

Genesis 22.1-19

covenant faith and faithfulness...

What was the worst test you ever had to attempt?

What is the purpose of a test?

1. **the testing of Abraham's faith...** read Genesis 22.1-19:

What's your initial reaction to the story, how does it make you feel?

What's the first thing Abraham was commanded to do?

Why does this command run contrary to what God had previously said to Abraham?

What did Abraham do or say that showed he was going to be obedient?

What was the good news that the angel heralded?

What did this test prove?

What do you think prepared Abraham to be obedient and prove his faith genuine?

What was Abraham's faith in?

2. **God himself will provide...**

The story of Abraham and Isaac became the basis for future generations looking to mountain of the Lord where God would provide (v14). The mountainside of Mt. Moriah where God sent Abraham to sacrifice Isaac would in later history become the site of Jerusalem. And it was on the hillside of Jerusalem that God did in fact provide a lamb for sacrifice. Why do you think Christians now see the sacrifice of Isaac as pointing forward to Jesus as the fulfilment of the hope that God would provide?

Read Hebrews 11.17-19

Abraham believed God's word that Isaac would have many descendants and so he reasoned that if he killed Isaac God would raise him back to life and keep his promises. It would be to do the impossible but Abraham already knew God was capable of that, the birth of Isaac had proven nothing is impossible with God.

The sacrifice of the loved son Isaac/Jesus would be a terrible thing if that were the end of the story. But the story ends with resurrection.

What are your reactions/feelings to the story now?

What does the resurrection tell you about God?

Why is it wise to put your faith in God?

3. **the testing of your faith...** read James 2

James wrote to correct a wrong attitude towards faith, that is, that faith is just knowing things about God. James teaches that true faith is both knowing right things about God and putting that knowledge into practise. Faith lives God's way. For us, like Abraham, genuine faith is obedient faith. In life God tests our faith so that it proves genuine. As with Abraham, obedient faith grows mature in the light of knowing that nothing is impossible with God.

Discuss how being convinced that nothing is impossible with God leads to living God's way, and vice versa, how not living Gods way springs from a mistrust of God and a reliance on yourself.

Talk about decision points or trials that you're facing, how that's a test of your faith, and, what it means to trust God in that decision.

Read 1 Peter 1.3-9; Rom 8.32

Pray especially for one another that in testing times you'll choose to live God's way and your faith will be proven genuine. Give thanks for God's great faithfulness, love and mercy extended to you in Jesus.