11

2. Gen 22 foreshadows the great sacrifice of Christ

- a. **Who** – Father sacrificing promised son
 - i) “only Son, whom you love” (v.2)
- b. **What** – greatest sacrifice
 - i) Law of First mention – sets tone
 - ii) Love (v.2), worship (v.5)
- c. **Where**– “Moriah”(v.2) “Mt of the Lord” (v.14)
- d. **When**– “then on the third day” (v.4)
- e. **Why**–“in your Seed all..nations..blessed”(v.18)
- f. **How**–“took..wood..laid it on...his son” (v.6)
 - i) “God will provide Himself the Lamb” (v.8)
 - ii) “The-Lord-Will-Provide” Yahweh Yireh (14)
 - iii) “in mount of Lord it shall be provided”

3. What an incredible foreshadowing of the greatest sacrifice

- a. Hope you see it...and hope you know it
- b. In one sense, what we now turn to – fulfills God’s call for us to take up cross

II. Subject Matter of Test – What?

- 1. Isaac
 - a. His son, only son (God does not recognize Ishmael?)
 - b. Son whom he loves
- 2. Moral Dilemma
- 3. Spiritual Dilemma
 - a. He was God’s Promise to Abraham
 - b. He was God’s Purpose for Abraham
- 4. Life has many such dilemmas
 - a. Places where God’s promises and the reality He has us in – seem opposite
- 5. This is more...willing entering dilemma
 - a. Abraham’s high mark of faith is one that we willingly embrace, choose what God is calling us into – even when seems contrary

III. Purpose of the Test – why?

1. Proves Abraham's Heart
 - a. This is true – God tells Abraham...now He knows.
 - b. Of Course, God knew...but now Abraham knows
2. Purifies Abraham's Heart
 - a. Tests...don't just revel – they are meant to purify
 - b. Pro 17:3 – God purifies our heart by such tests – picture it
 - c. 1 Pet 1:6-7, Ps 66:10-12
3. So, question again...what is God purifying, aiming at by this test
 - a. This is a huge question – one that I want you to consider well
 - b. Jesus helps us see our internal makeup in Mat 6:24. Can only have one master. Something about how we are – one thing as master, on throne
 - c. There is a book that helped me to see this better than ever did before
 - i) The Pursuit of God – by AW Tozer. Good book, encourage
 - ii) Chap 2 – The Blessedness of possessing nothing
 - A. If have, encourage you to read as follow up, might send out via email
 - iii) Will quote from rather extensively today.

Before the Lord God made man upon the earth He first prepared for him by creating a world of useful and pleasant things for his sustenance and delight. In the Genesis account of the creation these are called simply 'things.' They were made for man's uses, but they were meant always to be external to the man and subservient to him. In the deep heart of the man was a shrine where none but God was worthy to come. Within him was God; without, a thousand gifts which God had showered upon him.

Our woes began when God was forced out of His central shrine and 'things' were allowed to enter. Within the human heart 'things' have taken over. This is not a mere metaphor, but an accurate analysis of our real spiritual trouble. The pronouns 'my' and 'mine' look innocent enough in print, but their constant and universal use is significant. They express the real nature of the old Adamic man better than a thousand volumes of theology could do. They are verbal symptoms of our deep disease. The way to deeper knowledge of God is through the lonely valleys of soul poverty and abnegation of all things. The blessed ones who possess the Kingdom are they who have repudiated every external thing and have rooted from their hearts all sense of possessing.

- iv) See in a picture form – man and things
 - A. Throne of the heart – only one can be there. Only God can fill
 - B. God created all things to enjoy – relationships, stuff, money, etc
 - C. Man's problem, tries to satisfy throne with things...doesn't work
 - D. Maybe some are there right now....I know it was where I was
 - E. Invite you to Christ, only He fills – satisfies
 - F. Problem...Christians can still mess this up. Only one thing on throne
 - G. Christians sometimes allow other things to be what they serve
 - H. Serve money, job, relationships...and try to enjoy God – messed up
 - I. Some here...right there. Life in internal mess.
 - J. Things don't satisfy...and God cannot be just enjoyed

IV. Passing of Test – how?

1. By Faith – that is what this chapter in Hebrews is about
 - a. What is faith – faith comes from hearing, hearing by the Word
 - b. Is to hear...to trust...and obey
 - c. Abraham heard God's promise of Isaac, believed
 - d. Abraham heard God telling him to kill his son...believed
2. Concluding...God is able
 - a. God takes us into Abraham's heart – how did he put this together
 - b. Abraham knew God could not lie, be unfaithful
 - c. So – he reasoned, concluded – picture it, wheels spinning
 - d. He reasoned God could – was able to raise Isaac up
 - i) Is not exactly what happened....but Abe knew was possible
 - ii) Catch this – no Biblical example of resurrection up to that point
 - iii) Yet, Abe still believed – amazing faith
3. God calls us to such faith - believes Him...even when can't put together
 - a. Embracing Sovereignty of God and responsibility of man
 - b. Embracing God's love, purposes, when life is confusing

V. Outcome of Test

1. Passed the test Abraham did great...passed with flying colors

a. Passed immediately...was not always true in his life...Learned to trust God

2. Received Isaac back...and much more

a. In Abe's mind, Isaac was dead...but he gets him back

b. Also hears God's approval and commitment to bless him – Gen 22

c. On top of this –Still had all he had before...but nothing possessed him

Abraham possessed nothing. Yet was not this poor man rich? Everything he had owned before was still his to enjoy: sheep, camels, herds, and goods of every sort. He had also his wife and his friends, and best of all he had his son Isaac safe by his side. He had everything, but he possessed nothing. There is the spiritual secret. There is the sweet theology of the heart which can be learned only in the school of renunciation.

d. Want you to think through this carefully, to see it

e. This is not just terms. Doesn't mean we can always keep what God touches

i) Sometimes He takes away - Paul's throne in the flesh

3. It is to such renunciation God is calling us..working, maybe today

a. **Phil 4:11-3** – learned, have or not have – content...because of Christ

b. **Mat 6:24-33** – seek first...and have all these things (external)

c. **Luke 9:23-24** – called to daily take up our Cross...that is this

d. **Luke 14:26,33** – forsake all. That is what Abe did.

i) Want you to see – such a life can be lived...Abe did...you can

ii) Likely...that are not many that have risen so high in faith

iii) For Abe he is well over a hundred...finally here...

iv) But want you to see it – long for it, pursue it

Let us never forget that such a truth as this cannot be learned by rote as one would learn the facts of physical science. They must be experienced before we can really know them. We must in our hearts live through Abraham's harsh and bitter experiences if we would know the blessedness which follows them. The ancient curse will not go out painlessly; the tough old miser within us will not lie down and die obedient to our command. He must be torn out of our heart like a plant from the soil If we would indeed know God in growing intimacy we must go this way of renunciation. And if we are set upon the pursuit of God He will sooner or later bring us to this test. The way to deeper knowledge of God is through the lonely valleys of soul poverty and abnegation of all things. The blessed ones who possess the Kingdom are they who have repudiated every external thing and have rooted from their hearts all sense of possessing.

