

Title: Abraham's Faith ---Part 4

*The Supreme Sacrifice**Text: Hebrews 11:17-19*

Hebrews chapter 11, please. We are looking at the matter of Faith. Hebrews chapter 11.

There are notes in your bulletin. and I trust that you will use them as we study the Word of God this morning.

This really is a tremendous chapter on Faith. Please remember that in the first three verses there is a short explanation concerning faith. This is not so much a definition of faith, as much as telling us what faith will produce. You see, real faith will produce something. Real faith acts upon what it says it believes. Faith does something to prove that it is valid and real. *Time*

Then to illustrate this principle, the writer of Hebrews gives to us a series of O.T. men who demonstrated that they were men of faith because they did something to prove they had faith.

For ~~this~~ *These* past few weeks we have been looking at Abraham.. We have been looking at the things that he did which, again, proved he was a man of faith.

(1 ) For example , in verses 8-10 it says that Abraham was obedient to God's Call. God called him to leave Ur of the Chaldeans and to go to a land that he had never seen before. And the Bible says in Vs 8 that Abraham believed God's word, and he took his family to that distant land.

(2 ) Secondly, we looked at the main obstacle that faced Abraham in Verse 11 to 12. This test of faith related to the fact that he was <sup>87</sup>100 years old and his wife was <sup>89</sup>90. and God told them that they were going to have a child. And they laughed. Thus their son was called Isaac.. Isaac meaning..laughter.

(3 ) And then third, we looked at the real objective that they had in verses 13-16. And here the Bible teaches that Abraham was not simply looking for the land of Canaan. But, that Abraham had his heart set on a heavenly city whose builder and maker was God.

(4 ) Now, today, we want to come to the fourth test in Abraham's faith. And this test was probably the hardest of all. But, again, Abraham did something to prove that he had faith.

Hebrews chapter 11 beginning with Vs 17

(Read Vs 17-19 )

PRAYER

(4) Now, in Vs 17 we see the example of Abraham in the offering of his only son Isaac. This is recorded in Genesis chapter 22.

Now, I would like you to notice <sup>2</sup> basic <sup>principles</sup> things here in verse 17 to 19.

(1) First of all, this test <sup>of faith</sup> involved his only begotten son. According to the Bible ~~in offering up his only begotten son, Isaac,~~ the test involved his only son. <sup>Isaac's</sup> Now I want to take a moment to find out what that means.

<sup>By offering Isaac</sup> Noticed Vs 17 starts out by saying "By Faith, Abraham, when he was tested, Literally it is "being tested". It is in the present tense. Meaning.. "it was going on."

"Being continuously tested." Then there is the example.. "he offered up Isaac." You see, offering up Isaac was not the only way in which Abraham was tested. He was tested in the very announcement that he was going to have a child. Let alone killing the child through <sup>whom</sup> the Lord said He would bring the Messiah. So, Abraham was being constantly tested.

Another interesting thing about Vs 17 is the second word "offering" It means that he "was continuously offering". And the word is indicating the process of offering. Because you see, it couldn't say that he finally did it.' Because he never did kill Isaac. The point that the test was in his continuous offering. Not meaning that he offered Isaac several times. But looking at the process of offering by which he got the wood, he got the knife, and started walking up the hill with his son Isaac. But, he never did finish it. He never did sacrifice Isaac, as you know. But, God provided a lamb in place of his son.

But the test was severe. And it is looked at in a continuous idea. Because you can imagine the trauma in Abraham's heart.

According to Genesis 22 God told him to take Isaac and go up to Mt. Moriah and offer him <sup>there as a sacrifice</sup> ~~there~~. Abraham has <sup>to</sup> get the wood. He has <sup>to</sup> get the robe to tie him. He has <sup>to</sup> get the knife. And he takes two animals and some servants with him. And he tells <sup>them</sup> me to stay at the foot of the mountain. "I will go to the top and then <sup>we</sup> <sub>I</sub> will return to you."

But as they are walking up the mountain Isaac puts two and two together. And he says, "Dad, isn't there something missing here?"

I mean we are carrying the knife, the wood, the robe. But, where is the offering? And instead of saying to Isaac, "Hay, <sup>buddy</sup>, you are it." NO.. instead of saying that., Abraham says to Isaac "God will provide himself <sup>a</sup> Ram for the offering."

