The God Who Provides

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[0:00] Well, we love to hear you doing that. Singing to your God. Well, we are in Genesis.

! The God who provides.
Jehovah Jireh. Jehovah Jireh, the God who provides. Begin reading in chapter 22. Now, it came about after these things that God tested Abraham and said to him, Abraham.
And he said, Here I am. And he said, Now take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.
So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey. He took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son. He split wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.
[1:22] Now on the third day, Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance.
Abraham then said to his young men, Stay here with the donkey and I and the lad will go over there and we will worship and return to you.

Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. He took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together.
Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, My father. And Abraham said, Here I am, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?
Abraham said, God will provide for himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son. So the two of them walked on together. Then they came to the place of which God had told him and Abraham built the altar there.
He arranged the wood and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar on top of the wood.
Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.
[2:25] But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here I am. He said, Do not stretch out your hand 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.
Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son.
Abraham called the name of that place the Lord will provide as it is said to this day. In the mount of the Lord it will be provided.
Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son.
[3:34] 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. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed because you have obeyed my voice.
So Abraham returned to his young men and they arose and went together to Beersheba. And Abraham lived at Beersheba. Now it came about after these things that it was told Abraham saying, Behold, Milcah has also born children to your brother Nahor, Uz his firstborn, and Buz his brother, and Chemuel the father of Aram, and Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaf, and Bethuel.
Bethuel became the father of Rebekah. Now these eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother.
His concubine, whose name was Rumah, also bore Teba, and Gaham, and Tehash, and Meaca.
Well, what a test for this patriarch. You know, our salvation hinges on this moment in Abraham's life.

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[5:00] You know that? He needs to follow through because this is where the promised one is coming from, this bloodline. So if Isaac dies, it's all over.

And Abraham knows this. Now, as we think about this passage in this moment in Abraham's life, everything has been building toward this moment. And it's wonderful the way the author here, Moses, helps us see that kind of trail, that pattern in his past of success and some failure, success and some failure, until finally he gets to this moment.
His faith continuing to be refined and purified. Hence, Psalm 26. And now, this moment. Will he prove to be loyal and faithful to Almighty God in this?
Now, I want to ask you if you would consider how the following verses apply to you personally and to how you live your life.
Alright, let me take you through a series of verses and ask you about this. How do these apply to you and to your life? Do not let your heart envy sinners but live in the fear of the Lord always.
[6:17] Is that you? How about this one? How blessed is the man who fears God always. But he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.

the fear of the Lord leads to life so that one may sleep satisfied untouched by evil.
The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life that one may avoid the snares of death. That would be spiritual death because we all have to die.
And then this, better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and turmoil with it. Is the fear of the Lord and fearing the Lord that important to you?
That treasured by you? Among all the other baubles and treasures of the earth? Although a sinner does evil a hundred times and may lengthen his life still I know that it will be well for those who fear God who fear him openly but it will not be well for the evil man and he will not lengthen his days like a shadow because he does not fear God.
[7:43] And then finally this one. The conclusion when all has been heard is fear God. and keep his commandments because this applies to every person.

This is even a call to unbelievers. Now they're not able to fear the Lord apart from the Holy Spirit are they? But it's a call nonetheless. Real life life on this planet and life forever is caught up in bound up in the fear of the Lord.
Now the question again is that you? Is that you? Let me put it a different way for you. I'll put it right up here on the screen. Are you a God fearer?
Only Christians talk like this. Only people who read the Bible and think the Bible important to life talk like this. We are the only ones thinking in these kind of categories.
When the world teaches about fearing their gods, their idols, the false gods that they hold up, they hold their gods in terror. They're terrified of their gods and so they're constantly trying to appease them to get their gods on their side.
[9:06] That's not how we do in our relationship with the Lord. When we talk about fearing God, we have something very, very different in mind. my friends, would people know you as a God fearer?

Now, I perfectly understand you're just like me in my neighborhood. I hope my neighbors would come to know me as a godly man or at least a man who's living a different kind of life and they would recognize certain things about how I live and carry myself, how I speak and how I deal with others.
And they probably wouldn't know to refer to me as a God fearer. But given what we've just looked at in the way of all these scriptures to define the Christian life, would people around you know you as that kind of person, a God fearer?
Whether they could label you like that or not. God desires that we follow Him from a heart that deeply reveres Him.
That's the greatest quality of our walk with God is that our heart would deeply revere God. That we would constantly stand in awe of Almighty God.
[10:17] That's a worshiping spirit, constantly worshiping the Lord, being in awe of Him. Now is your heart awed with God?

Because it will make the difference in how you live. It will make the difference in what comes out of your mouth at any given moment. If you're in awe of God, you're going to be careful with your mouth.
And the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart. If you're in awe of God, you're going to be careful about how you go about your job, your work day, what you do in your private moments.

