

The Sacrificial Similarities

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[0 : 00] If you have your Bibles this morning, I want you to turn to Genesis chapter 22. Genesis chapter 22.

I want us to climb again up Mount Moriah to look at Abraham and Isaac. I preached on this three weeks ago. I don't expect you to remember that.

But it is such a poignant passage that I believe we need to look at it one more time. I say that because there are similarities here to the cross of Christ that to me seem amazing.

And I want you to see it. I don't want you to miss the sacrificial similarities. It's in Genesis chapter 22 beginning in verse 1 and it says this.

After these things, God tested Abraham and said to him, Abraham. And he said, here am I. He said, take your son, your only son Isaac, 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.

[1 : 15] So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to a place of which God had told him.

On the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. Then Abraham said to his young men, stay here with the donkey.

I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac, his son.

And he took in his hand the fire and the knife, so they went, both of them together. And Isaac said to his father Abraham, my father, he said, here am I, my son. He said, behold the fire and the wood, but where's the lamb for the burnt offering?

Abraham said, God will provide himself the lamb. For a burnt offering, my son. So they went, both of them, together.

[2 : 23] When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac, his son, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood.

Then Abraham reached out his hand and took his knife to slaughter his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham.

And he said, here am I. He said, do not lay your hand on your boy or do anything to him, for I now know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.

And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked and behold, behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it as a burnt offering instead of his son.

So Abraham called the name of the place the Lord will provide. As it is said to this day, on the mount of the Lord, it shall be provided.

[3 : 27] Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, thank you for the cross of Christ, the sacrifice that Christ made for us that is foreshadowed in this passage today.

Help us to see the correlation, not only of the Christ event and the Abraham and Isaac event, but also the relationship to our life, of what it means to acknowledge the sacrificial death of Christ and then live our lives as living sacrifices.

Give us understanding today as can only come through your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, amen.

There's no doubt that this event, Mount Moriah, points to the most pivotal event in all of history.

And the most pivotal event in all of history happened on Mount Calvary. Jesus died on the cross and rose again. That is what history rotates around.

And if you look at the Old Testament, there is often scripture that is a foreshadowing of the sacrifice of Christ. It foretells what is to come.

[4 : 56] In reality, the Old Testament sets the stage by showing us the need of Christ. Everything that's happened since the cross looks back to the cross.

In other words, our hope is found in the cross. And in a very real sense, those that came before the cross were helpless, if not for the coming of the event of the cross of Christ.

Even though their knowledge of Christ was limited at best. And that is filled with such a foreshadowing that we see in the Old Testament again and again.

First of the year, I plan to preach on Genesis 1 through 11. The creation of the world and where the war really started that we're facing today in our world. And even there, with the first sin and the covering of that sin, you see the cross.

You see it again and again. And so today I want to show you seven similarities. I know it's scary. Just chill out, all right? Seven similarities of this event and the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross.

[6 : 16] Now having little sleep, if I fade out on four, forgive me, okay? First is the pain of the sacrifice. When Abraham was told in verse 2 to sacrifice his son, his only son, it was the ultimate demand.

For as long as Abraham had had the call of God upon his life, and that was throughout his adult years, he looked to the promise of the birth of his son.

Not only did he want a child, but his future legacy hung on this boy. The promised covenant that God made with Abraham would be only fulfilled through his line.

Yet here God says all of that, sacrifice it. Sacrifice him. It was the ultimate ask. But God did not ask anything of Abraham that he would not do himself because the price of holiness requires that sin must be paid for permanently.

Before the cross of Christ, bulls and goats of yesteryear sacrificed in orchestrated fashion, served as just a stopgap to an eternal sin problem.

[7 : 54] Every sacrifice that was made in a tabernacle or a temple were only a foreshadowing of the sacrifice of the sinless one to come. The reality is the offering of Isaac is similar to the cross of Christ concerning the pain involved of the sacrifice.