<sup>We</sup> Now, there is two ways to take that. (1) Number one, that some how when get up there on top there will be a little lamb running around. And we will catch him. Which doesn't appear to be the truth. Because Abraham didn't even know it when he raised the knife over the body of Isaac. God had to show him where the Ram was caught in the bushes.

You can take it that way. Or, (2) you can take it, as the Hebrew suggest, that God will provide himself as the lamb. And to me that makes more sense. Because Abraham already had his <sup>flesh</sup> confidence in God and already knew what God was doing. And he knew that God, himself, would be the substitution. And no matter even if he had to kill Isaac, there was nothing to worry about because God would provide final atonment, final substitution for all man's sin through the Messiah who would come.

Now, two things about this only begotten son. And both things are tied up in the word "begotten."

<sup>only</sup> Some people say that that proves that Jesus Christ was not really God in the flesh, but was "begotten" of a human father and mother. There are a lot of people who believe that. There is a certain cult that really teaches that. You see, it is used of Jesus. "Only begotten son." And every time it is used it is used <sup>by</sup> of the writer John. For example, in John 1:14 it says.. "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Or, in John 1:18 which says, "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained him."

Or, as John 3:16 says "For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son."

Also, in I John 4:9 we find the same thing. That God sent his only begotten son. So, it is used five times by the writer John to refer to Jesus

Now, <sup>people</sup> ~~Jews~~, also hear of Issac. And I believe that is the key text for helping us to understand in what sense is Jesus the "only begotten son" of God. Well, let's take for a moment the word "begotten." You see, that term cannot refer to birth, alone. It is impossible. WHY? Because Issac was not the only son who was born to Abraham. Yet, the text says in Vs 17 that he offered up his only begotten son.

But he wasn't the only son he had interms of birth. He also had Ishmael by Hagar. And he had six other sons by Ca'tur'a, his second wife.

So, it is impossible to say that Isaac was his only begotten son by birth. (2 ) Now, the second part of it meaning "only" Now, "only" cannot mean "only" in every sense. You say, "are you sure you know what you are doing, Pastor Bill. Yes, I know what I am doing. And I know what I just said.

"Only cannot mean "only" in every sense. Let me show you what I mean. In referring to Jesus, Jesus is not the only person named the "Son of God." You see, if that is what it means---only meaning only begotten", So, he is the only son of God..NO! Because there are others called "son of God."

Namely: we have angels who are called sons of God. Adam, himself, is called a son of God. And all believers, today, are called sons of God.

So, he isn't "only" in the sense of that meaning "only son of God". Meaning "title" or "name". That is impossible.

<sup>Taking</sup> ~~Taking~~ all of this together, and <sup>Talking</sup> ~~Talking~~ what verse 18 says which is the follow up to Vs 17. "And he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; it was he to whom it was said, 'IN ISSAC YOUR SEED SHALL BE CALLED.'" We therefore learn the meaning of "only begotten". And that is "unique." Meaning "the only one of its kind."

In the case of Isaac. He is the only one of his kind of Abraham's children through whom the Messiah would come. "In Isaac your seed shall be called."

And Jesus, also, is <sup>the</sup> unique son. There is none other like him. For no other son of God was God in human flesh. NONE...Including angels, Adam and us. He was unique. The only one of it's kind.

So, what we have here is a tremendous testimony to the person of Christ. As well as referring to Abraham's son, Issac

Now, in Vs 18 the second thing that I want you to see. First of all, the test involved in his only begotten son. And that was a real test. The one through whom the Messiah would eventually come.

(2 ) But secondly, the testimony of God was at stake. The testimony of God was at stake. This really strick me. In Vs 18 God had said to Abraham, "In Isaac your seed shall be called."

Now, God ask him to kill that boy. So, the testimony of God, God's promise to Abraham, is now at stake. How will God fulfill his Word? *if Isaac is Killed!*

You know, many times in my own faith I find that is exactly what God does. In the very area in which He has promised to be faithful, he will produce a test that puts his promise at stake.

Well, don't worry about it. If our faith and confidence is in God, we have nothing to worry about. God will fulfill his word. No matter what. No matter how severe the test. And Abraham had to learn that. Let me show you what I mean.

*chapter 12*  
In Genesis, God said to Abraham, "In your seed I will bless the entire world." All nations will be blessed.

And Abraham realized that if this was going to happen you would need a boy. You must have a son. That is what God said.