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If you're in awe of God, you're going to be careful about the kinds of thoughts that dominate your mind and your heart. Thoughts about yourself, thoughts toward other people, because you know that the God of the universe knows your thoughts.
He knows your heart better than you do. Are you in awe of God? Do you follow and obey God because you are in awe of Him?
[11:30] Friends, our motives matter to God. When I do counseling, and some of you have privileged me, by coming to me or Greg to seek our counsel, sit down with us and walk through this season of life with us as our pastor or pastors, and love us through this and guide us through this.

That's such an honor, you guys. And I hope that more of you will take advantage of that while we're among you to do this. And I make a big deal of motives when I work with counselees.
Whatever issue you bring to me, we are going to write in the first few sessions sit down and start talking about heart motives. What drives you to do what you do?
Think what you think. Act like you act. What are the desires of your heart? What is the I want to that is driving your life? I want fill in the blank because whatever you want is what you're giving yourself to in any given moment.
Our motives matter to God and the fear of the Lord has everything to do with the motive of our heart. Now an important consideration in your walk of faith with Jesus is this.
[12:46] Do you obey Him? We've talked a lot about already the motive of your heart, the desire of your heart, but now does that translate into obedience?

Are you living according to His will? How about this? Do you ever think about what is behind your obedience? why do I obey God?
Do you ever think about what's behind your disobedience? Why do I disobey the Lord? Why do I continue to struggle with this particular kind of sin in my life?
And why am I so motivated to hide it from others? Obeying Jesus is important and here's why.
It is a test of our love for Him to obey Him. It is a test of our love for Jesus to obey Jesus.
[13:48] You sure Jeff? Alright, look at this. Jesus said, if you love me, you will do what? Keep my commandments. That's obedience, isn't it?

He also said, he who has my commandments and keeps them, obeys them, is the one who loves me. So we cannot talk about loving Jesus and walking with Jesus and not obey Jesus.
Now folks, please hear your pastor carefully here. I'm not talking about just a private obedience. obedience. I'm talking about a corporate obedience as well. Are you part of the family of God and the body of Christ that helps you obey Jesus in the things that He has put the greatest priority on? His people and His Word. How much of your life is a God-fearing life being born out in your loyalty and commitment to God's people and to God's Word?
Because those are the priorities of heaven for this earth. These people in this room who are saved are going to share heaven with you. Everything else you see around you materially is going to burn.
[15:10] But the souls of each one of these human beings will live forever. That's it. That's what's going to heaven. That's what's going to outlast all this stuff.

And so as a God-fearer, do you have the heavenly priorities of Jesus paramount in the way that you think about your life, live your life, order your life, prioritize your life?
Because that's what a God-fearer does. If you love me, you'll keep my commandments. The one who says he loves me ought to keep my commandments. Alright, all of this drives into the motives of your heart toward Jesus.
In your own relationship with him, what are your heart desires, what are your greatest wants toward him? Hopefully, as you grow in the Lord, you'll say, my greatest want is to please him.
To please him. It's as simple as that. Whatever that means for me, wherever that takes me, whatever that requires of me, wherever that puts me, my greatest desire in my heart toward the Lord Jesus Christ is to please him in all aspects of my life.
[16:30] That at the end of the day and in the moment, he would be pleased with my obedience, my thoughts, my actions.

Alright? Now, this is a privilege. Only Christians get to even ask these questions, Christians consider these issues. Only Christians are able to live like this.
Jesus wants you to know the joy of knowing him. So, I'm going to ask this question before I move on. Are you a God-fearer?

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Why do you obey Jesus? Is it because you can answer yes to number one? Question one. I'm a God-fearer, Jeff.
That's why I want to obey him because I fear the Lord. I hold him in a high and holy reverence in my life. And I want to please him in all things.
[17:30] Alright, well, what about Abraham then in all this? This is right where he is. God has been shaping Abraham into a God-fearer. You'll see this in the sermon in just a little while.

Now, that spiritual quality, the quality of being a God-fearer, that spiritual quality of heart is the beginning of knowing and obeying God's wisdom.
There is no way that Abraham is able to do what he's doing in this greatest of tests in his life without being a God-fearer.
And what has brought him to this place? Because you and I can both say, well, he's not always been a God-fearer. He was a moon worshiper not too long ago before God brought him to the land of promise and started teaching him who God is.
And then what about when he threw his wife under the bus those times? Yeah, I get you. Right. So God has been refining that faith, getting him ready for the next thing and the next thing.
[18:36] And what we need to ask this morning is this, what's that all about? Why would God do that in this man's life? Why is he leading him in a life that's constantly getting ready for the next thing?