But not only that, but there's also a similarity to me in the struggle of the journey. I don't want you to read this casually. Abraham and Isaac wound their way up to the mountain to the place that God ordained for them to go.

And it was upon that spot where that sacrifice was offered that the temple would be built in the future. It was upon that spot that the sacrifices on the Day of Atonement and the Holy of Holies, the sacrifices that would be made would be on that spot.

It was at that spot God picked out and led him. It was a prophetic spot. And it was a three-day journey.

Three days of knowing that he was to offer his son. Three days, I believe, of wondering how it all played out.

[9 : 19] Like the man said to Jesus, I believe, help thou my unbelief. I believe that must have been the prayer of Abraham as he wound up that mountain. Three days of dread. Three days of struggle.

Three days of heartache. Three days of surrender. Giving up his way for God's way. And it reminds me of another struggle. Because in Luke chapter 9, verse 51, Jesus, it says, set his face toward Jerusalem.

Now, roughly six months after that verse, he would climb Calvary's hill. But that pivotal verse in Luke shows us that everything after that point was aimed at the cross of Christ and what he would do on the cross.

His earlier ministry was gathering disciples. His earlier ministry was teaching those disciples the truths of God's kingdom. His earlier days was showing them how to minister.

He was displaying for them the power of the Holy Spirit and training them to found the church. And after three years of that kind of ministry, it all becomes directly related to the cross.

[10 : 44] And when his last week began, he barred a beast of burden, made a triumphal entry, and began his journey to struggle up Calvary's hill.

And on the night he was betrayed, and before he would be crucified, he suffered in prayer.

As I told you at Easter time, I think you can only understand the weight of the cross if you understand the journey that got him there. And in the same way, what kind of walk was that with Abraham and his boy?

The struggle of the journey. Third similarity. The loneliness of the surrender. When Abraham and Isaac reached the foot of Mount Moriah, Abraham spoke to those that traveled with him. Verse 5 tells us what happened. And it says in verse 5, Then Abraham said to his young men, Stay here with the donkey.

[11:59] I and the boy will go over there and worship and come back to you. Now that's a poignant statement. There's a lot there. But some of it is that that final journey would have to be traveled alone.

Just he and his precious son. And when I saw that, I could not help but think about when Jesus had taken Peter, James, and John with him up the Mount of Transfiguration in that amazing event where the glory and the light of heaven shone upon him, moved in a mighty way, and he was up there with only Peter, James, and John.

It was the same three, Peter, James, and John, that he took further into the Garden of Gethsemane to pray with him. However, in the final hours of his prayer, he went a little further alone to lay out his heaviest burdens before the Father.

I believe this journey of Abraham and Isaac, this last leg of the journey, foreshadows that of Christ in the Garden.

It was the loneliness of the surrender. Fourth thing is the foresight of the Father. Abraham was instructed to go to Moriah.

[13:43] Moriah is a Hebrew word, and the meaning of the word Moriah is foreseen by Yahweh. God saw all of this before Abraham was even born.

He knew that he would say to Abraham, go to the land of Moriah. He also knew much more. He knew before he placed Adam and Eve in the garden that they would sin.

And that after him, we would all be born into sin. He knew it before it happened. I wear an Apple watch today, but not so many years ago, some of y'all will blow your mind, you youngins, we've not always had Apple watches.

We've not always had smart watches. unless you count the way the Swiss make a watch, which is pretty fabulous. And this watch does a lot of stuff, but let's forget this watch.

A traditional watch's job is to tell time. It can do other things. It can possibly tell you what day it is and those type things.

[15:14] But his job is to tell time. It's primary purpose. And in the same way, we can do a lot of things, but I want you to know that our primary purpose in life, we were made to glorify God.

That's what we were made for. It's our primary purpose. We can do a lot of other things in life, but our primary purpose will always be to glorify God. That's what we're made for.

Now, a watch can fail to perform. Sometimes it runs fast. Sometimes it runs slow. Sometimes it even stops.

And when a traditional watch stops, its face tells a lie. It's not the right time. It does not live up to its making.

