

On A Hill Far Away

I. **Prayer:** *a test of faith, a test of hope, a test of love.*

II. Slide1 Intro: On A Hill Far Away

A. *Faith is like calories: you can't see them, but you can always see their **results**.* Swindoll

B. After waiting 25 years to have a son, Abraham faces the worse test of faith *ever*.

C. Slide2a When John Bunyan was in jail (after the restoration of Charles II in 1660, it was illegal to conduct divine service except in accordance with the forms of the Church of England. Bunyan, who persisted in his unlicensed preaching, was confined to *Bedford county jail* from 1660 to 1672) He was thinking of what must happen to his family if he was executed. Especially the thought of his *little blind daughter*, who was so dear to him, haunted him: "O," he said, "I saw in this condition I was a man who was pulling down his house upon the head of his wife & children; yet, thought I, I must do it, I must do it."

1. Slide2b *The dearest idol I have known, Whate'er that idol be, Help me to tear it from thy throne, And worship only thee.* (wow)

D. The writer to Hebrews takes faith out of *religious theory* & clothes it w/**flesh & blood**.

1. James said, **faith without works is dead?** *Meaning, if there is true faith, there will be consequent actions.*

2. **Inward** faith always leads to **outward** evidence.

3. **Faith** *assumes, presumes, supposes & presupposes obedience.*

III. Slide3a ABARAHAM'S SORROW (1-8)

A. **God tested Abraham** - God is not in favor of human sacrifice, **and** He later directly prohibits it (Lev.18:21, Deut 12:31).

1. **Satan** *tempts* us to bring out the **worst** in us, **but** **God** *tests* us to help bring out the best. *Wiersbe*

2. But this would not only be a sacrifice of his **son**, **but** of his **hopes**, of his **dreams**, **and** his **25 year wait**.

- B. (2) It doesn't say, *Take your son, whom you love, 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.* [not Ishmael]
1. **No**, but emphasizes, *Take your son, your **only son Isaac**, whom you **love**.*
- C. **Only son** - emphasizing **value not number**. Yes, *Ishmael* was his 1st son, **but Isaac** is whom the *covenant promise* would be **passed through**.
1. In Heb.11:17 *Isaac his **only son***, *monogenēs* is used...the same word found in Jn.3:16 describing **Jesus**. Above all, this term refers to **uniqueness**.
- D. **Slide3b** This event is a wonderful **type of Christ**, the **only Son** who was willing to give His life to please His Father. [Both Isaac and Christ were promised sons...]
1. **Both** were born miraculously (Christ Virgin birth; Isaac miraculous birth). **Both** brought **joy** to the heart of the father. **Both** were born at the right time. **Both** were persecuted by their brethren. **Both** were obedient unto death. **Isaac** questioned his father, and Jesus asked, *My God, why have You forsaken Me?*
- E. **Whom you love** - 1st mention of love in the bible (22 ch's in).
- F. (3) **My question:** *How did Abraham feel that evening? How did God the Father feel the days leading up to His Sons death?*
Is God the Father cold & callous (despot)? Does He have feeling/emotions? Abraham had 3 days to contemplate the killing of His son (how long did God the Father?)
- G. **Early** - quick obedience? couldn't wait to do the will of God? set his alarm clock early? *maybe?* - **Or**, as *Soren Kierkegaard* said, *that maybe he went mad all night & most likely didn't sleep.* I agree, I don't think he could sleep...*what father could?*
- H. Abraham very wealthy, plenty of servants...**yet he saddles the donkey, he cuts the wood.**
1. Martin Luther, *"The only cure he knew, humanly speaking apart from prayer and meditation, of the **onslaught of a debilitating depression** was to **busy your hands with manual labor.**"*
 2. I picture him swinging away. Cutting the **fire wood** for the **funeral pyre** of his son. Each stroke with more intensity.
- I. (5) **The Faith verse** - *we will come again to you.*

J. Slide3c Heb.11:17-19 helps us out here. *By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, 18 of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” 19 He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.*

1. Abraham took out the knife & was ready when...he was stopped *by a voice from heaven*. The *same voice* that **remained silent** 2000 yrs later on the same hill called Calvary.
2. **But** here finally in vs.19 we find out that Abraham’s faith, was in the loving character of God, which enabled him to *solve this crisis by reasoning that* God was in full control of both **death & life**; He could **restore** as well as **take**.

a) This is Resurrection faith.

3. Slide4 Considered/λογίζομαι (Heb.11:19) - a *mathematical term* where we get our english word *logarithm*, it means *to calculate or reckon upon the basis of firm evidence*.¹

a) Slide5 Abraham was mathematical in his deliberation, **not** faith *w/o reason*...