What's the point of the next thing? What's he supposed to be proving? What's he supposed to be doing with that? You see, this is you and this is me. God always getting you ready for the next thing. And you know what happens when you don't get ready for the next thing because you're not being faithful to God? You get stuck and he keeps taking you through the same thing over and over and you start coming to us and saying, my life is one big cycle of, I see it.
It's just I cycle around and it's just a matter of time for I'm right back where I was again and now I'm doing it. What is that? And I'm telling you what it is right now. It's God getting you ready for the next thing and you're being stubborn and unfaithful and he's keeping you right where you are until you learn the lesson and you move to the next.
But what you have to ask yourself is what's the point? Is there a greater reality in all that? Melanie, you're shaking your head yes. See, probably because like me you've been through enough to know, hmm, I better listen.
[19:55] There's a lot more joy in my life when I listen. Even when there's turmoil there's still joy because I know who's in control. Again, I say to you that spiritual quality of heart, of being a God fear, that is the beginning of knowing and obeying God's wisdom.

Listen to how I say this, please. It is the sum of living a godly, a godlike life. So nurturing a growing high and holy reverence for God is what it means for you to be set apart to God.
Unbelievers don't do that. They don't reverence God. They're not in awe of God. They don't care about God. They don't live for God. His glory doesn't matter at all. But for a God fearer, everything about our life should be defined by that awe that we hold him in.
That's who I am. I can't get away from it. God made me to be in awe of him and to enjoy him forever. So am I in awe of him as a believer?
God fearer. So friends, you are first and foremost a God fearer. We don't preach enough about this, we pastors.
[21:10] We should use this terminology more often. Proverbs is full of it. Ecclesiastes is full of it. All the wisdom literature speaks of the need to be a God fearer.

And now we have that same terminology here describing Abraham in chapter 22. Look with me if you would at verse 12. The angel of the Lord who is Jesus.
We think this is the second person of the Trinity. Jesus said, do not stretch out your hand against the lad and do nothing to him for now I know that you are what? A God fearer.
You fear God. You reverence God. You are a God fearer. And we'll do more with that in just a few moments. Well like chapter 21, chapter 22 is sectioned into three scenes.
I'll put it up here so you can see where I'm coming from. The narrative develops around Abraham sacrificing his only son to God.
[22:13] Three scenes just like the previous chapter. Three vignettes in the storyline that we'll see. So the tension builds as Abraham prepares to leave.

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Then journeys for about two and a half days they call it three. He climbs the mountain, prepares the altar, binds his son and then he comes to the very moment of plunging the knife into young Isaac's heart.
That would have been the most likely way that he would dispatch him or kill him is to put the knife into his heart so it would be quick. Now the question is this, would Abraham knowing what he knows about the Lord and about the promise God has made about Isaac, would Abraham really have done it?
Is this all just a show? Is this all just something in the scriptures to just kind of give us a show and we know how it's going to end? Would he have killed his only son in full unflinching obedience to Almighty God?
What do you think? Absolutely, you're right. You're right. Yes, he certainly would have killed him, which is why the angel of the Lord had to say, Abraham, Abraham, stay your hand.
[23:25] Why? Because he was getting ready to put that knife right into him. Stay your hand. Do not kill him because he would have. Now, with all of this, we have to answer the question, why?

Why would Abraham have gone through with such a horrendous act? I hope that this is morally offensive to you to think about. It should be. You can't imagine this, could you, Vanita, with all your babies?
No way. I couldn't either. Any of us who have, you imagine your grandchild, take your grandchild and take him up and put a knife. So I don't think it's wrong for us at all to imagine a bit that we've got Abraham standing in this moment and he's probably crying his eyeballs out.
I know I would be if I was going through it, I'd be a mess. And we probably could never really truly fathom what it was like for him to have the angel say stop and then Abraham look up and see the ram that was provided.
I wonder if he went, I knew it, I knew it, I knew it, I knew it. I knew he would do this. I knew something like this would happen. Well, maybe, but Hebrews gives us a little bit of a different answer.
[24:44] And that answer is even harder for me. And we'll see what that is. Alright, let's talk about where Abraham is in this as we answer this great big question, why would he have gone through with this?

Alright, so first of all, God provides the definitive test for the God fearer's heart. Remember, this is in three scenes and God is going to give us this definitive test for Abraham's heart.
That's verses 1 through 8. And we see that a God fearer's heart keeps trusting. Abraham had learned to trust God no matter what life threw at him.
You hear that? Notice verse 1, now it came about after these things that God tested Abraham and said to him, Abraham, and he said, here I am.
So test, now not tempt. Remember, the Bible says that God doesn't tempt anyone. So this is not tempting him to sin. This is a test and we need to talk about that.
[25:49] After these things cover several decades. You see that in verse 1? Now, do the math with me. Sarah had Isaac at 90 years old.

We know that. She weaned him at about three years old or about three years later, roughly. So say now she's 93. In chapter 23 verse 1, Sarah dies at 127 years old.
So if we take 127 when she died and subtract 93 from it, which is what she is now, that covers about 34 years of time. So after these things kind of covers a three decade long period of time, that these events in chapter 22 are taking place.
So the issue, verse 1 introduces, I'll put it up here on the screen, the issue concerns God's decision and actions to test Abraham, just like God does in your life and in my life.
So test, you need to understand what it is because it's happening to you and it will go on happening to you. God will keep doing this to you. It means to prove or to put to the proof.
[27:12] So we want to see the proof of something in our life from this. It seems God is creating a situation for Abraham to prove out or to openly demonstrate or reveal to himself and to others what his heart holds most dear.