Now, at that point when he believed God, he was 75 years old. Now, in this little problem that Abraham was facing, 75 isn't too bad. He had heard of people who were 75 years old having children. That wasn't too bad. But, you know, he couldn't quite see this because Sarah's womb was barren.

So, here is what he said. The first time he faced that issue he said, "Now, wait a minute. What God means is "one born in my own household." So, he looked at Eliezer (El i e'zer) of Damascus. Eliezer was a steward in Abraham's household. And he said to God, "Surely, you mean Eliezer. One who was born in my own household. And God said, "NO."

So, Abraham puts two and two together. And as time rolls on we find Abraham in Chapter 17, eleven years later, welcoming Ishmael. Abraham is now 86 years old. And he figures that Ishmael is the answer to God's promise.

And <sup>So</sup> ~~then~~ Abraham says to God. "Oh, that Ishmael may live before you." And God says, "I appreciate the help. But no it is not Ishmael."

Now, I know that is reading between the lines. But if you read those two verses you will get the point. "In Isaac your seed shall be called."

The interesting thing is that Abraham didn't have a son until 14 years later. But God already told him his name. Do you remember? When God told Abraham and Sarah that they were going to have a son, they both laughed. And because they laughed there son was named "laughter", or Isaac. It is sort of a constant reminder to Abraham about faith.

I am so glad that we have this story in God's Word. Abraham trusted. Then he doubted and struggled with his faith. And yet, God was always there. Isn't that great? We are just like Abraham. We trust and then we doubt. And yet though it all, God is always there. And that is so wonderful about our word God. You know, he never gets tired of us crying out for "help." And he loves us so much that He continues to reassure us of His promises and His love. Even though we have trouble believe all the time.

And so, dear friends, in the area of faith, the real issue is the testimony of God. His testimony is at stake. Not Abraham's faithfulness to God. It is God's faithfulness and promise to Abraham. You see, God wants us to trust Him. Not to trust ourselves to trust Him. But to trust Him. And there is a real difference.

Peter says in 2 Peter chapter 3 that "in the last days there will be people going around saying, 'where is the promise of His coming. Haven't all things been continuing as they have been since the beginning of the world.'"

People questioning the promises of God. It is the testimony of God that is always at stake. But God is faithful. Every last promise..every word that He has ever said..about what would happen has always come true. There has never been a statement that God has ever made that hasn't come true. And of course we know about many of the fulfilled statements of God. And there are still unfulfilled prophecy that are going to happen.

We all need to trust God. Not trust ourselves to believe in God. Therefore making it happen. NO!.....

Many people think: if I really believe enough, <sup>Then</sup> ~~so how~~ God will ~~then~~ do what He promised. Because I really believe enough. ISN'T THAT STUPID?

No! To trust God is to believe that He is faithful who has promised to you. He will do just what He said. It is to trust God.

And of course that is the real issue in our hearts. Are <sup>we</sup> ~~you~~ trusting God? Or, are <sup>we</sup> ~~you~~ trusting <sup>ourselves</sup> ~~yourself~~ to somehow have enough faith so that God will then respond. *Faith is trusting God to do what He promised.*

(3) The third thing about this offering of Isaac is that Abrahams' faith was in God's power to raise the dead. Vs 19 says "He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead; from which he also received him back as a type

The verse simple means that Abrham believed that even if he had to kill Isaac, God would raise him up from the dead. This is a fantastic verse. It proves that Abraham was a man of faith.

You see, Abraham ~~knew~~ what God had said. Abraham knew the test that God gave him. <sup>He</sup> was ask to kill his son. But in that moment of time he believed. He wasn't questioning God at all. ~~He~~ put two and two together and realized this: God has to be faithful to his word because He is God. Therefore, he will have a plan: namely ---resurrection.

And do you know that in Genesis 22:5 when he left those men at the foot of that mountain, he said to them: "that he and the boy would go up yonder and worship and we will come back again."

Abraham's confidence was in the Lord. And he knew that even if he had to kill Isaac, God was able to raise him from the dead. why/ Because God didn't say through one of you boys, the seed is going to come. NO WAY. Abraham knew the promise. God said that the seed would come through Isaac. That Isaac would also have a son. So, Abraham knew ~~that~~ there was only one solution. THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.

Isn't that fantastic? That this man in a moment of time realized that God would be faithful. In fact, Abraham never even argued with God. "Hay God! if you do this, then how will this happen?"