But the watchmaker knew that was going to happen. And so he built a provision in there. One of two ways.

[16:30] The early watches are those who would need to be wound again. They could wind that watch up again. reset it and go on.

Newer watches added batteries and so it goes until the battery dies and then you replace the battery if you can ever get the back off of it. There's a provision built in for a malfunctioning watch. I thank God that he's built a provision for humanity. For a humanity that fails to live up to our primary purpose because God has built into his plan a plan of redemption before the fall of man.

Actually before the foundation of the world. Revelation 318 tells us God knew a provision would need to be made and that provision was made through Christ on Calvary.

But the father knew it would be needed before the fall ever came in the garden. Before the first sin was ever committed.

[17:51] There's a commonality of Abraham and Christ in the foresight of the father. Even the very mountain that Abraham was sent to was named after the foresight of God.

I'll tell you another commonality and that is the dread of the place. I picked up on this parallel and I just can't get over it. Because once God told Abraham to go the dread of the place was before him. He cut the wood or he was 100 years old. I hope somebody cut his wood for him. But anyway he cut the wood he prepared for the trip and he set out for the place. That's in verse 3.

In verse 4 it says on day 3 he lifted up his eyes and he saw the place from afar. Don't you feel the dread in that? I mean you've been anticipating and wondering how God was going to work all this out and exactly what was going to happen and you're winding around making your way and you catch sight.

That's the spot. That's the dreaded spot. It was ever before him.

[19:14] Verse 9 says when they came to the place. The place. I'm thinking oh God I believe I know you're leading I know you can provide but this is the place.

The dread of the place that never seemed to leave. And what caught me about that was it reminded me of Luke chapter 23 verse 33 and it says and when they came to the place that's called the skull there they crucified him and the criminals one on his right and one on his left.

The dread of the place was common. there's another commonality I want to tell you about and that's the willingness of the innocent. There's a mysterious part in this story that I don't believe when we get to heaven we'll ask the questions that we say we'll ask.

Okay? People say boy when I get to heaven I'm gonna no you're not. No you're not. If you get there okay. That's a whole other matter I'll deal with before we leave but you're gonna be so caught up in the glory of God in the presence of Christ in the reunion of the saints in as scripture calls it the marriage supper of the land that sounds like a feast to me.

You'll be so caught up in that that your questions will be gone. But I wonder now I won't then I guess but I wonder now about that trip up there for Isaac and Abraham.

[21:12] I mean how did that all go down? You know I mean and how did it work out when they got to the place of the sacrifice? Isaac was a young strapping man and while Abraham was old and I mean if you're a hundred today I don't mean to be you know that's considered old by most of us you know.

was there any dialogue there besides him asking about that sacrifice? I mean we know on the way up Isaac asked where the sacrifice was and we know that Abraham answered that God would provide but when they got there scripture tells us that Abraham laid the wood in order and laid his bound son on the wood and then Abraham raised the knife.

Isaac had to be willing to serve his father when just the two of them are in that spot.

Whatever may come he had to trust the father. That reminds me of Christ.

In the garden of Gethsemane may this cup pass from me yet not my will but yours. And on the cross when he cried out my God my God why have you forsaken me?

[22:44] Christ felt forsaken. But was he? That's the beginning of a psalm that he quotes that speaks not only of the prophecy of the cross but it also speaks of the delivery of the Lord.

And Christ knew that psalm. Isaac had to go willingly. Christ went willingly. It was the willingness of the innocent.

One more similarity and I'll close. The provision of the sacrifice. Abraham as the knife was raised in agony over his son the angel of the Lord spoke saying in verse 12 he said do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him.

For now I know that you fear God seeing that you have not withheld your son your only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked and behold behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by his horns.

Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called the name of that place the Lord will provide. And it is said to this day on the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.

[24:10] This is the most obvious similarity to that of Christ because God watched his son be led like a lamb to the slaughter laid upon the wooden cross bound by the spikes in his hands and feet and it is as if God himself lifted the knife of sacrifice and brought it down on his own son as Christ hung on the cross and died for our sins.