That is critical. Now we're getting to the why he would go through with this. Now God ordains, this is very important theology folks that I'm about to tell you now as it applies to your life.
The bottom of the screen here, God ordains the circumstances of your life to show you the devotion of your heart because he already knows it. So God will create.

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Listen, don't just say allow. Allow is true, theologically correct, but go a step further and say God purposes, creates, ordains circumstances in your life so that he can reveal to you the loyalties devotion of your heart.
Why? Because your heart is wicked and deceptive. Sin hides and lurks and camouflages itself even with good desires.
[28:28] It masks. It fools you. It deceives you. And so God uses these circumstances of life and puts you in these circumstances and they squeeze you and then what comes out shows you what's in your heart.

Now this is the way life works. This is the way your sovereign God has chosen to do it. So we need to just fall into line with this and understand it. What does your heart hold most dear?
Well God will show you. God will show you by ordaining these things. Difficult, trying, painful, even frightening issues of life are God's tools, beloved.
They're his tools. And he uses these tools to openly show you the true desires and deepest devotion of your heart toward him.
Not just toward others but toward him. So sometimes we don't like what we see. Is that true? Sometimes we don't like what we see but we need God to show us in order for us to repent.
[29:36] To turn from. In Abraham's life we know he had failed some of these tests in the past. He had some successes as well yes but each time God grew him, God refined his faith, Abraham's heart became increasingly trusting, increasingly devoted to God because he said to himself if I had just trusted the Lord this would have turned out a lot differently and we could have avoided all of this.

And that's on me. Isn't that how we learn? And grow. And God is so patient with us in this. But friends don't make the mistake of thinking that God will just overlook your disobedience and your stubbornness and move you on to the next thing.
He'll keep you right where you are until you learn the lesson he intends for you to learn. That's a good parent. That's a good father. And this is where we find Abraham in his life right now.
He needs to learn about God's heart and God's ways. Alright, verse 2 now. Look at verse 2 with me as he transitions in this test. This test is going to start taking shape now.
Take now your son, God said. Your only son. The son whom you love. You know, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering.
[30:52] Folks, you understand what he's telling him? Go to this mountain, kill your son, and then burn him. Burn him up as an offering to me.

Now swallow that one. And Abraham doesn't flinch. Look at verse 3. So he rose early in the morning and he got everything ready to go do what God just told him to do.
We don't have any record at all that Abraham prayed, wept, asked, Lord, let this pass from me. Lord, is there any other way? He got up the next morning very early in the dark and started getting everything ready to go.
He knew he had a journey on his hands. This is a brutal reality check of his heart toward God. And God will do the same thing to you folks.
So hear this carefully now. The Lord doesn't hold back as he rehearses how much Abraham cherishes Isaac. Listen to what God reveals or brings out that he knows about Abraham's heart toward his son.
[31:59] What does he say? Look at your verse. Your son, your son. Oh, your only son. Whom you love. Isaac.

Remember? Your laughter, the delight of your heart is what his name means. Do you see what God's doing there? It's brutal.
This person that is so dear to you, so important to you, he could be doing it with you and saying this thing is so important to you, this thing that is so monumental to you.
Let's test it out and see if that's even greater in your heart than I am. Because if it is, we've got a problem. And so this is exactly what God is doing with him in this moment.
Something quite significant, folks, but easily overlooked is happening right now. This is the first mention in the Bible of the word love.
[33:01] Isn't that something? The first time the Bible mentions the word love. Take now your son, your only son, whom you love.

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Isaac. And it's very interesting because we know from the New Testament, from the cross, from us making much of Jesus every time we meet, we know that we see the shades here of what will happen in God offering his son, right?
All right. We know that. And we're going to say more about that. But listen to what's going on here. The very first time this is mentioned, the word love, and it is very significant that is used to express a father's love for his only son.
The first time in the Bible love is mentioned and it's the love that a father has for his son. Now what do you think we're going to do with that? Where's that going to take us? It's exactly where it does take us.
I want to show you this because I want to walk you through what this means. We'll slow down just a little bit. Your son, your only son, whom you love. Isaac, your laughter, the delight of your heart.
[34:12] We know from the New Testament that Isaac is a type of Christ. What do you mean by type? Types happen in Scripture. Whenever we see a type in the Bible, this is what we mean.

It is a corresponding foreshadow or a prefigure, prefiguring of the greater substance and fulfillment to come.
Whether it's a person, situation, whatever it is. So that's what a type is. It is showing us in the now a kind of foreshadow or prefigure of what will come later but be even greater and it will be fulfilled.
So this is what's happening now as we see Isaac as a type of Christ. The Scripture, notice this couple of verses here.
The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles, that's us, by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying this, all the nations will be blessed in you.
[35:24] That's our text for today. That's in our text, in our passage. In order that, why would he do that? Why would he make that promise to Abraham beforehand? Why would he preach the gospel to him like that?