Abraham simply calculated **GOD** into the equation. [It’s like having *a God key* on your calculator]

K. (6) *The loading of the wood onto Isaac* brings to mind the detail in John 19:17 *he went out, bearing his own cross*. **But** the *fire* and the *knife* are in the **father’s** hands. **Victim** and **offerer** walking both together. *Kidner, D.*

L. (8) Abraham’s *God will provide* was to be immortalized in the name of the place (see vs.14)

1. We could call it *his lifelong motto*. *Many have lived by it since*.
2. His complete **certainty of God**, together with **complete openness as to detail**, makes this **a model reply to an agonizing question**. *Kidner, D.*

IV. Slide6a **ISAAC’S SUBMISSION (9,10)**

A. (9) **Bound Isaac his son** - If Isaac was strong enough to **carry** the wood, he would have been able to **resist**. There is neither record of a *struggle* **nor** *a word of exchange* for either Abraham or Isaac.

¹ Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament, pg.709.

- B. (10) Took the knife to **slaughter** his son - occurs elsewhere in the OT of human sacrifices by pagans (Isa 57:5; Ezek 16:21; 23:39). Its use here may serve to heighten the horror of the event. Nothing worse than the **slaughter** of **children**, especially for *religious reasons*.
- C. Slide6b **Never doubt in the dark what God has told you in the light.**

V. Slide7 **GOD'S SUBSTITUTION (11-24)**

- A. (12) You have not **withheld your** son, your only son, from Me - same word used in the LXX as in Rom.8:32 **spare**. *He who did not **spare** his own Son but gave him up for us all.*
- B. Slide8 (13) **Instead of his son - Substitution.**
1. In understanding **Atonement** in theology we call it **Penal Substitution** - (penal = penalty. **So**, Jesus bore our **penalty** & Jesus was our **substitute**).
 - a) It's also referred to as **Vicarious Atonement** (a **Vicar** is one who stands in the place of another)
- C. Slide9a We also see **4 terms** that show how Christ's death met the 4 needs that we have as sinners:
1. We deserve to **die** for the penalty of sin. **by sacrifice** (to pay the penalty of death).
 2. We deserve to **bear God's wrath** against sin. **by propitiation** (to appease God's wrath).
 3. We are **separated** from God by her sins. **by reconciliation** (to bring us back into fellowship with God).
 4. We are **in bondage to sin** and to the kingdom of Satan. **by redemption** (to ransom).
 - a) Slide9b These 4 needs are met in Christ's death (see brown above).
- D. (14) **The Lord will provide/or see to it** (from vs.8) - this is **Jehovah Jireh**. *God providing for your salvation.*
- E. I hope everything screams inside you, **this is not fair**. *No father should ever face being asked to **sacrifice his son!*** Oh wait, One did.
- F. **It is of no value to God to give Him your life for death.** He wants you to be **a living sacrifice**, to let Him have all your powers that have been saved and sanctified through Jesus. This is the thing that is acceptable to God. *Chambers, O. My utmost for his highest.*

1. Slide10 Rom.12:1 *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a **living sacrifice**, holy and acceptable to God, which is your **spiritual worship** (aka *reasonable service*).*
 2. **Living sacrifice** – We usually think of sacrifices as something that is **dead**.
 - a) We're **dead** in the sense that we *no longer live for ourselves*, but we're **alive** in that *we now live for God*.
 - b) Many will boast, *they'd die for Christ...but* what He wants to know is *will you live for Him?*
 - c) **What is the problem with living sacrifices?** (they keep crawling off the altar)
 - (1) Don't be *defeated* if you find yourself *off the altar*, saint.
 - (2) **Consecration is a process**. It takes daily, even hourly, commitment to live for God.
 - (3) Don't ask, *Have I presented myself*, but **am I presenting myself?**
 - (a) It's **daily** laying aside *our own desires* to follow **Him**.
 3. **Holy and acceptable to God** – consecrated, set apart, **or living a reserved for God life**.
- G. **There comes a time in each of our lives when God will test us.**
1. **This is a test of full surrender**. A test to maybe give up **your** heart's desire, simply because God asks us to.
 2. **Maybe it's moving to a distant land**...away from family & friends. Away from the creature comforts you are use to.
- H. **This takes a unique faith** - A faith like when *Abraham said to his young men, Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.*
1. God has promised us HIS very best – He has assured us that, **all things work together for good to them that love Him**.
 2. Slide11 Elisabeth Elliot, **True faith** goes into operation *when* there are **no answers**.
 - a) How **close** Abraham must have been to the Lord, to **trust** Him so.
 - b) Let us stay **close** to the Lord also, *that* we too might have a faith that *surrenders all*.