You see, that is probably what we would have done. Right? We give God 30 reasons why he can't do what he is doing. You know?

A lot of things get to be pressure in our lives and we question God. You know, God you can't be doing these things and still be faithful.

Well, I like Abraham in this moment. Really teaching us faith. He never questioned God at all. He knew that God was able to do what He said. And the only thing he could figure out was that He was going to do it in a different way. Through the resurrection. Vs 19 is a fantastic verse. He knew that God would raise him from the dead.

Then Vs 19 says, "from which he also received him back as a type." The word "type" is the word "parable."

Now, I learn why God did the whole thing in Genesis 22. It is a parable. Now, what is it a parable of? It is a parable of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

When Abraham went to offer up Isaac, God provided, himself, a lamb. Instead of His son Issac. Substitutionary death. When Christ went to the cross to die for your sins and mine, he substituted himself for you and me.

A parable. When Abraham says that he knew that God would raise him from the dead, he received the whole story by way of parable. There was no literal resurrection there, as you will remember. God stopped him before He killed Isaac. It is only a parable. But the parable teaches a tremendous truth. That the Messiah also, who would be killed, would be resurrected. Tremendous teaching.

Now, I would like you to turn to Romans 4 and show you the point. The book of Romans chapter 4 verses 18 to 25. This passage, by Paul, clearly reveals that the whole issue was belief in the resurrection of the dead.

Now, I don't know how much you know about the Bible, or where you stand on this. But, dear friends, the Bible teaches that you cannot be a christian unless you believe in the resurrection of the dead. It is impossible. That is what Christian hope is all about. In fact the Bible says in Romans 10:9 "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved."

It is impossible to be saved unless you believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.



You may believe a lot of fine things about Jesus, but unless you believe that He arose from the dead, you can't be possible be a believer. That is the whole issue of what we believe that makes us christians.

And Romans chapter 4 will nails it down. Vs 18 speaking about Abraham..

(Read Romans 4:18-21)

Isn't vese 21 fantastic? You should memorize that verse. "And being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform."

At this point let me say this: granted Abraham laughed...granted Sarah laughed. They both creaked up when they heard that they were going to have a child. I understand that. But the Bible says that he did not waver in unbelief. He did believe that God was going to do what he said. He creaked up at the method that God said. But he knew that God would do it all the way. God would do it. He just wasn't expecting that method.

And did you know that the Bible does not put down their laughter? A lot of people think that. You know, we laugh at this and say he was weak in faith. OH NO...Did you know that God told them that the whole situation was caused by God? It was God who caused them to laugh. So that Isaac would be callled laughter. And everyone who creak up when they heard about it? If you don't see that, you need to study that story again. God told them the reason he did all of that so that they would laugh with them. It is not laugh meaning "funny", but laugh with joy. God is able to do the impossible. What a jok on the human race. Who say that all things go this way. And it is impossible for God to intervine and do something supernatural. It is God's little jok on the human race. And the believer laughs with Abraham and Sarah. We laugh with joy in our hearts. God is able to do what he says he will do. And Abraham was assured of that.

Now, look at Vs 22...(Read Romans 4:22-25)

Dear friends, did you know that God counted Abraham to be righteous not because he lived a good life, but because he believed that God's power was able to do what He said. And that God could even raise Isaac from the dead. And this lesson, Paul says, in now for all of us.

Do you know how God counts you to be righteous? Not because you do good things...and score enough points with Him. No that is not the way. God counts you and me righteous on the same bases that He did Abraham. Because we believe in God's power. Especiall the resurrection from the dead.

That is something a person struggles with. I talk with Christians who struggle with this issue. Dear friends, God is not making any of us righteous. Did you know that? We will not be make righteous untill the second coming of Christ.

The word "reckoned" means "to declair". Righteous is something that God declares about you because of something Jesus did. Not because of something you do at all. You are not worthy of salvation. We never will be. We are all sinners. But, the Bible teaches us that the moment we believe that God is able to do what he says. We believe that God raised Jesus from the dead. We believe in the hope of the believer. The Bible teaches that God declares you to be righteous. Your are declared righteous by God bases on your faith in God. Not in yourself to do what you think God wants you to do.

That is why it is so important to confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and to believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead."

When you do that, dear friends, you to shall be saved.

Let us Close in Prayer