In order that in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham might come to us, the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Holy Spirit through faith.
just like Abraham. That's how he was saved. Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He doesn't say to seeds as referring to many, but rather to one and to your seed, that is Christ.
This is a prophetic foreseeing, foretelling of the reality that Jesus Christ will come through this promise to Abraham of Isaac.
Isaac will be the bloodline that will bring about the Messiah. And so when he makes this promise to Abraham, many nations will be blessed in you. He's saying, many nations will come to know this same faith response to me in salvation.
[36:36] And so Isaac is a type. He's a type of Christ. He is foreshadowing the greater reality and fulfillment of the cross and Jesus coming. When the only Lamb of God will be sacrificed, only no one will stay God's hand because Jesus will die for us, for the Gentiles.

All right. Are you following me now with this? Okay. All right. This is what he's talking about. Abraham's offering of his only beloved son Isaac corresponds to and foreshadows the greater substance and fulfillment of God offering his only beloved son Jesus Christ for us.
So commentator Henry Morris. Now I wanted to show you what's going on. It'd be easy to miss all this. Commentator Henry Morris offered up some inspiring insights about this. I want to share with you a few of the passages that led up to what he will eventually say and I'll give you his quote.
So let me ask this. What is the first occurrence of love, the use of love, or the concept of love in the New Testament? Here we have it in the Old.
What's the first occurrence in the New Testament? And here it is. I'm going to put it up on the screen for you. And behold, a voice out of the heavens said, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.
[38:04] Just like in the Old Testament, the first use of love is about a beloved son. Now, we transition over to Mark and to Luke to see the first occurrence of love there in those texts.

And what do we find? And a voice came out of the heavens. You are my beloved son. In you I am well pleased. And then in Luke, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came out of heaven. You are my beloved son. In you I am well pleased. What's the event happening in Jesus' life here where God is saying this about Jesus?

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The baptism. Jesus' baptism. Now, Morris says this. Let me quote him. But now as we look into the gospel of God's love and God's son, that is the record of the beloved disciple John, we are silenced in awe.
Or reverence, fear. When we come to read the first verse in John containing love. And what is that verse? For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.
[39:28] Morris adds this. Three times God shouts his love for his son from the very heavens itself. But then he tells us that he loved us.

Yes, us. So much that he was willing to sacrifice his only and beloved son in order that we might be saved. Isn't that beautiful?
So easy to miss that here. In a little word, love. God is telling Abraham to do something that God himself will willingly do with his only beloved son.
And for a people who hate him. So that they will come to love God and love one another. Without God making this sacrifice and following through on this promise, there'd be no hope for us.
None whatsoever. So God is telling Abraham in these moments, Abraham, take the great delight of your heart. And what does the text say?
[40:42] Go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering. Go kill your son and burn him up for me. Now, interestingly, folks, this isn't a hill for me to die on.

But interestingly, let me share this with you. Moriah is the area of Jerusalem. Very interesting. The highest point in that area became the temple mount where the temple was built on a mountain. They called it. Abraham might have built his altar to offer Isaac where the priests actually made their sacrifices much later when the temple was built.
Now, I personally believe that that is exactly what the text is bearing out. It's not a hill I'm ready to die on, but I think that that is the case. And I think it's a beautiful, beautiful thing.
Where God spared Isaac and offered up a ram in his place, God would not spare his own son, but offered him up willingly for us.
[41:53] That's the gospel, isn't it? He preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand. This was God's plan all along. This was the truth that God would do all along.

Wow. Take him on and sacrifice him. So I'll put this up. A God-fearer's heart keeps obeying.
We keep trusting because God has proven himself over and over and over faithful to us, to love us, to do for us, to be for us.
A God-fearer's heart keeps obeying. In verses 3 through 5, so Abraham rose, he saddled the donkey, he got the men, he got the wood for the burnt offering, and he went to the place God told him.
He saw on the third day the place in the distance and he kept right on walking. And Abraham said to his young men, now look, you stay here. This is something I have to do. He's saying, I have to do this.
[42:57] You stay here with the donkey. I and the lad will go over there and we'll worship. And notice what he says. Who will return? We.

Thank you, Mark. You caught that, huh? We will return. Oh, this is faith, folks. This is faith. Abraham didn't understand God's plan here, y'all. He didn't understand.
He had enough to know what he needed to do. But do you think he understood all the things that were going on behind the scenes? No. How could he? But he took God at his word so that there was no contradiction between doing this very hard thing, this unimaginable thing, and at the same time, with the promise of God that he had made to Abraham concerning Isaac.
No contradiction. I'm going to do this hard thing, this unthinkable thing, but there's no contradiction in my mind between that and what God has said that Isaac, through Isaac, many, many, many nations will be blessed.
All the nations of the earth. Now, you can't reconcile that, can you, in your own mind, can you? Can you do that? I couldn't. He couldn't. He just took God at his word.
[44:10] Now, there are, look, there are many, many times in your life, there are many times in my life, where on paper, things don't make sense. And I'm not saying that you act irrationally.