That is the work of the cross. The sacrifice to replace all previous sacrifices. Hebrews chapter 10 verse 11 and 12 speaks of this and explains it to us when it says and every priest stands daily at his service.

offering repeatedly the same sacrifices which can never take away sin but Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins. He sat down at the right hand of the father.

God has provided the sacrifice. He did for Abraham. He did for us. And the similarities of these two stories amaze me when you look at the agony of giving up your son.

When you look at the struggle of the journey. When you look at the loneliness involved in that. The prophetic foresight of the event. The dread that came with it. And the willingness of the one to be sacrificed.

[25 : 31] And once again God provides. I want you to hear me today. He always provides. He provides. He provides.

He provides. He provides. He provides. He provides. He provides. He provides. Now. What are you going through today?

What are you struggling with? God will provide. He's good for it.

He always does. What does he ask for in return? He asks for the surrender of our lives. Romans 10 9 says if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead.

You will be saved. And the sacrifice of our lives for him is what he asked for. And friend don't misunderstand me. He don't want us to die for him.

[26 : 42] He wants us to live for him. Romans chapter 12 verse 1 and 2 says this and I appeal to you therefore brothers by the mercies of God to present your bodies as living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God which is your spiritual worship.

Oh listen friend. You need to memorize this verse today. In the world in which we live you need to know it. Bring your Bibles with you.

Underline it. Mark it. Put a post-it there. Live by it. Do not be conformed to this world. But be transformed by the renewal of your mind.

That by testing you may discern what the will of God. What is the will of God. What is good and acceptable and perfect. God just wants you to live for him.

That's what he wanted for Abraham and Isaac. That's the opportunity that he gives us provided through Christ. Christ. And that opportunity is provided through the sacrifice of Christ to all who come to Christ.

[28 : 03] Some of you might need to hear that this morning. But I'll promise you one thing. There's a world right outside those doors that desperately needs to hear it.

With every head bowed and every eye closed, if there's never been a time in your life when you have surrendered your life to the Lord Jesus, ask him to forgive you of your sins, to come into your life and to change you.

Empower you with the Holy Spirit of God and enable you to live a life that glorifies him. To live a life that pleases him. If you've never made such a commitment as that, I want you to know we'll stand in just a moment and we'll sing, but more important than any song we sing is that you make the proper decision for the Lord as he leads you.

You come and say, Pastor, I want to be saved. I want to know the Lord Jesus personally. You come and we'll lead you in that process.

Maybe you've done that privately, but you've never told anybody about it. It's time to tell folks. Jesus said, if you're ashamed of me before others, I'll be ashamed of you before my Father.

[29 : 26] He wants us to boldly live for him. To honor him by letting others know what Christ has done in our life, by living that out and by showing that through the first step of obedience of baptism.

And man, what a cool opportunity we have coming up in just a little less than a month for you to publicly display your faith in Christ through baptism. You might be here this morning.

God may be drawing you to First Baptist Church. You know this is the place that God would have you to serve. He's led you in that way. You come. We'll happily guide you in that process.

And there's a lot of others here today who look at your life and when you look at your life, you say, I'm not living sacrificially for the Lord. My life's not marked as a living sacrifice for God.

I'm doing what I want to do instead of what he wants me to do. I'm displeasing him. I'm not living for his glory. And I need to set that straight. Right here in the middle of the hot summer. What a great time to get it right.

[30 : 32] Quit living lacklusterly for the Lord. Enough with casual Christianity. The Holy Spirit of God fill us up. Wear us out and build us back up.

That's what it's about. You just do what God tells you. Just trust him. I don't ever want you to do more than what God would have you to do.

I pray you'll never be satisfied with less. Lord Jesus, I love you. And I thank you that week after week you allow me to stand and proclaim the salvation of the Lord.

With a full confidence that you will provide. God, help us to respond in obedience, God, I pray. In Jesus' name, amen.