You need to use your brain, your mind. But what's most important for you making the decisions that you make in times like that? Times of uncertainty, times of doubt, times when you don't have all the blanks filled in.

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What's the most important criterion for you as you measure that out and make decisions about what you will do? God's truth. That's the one place you can stand and be certain.
Everything else is what? You don't know. I don't know. You could come to us for counsel, but we probably don't know any more than you do how it's going to turn out. You have to let God's word guide you.
You have to let God's truth be the defining factor for how you think about your situation, perceive it, interpret it, and then how you begin to act on it. Again, I want to act in a way where whatever I think, say, and do is going to be pleasing to God.
[45:21] I'm a God fearer. The most important thing in this moment is not that I get through the problem. It's that I get through the problem pleasing Jesus. You see the difference?

That second difference is the difference of the presence of God with you taking you through faithfully. Faithfulness is what it's about. Not perfection, because we all stumble, we all falter, we all have uncertainty, doubt, even fear, anxiety, worry.
But we can't let those things keep us from moving forward to please the Lord. And that's exactly what Abraham, I think he experienced a lot of that. But he didn't let it get in the way of pleasing the Lord.
Look at this verse. But God said, no, Sarah, your wife, will bear you a son. This is when he said, let Ishmael be before you. No, no. Sarah's going to bear you a son.
You're going to call his name Isaac, laughter, and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant. Wow. For his descendants, his seed after him.
[46:33] Notice in verse 5 that Abraham told his servants that both himself and Isaac would return. So we're told, Mark caught on to that. We are told that Abraham believed God could and would raise Isaac from the dead.

The Bible tells us that. And so we're kind of given this clue into what might have been going on in Abraham's heart as he thought about having to do this to Isaac. He was probably thinking in terms of, I've got to do this because God's commanded me to do it.
I don't understand it, but it's God's word and I've learned to trust the Lord. I'm going to do it. But I'm thinking that probably what's going to happen, the only way he can make good on his promise to use Isaac is he's going to have to raise him from the dead.
That's why I'm going to come back with my son. They're going to see me walk back with Isaac. It's the only way I can figure. I can see the old guy doing that.
That's reason. Well, we have more than just my supposition about this. Look at look at what the next verses say. By faith, Abraham, when he was tested, that's our passage, offered up Isaac.
[47:42] And he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son. It was he to whom it was said, in Isaac, your descendants shall be called. He considered that God is able to do what?

Raise people even from the dead. From which he also received him back as a type. So there's your type. As Abraham makes these preparations, as he travels the three day journey to Moriah, every single step he fully intends to go through with sacrificing Isaac to God.
He trusts God at his word. It was the only way Abraham could bring himself to do such a cruel, soul crushing thing. Look, you're going to have hard things in your life, folks. You're going to have difficult things to get through.
The most difficult you. Well, how would you answer this? The most difficult thing for you to overcome in your life as a Christian every day of your life is one particular thing.
It begins with a capital W or Y. Sorry. That was a dyslexic moment there for me. It begins with a capital Y.
[48:55] It has three letters. It has an O in the middle and a U at the end. What would you think that is? U. U. The most difficult thing for you to overcome in your temptation to sin every day of your life is you.

Your patterns, your bad habits, your lack of discipline, your laziness, your apathy, your lack of diligence, your lack of love, your ungratitude. I mean, just keep going.
Wasn't that Abraham's issue? Why did he do with Sarah what he did? Give my wife to another man, go off, do it saves my life. Who's God in that moment? Abraham.
You. This is the issue. God has to teach us to look away from us. It's our default, isn't it? It's our default.

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Honoring at the bottom of the screen. Honoring God's word is the best and safest path through the difficulties of life. You're always on great ground and territory when you're moving through these issues of life and you're looking through God's word in how to stand through that circumstance.
[50:17] What is God's word? Tell me here. What can I glean from God's word that will help me measure this moment carefully? Please Jesus in it and be a God fear.

Remain in awe of the Lord. I'm not so focused on me and the problem or someone else that those things are becoming more important to me than who the Lord is and what God's doing in my life.
All right. Honoring God's word is the best and safest path through the difficulties of life. And then we have this. A God fears heart keeps walking. A God fears heart keeps walking.
You'll notice in verses six and eight. What do what do each of those verses end with? So the two of them walked on together in verse six and then down to verse eight.
So the two of them walked on together. What is it that's sandwiched in between his son asking him, father, where's where's the lamb? Where's the sacrifice?
[51:22] Where's the burnt offering? And Abraham couldn't tell him, son, you're that you're that offering. It wasn't the moment. It wasn't the time. Wisdom.

Folks, this is a hard walk of faith, isn't it? This is a hard walk. You think you and I have hard walks and we have stuff to go through. This is a hard walk. This is a season where it's hard to take the next step.
You've been there, right? If you haven't, you will be. Only a refined and seasoned faith could take a walk like this with the Lord God. Now, some commentators, because of the decades long time intervening here after these things that I told you about.
Some commentators think that Isaac could have been in his early thirties. Other commentators think that he was probably more likely in his twenties. Others think that he was probably in his teens.
I lean, and again, not a hill to die on, but your pastor leans toward Isaac being in his late teens. I don't think he was quite 20, but I think he's an older teenager.
[52:31] All right? That's just what I think's going on. I think that the fact that Abraham had to put that big old pile of wood on him, and he had to trek that up a mountain, says a lot about maybe his age and, you know, his ability and all.

I don't think he's a little kid. I don't think he's a little kid. And I don't think he's a grown man. I think as a grown man, he'd have been figuring stuff out. You know? So Isaac's question must have burned deep into Abraham's heart, but he couldn't tell him that, son, you're the sacrifice.
And once again, in verse 8, Abraham's heart takes the next step of faith in a loving, good, and mighty God. He trusts the Lord. What does he say to him? God will provide for himself.
God will provide himself the lamb. Isn't that what he did with Jesus? Do you realize that? That's the only way God could accomplish salvation for you and I. God had to provide himself for himself because only God the Son could be our sinless, spotless, blameless substitute standing in our place to offer up his sinlessness in place of our sinfulness.
Did you hear how I said that now? It is God himself offering up himself as the offering, the second person of the Trinity. God provided the lamb and the lamb was himself.
[54:01] Have you ever thought of that? God providing himself for you and for me. It's powerful.

Then quickly, I'll show you this. God provides the definitive truth for the God fearers heart. This is very interesting that he comes to this particular place.
They came to the place that God told him. So he's there. He built the altar and he bound his son and he got everything ready. And he stretched out his hand to drive it into his son's heart.
But Jesus said, no, don't do it. Don't do it. I know now that you fear me. Folks, we need to let our hearts enter into this solemn scene with great reverence.
The knife is in his hand to kill his son and he's been carrying it for three days. The fire is to burn up his son.
[55:05] And he himself carried it up the mountain. It's unthinkable that God, as we know him in Christ, would ever command such a thing, much less expect it to be obeyed.

But Abraham is doing exactly as God has told him. And so a God fears heart withholds nothing from God. I trust you exclusively, Lord.
So whatever you say, whatever, it doesn't matter if it doesn't make sense to me. If your word tells me this is what I need to do, then I'll do it. Can you live like that? I may not understand all of the

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ramifications.
I can't forecast all the outcomes and those that I can forecast. I'm not sure I'm going to like. So I'll do it. But I'll do it.
Right. Come on. I'm not the only one like that, am I? I'll do it, Lord. When God was working in my heart to call me to ministry, some of you know I won't go into it now, but I ran.
[56:06] I ran from the Lord, coward that I am. I could not bear the thought of going into ministry. You got the wrong guy. I am not your lovey-dovey dude.

I won't do my own thing. When God finally got me to a point where I was saying yes, because he kept using the four by four, not a two by four.
And then he said, now I want you to preach. And I thought, oh, land's in. I can't get in front of people and do that. Me, me, me, me, me, me. What if they don't like me? What if they criticize me?
What if they make fun of me? Well, all that happened. All that happened. And God is faithful, isn't he? God is faithful.
Abraham's doing what he was told to do. All right, let me ask this question of you. What is it that keeps Abraham's hand from plunging the knife into Isaac? Well, we know the who. The who that keeps him from plunging the knife into Isaac is the Lord Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, the angel of the Lord.
[57:11] All right, but what is it? What is it that actually stays his hand and keeps him from, all right, here's the answer. Truth.

Say, Jeff, truth, what are you talking about? It's what God says to him. Doesn't God speak to him? Doesn't Jesus speak? He says something to him.
What does he say? Look at what it says. Do not stretch out your hand against the lad and do nothing to him. Folks, that's the truth. The truth stayed his hand.
Stop! God's word tells you that. Stop! Go the other way. Do this instead.
That's what God's word does. It instructs you. He needed instruction. He was doing what he knew to do. This is the next step. Plunge. But God said, no, no, no, no.
[58:09] No, no, no, no. I'm going to tell you the next step. It was the truth of God speaking to Abraham what needed to occur next.

Abraham has obeyed to this point. He's been faithful. And now, now God says this. In effect, God says, this, Abraham, this, Abraham, is the truth that I had for you to follow all along, and now I'm revealing it to you.
This is the next part of the truth that you're to act on. But see, he couldn't know that until he was faithful with the truth God gave him. That's the point. When you're living in the truth that God gives you, he's getting you ready for the next step of what he will show you, bring you to.
But you've got to be faithful in that moment of what he's showing you. Are you with me? I'm ready to do it, Lord. Whoa, wait. No, we've got some other truth that you're going to live by now that it's going to order the moments of your day.
Don't kill him. Look what I've done. This was the truth all along, Abraham. I had this planned all along. You couldn't know it until I got you to this moment. Do you see?
[59:24] That's the prerogative of your God. You don't get to work out details like that. You just get to be faithful. He gets to define the timing.

Well, Lord, do you know what I almost did? I almost, I was just, I was ready to, and now, I almost killed my boy.
How could you do that to me? We're fit pitchers. Yeah.
That's not what he did. He stayed in the moment, and he was relieved and thankful. This is, this is where you wanted to bring me all along.
You had this, you are so big. God, you are so awesome. Awesome. I am in awe of you right now.
[60:30] See? Worship. And God is taking you from one moment like that, and one situation like that, to the next. Just like he's doing with Abraham. One test after the other.

Getting you ready for the next one. Showing you what your heart is. Toward him, toward other people, toward your kids, your husband, your wife, your work, your attitude toward life.
He'll do all that. It's, I, it's, I tell you, it's not boring to live with the Lord. In verse 12, you've withheld nothing from me.
You've been willing to give me what delights your heart most. You've been willing to give me the best your heart has to offer. You hear that? Abraham, you have put on the altar of your life the best

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that your life has to offer me.
Wow. What a challenge. Not the leftovers. Not the little pieces. Not whatever you could manage after you do with it what you want to do.
[61:32] You gave me the highest and best you had to give. And for that, wonderful. A God-fearer's heart worships God in truth.

Up on the screen. And now in these verses 13 and 14, Abraham worships God by the truth the Lord has revealed to him about God's plan to grow him in his love.
And what does God say? I will always provide for you because nothing is impossible for me. I will always provide for you. And Abraham's result, you know, you are the God who provides.
Wow! Why wouldn't I worship you? You're constantly amazing me because I'm living my life in a way where you're amazing.
I'm not trying to get in the way by being my own little God because I'm not amazing and I'm constantly disappointing myself. But you know, when I live for you and I live for the next moment in you, I'm amazed because you always show up and do amazing stuff.
[62:39] That's a win-win! If you trust Him.

If you trust Him. It is by God's provision alone that you will always have what God intends for you in your walk with God and in your life.
Number three, I'll just say a few things. God provides the definitive triumph for the God-fearer's heart. We see that in 15 down through 19.
I'm going to save 20 through 24 for next time. I think it goes a little bit better there for what I want to do with it. This is a definitive triumph and it's a God-fearer's heart rejoicing at God's truth.
He told Him the truth. He provided the truth for Him. The truth changed the whole scene of His life in that moment. And now Abraham worships by that truth. Obedience to God brings blessing from God, folks.
[63:44] Because we are living by God's own words to us. His wisdom is life. Remember? His wisdom is life. We said that earlier. Look, the fear of the Lord leads to life.

From Proverbs. in verse 19 we have this. It is, it's really, so Abraham returned to his young men and they arose and went together to Beersheba.
Yeah, he went back and there was Isaac just like he said. I came back with my son. And Abraham lived in Beersheba. You know, it's almost kind of a letdown.
Oh, he just went back to the guys and they all went, hey, hey, all right up there? Yeah, it's all good. Let's go. Let's go home. And they went home.
And you know what we take from that is this. He simply turned around from Moriah and all that happened and he turned to the next thing. He turned to Beersheba to go, he just, he turned to live his life.
[64:51] And that's just what happens with us. One situation, one day at a time. Then we get up and we live the next day. We meet with whatever comes our way. We seek to obey the Lord.

We seek to apply His wisdom to each situation of life. And what do we find? Well, we find that God provides for us because He did not withhold, listen, He did not withhold His best from us.
He withheld nothing from us. And now we benefit in the blessing of getting God's best given to us. Hallelujah. And so the question that I'll end with is this. Will you follow the Lord in the fear of the Lord? Will you follow in Abraham's footsteps as a God-fearer?
Will you join me in prayer? God, this is such a profound section of Your Word where we read about something that is far beyond the scope of our understanding.
[66:06] Even in the power of the Spirit, we are limited in being able to even imagine what it must have been like for Father Abraham to take on this monumental command and be obedient to it as He obeyed you.

Likewise, I pray for my brothers and sisters to be encouraged by this message of the hope of You being our Jehovah Jireh, our God who provides, that You will provide for us in the way of love, the way of kindness, gentleness, wisdom, discernment, forgiveness, whatever it is that we find ourselves in need of as You create these moments and situations of life and bring us through them. We look to You to provide for us what we need to help us navigate them faithfully in a way that causes us to be these God-fearing people who please Jesus in every respect.
Thank You for Your Word. Thank You for the Spirit as You counsel and teach us. And thank You for these moments now that we can give to You because You are worthy in Jesus' precious name.

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Amen.

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