**Help Me to See You Lord**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**James 1:2-6**

**Sunday Morning**

**July 29, 2018**

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

**When we’re facing a difficult decision or situation, it’s important that we distinguish between a trial and a temptation**

Saints, God allows trials in our lives to purify and strengthen us in our faith and Christian life. But temptations come to entice, pollute, and weaken us. As believers, we’re going to face both temptations and trials of different kinds and sizes and on various occasions in our lives. These are times when our faith is on trial.

Abraham had walked with God many years through all sorts of trouble and hardship. He’d made mistakes along the way when he gave in to fear, but he’d also demonstrated his faith by obeying the Lord. He had seen God’s faithfulness to keep His promise to give him a son, even though it seemed impossible.

**Titus 3:1 ESV**

“Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work…”

**John 14:15 ESV**

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments”

**Acts 5:29**

“But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men”

When Sarah was ninety and Abraham was one hundred, the promised son Isaac was born. It was through this son’s lineage that all the other promises God had made to Abraham would be fulfilled.

**The Lord tested Abraham’s faith**

**Genesis 22:1-19**

1 Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 And He said, "Take now 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."

3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. 5 And 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."

6 So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. 7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" 8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. 10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."

12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." 13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.

14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of The LORD it shall be provided." 15 Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16 and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—

17 blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." 19 So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

Saints, having received the promised son, Abraham was told by God to do something that was not only shocking but also seemed to contradict His future promises:

**Genesis 22:2**

“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”

It had taken so long for Abraham to receive this son, and now God was telling him to sacrifice him, yet Abraham responded in obedience.

**Genesis 22:3**

“So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him”

Saints, there was probably a conflict in Abraham’s mind as he tried to reconcile this command with God’s previous promises:

**Genesis 12:2-3**

“I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed”

**How could all this come to pass if Isaac was dead?**

He was not only important to Abraham but to the fulfillment of God’s promises. Yet the Lord made it very clear that He was calling Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, his only son.

Although Abraham had another son through Hagar, Sarah’s Egyptian maid, God had chosen Isaac as the son through whom all His promises would be fulfilled and through whom Jesus the Messiah would be born. In this regard, he was Abraham’s only son, and the one whom he loved.

**Our lack of understanding of why God tells us to do something is never an acceptable excuse for not doing it**

Saints, God loves us and has a plan and purpose for our lives. Even though we may want a better understanding of how everything will work out, God doesn’t owe us further explanations. Obedience means we do what He says, when He says, whether we understand it or not.

Saints, Abraham is a perfect example of this. Although he didn’t understand why God asked him to sacrifice Isaac, he did exactly what the Lord told him. Abraham’s words in Genesis 22:4-5 reveal how he thought God would keep His promise:

**Genesis 22:4-5**

“On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. Abraham 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.’”

Saints, the Hebrew meaning is that both he and Isaac would worship, and both of them would return. Abraham’s faith in God was so strong that he reasoned that if He asked him to sacrifice Isaac, He would then raise him to life in order to fulfill His promises.

**Hebrews 11:17-19**

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

**There is just as much power and authority behind God’s promises to us as there was to Abraham**

Saints, the Lord knows what He wants to do in our lives, how He’s equipped us, and where He wants us to go. We are not to argue, but to trust Him. Trusting God begins with obedience in the small things He tells us to do.

Then, when the larger challenges come, we’ll already be in the habit of obeying Him. Obedience depends on whether we believe that God is omniscient, knowing all things; omnipotent, having all power; and omnipresent, being present everywhere. To refuse to obey is equivalent to denying that He knows what is best for us, has the power to accomplish it, and will be with us through it.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17**

16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

**Ephesians 2:10**

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them”

Saints, even though God’s command was confusing, difficult to obey, and not at all what Abraham wanted, he never argued with the Lord.

**Genesis 2:6**

“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 the two of them walked on together”

When Isaac commented that they only had the wood and fire for the burnt offering but not the lamb, Abraham said,

**Genesis 2:8**

“God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son”

**Abraham is proven faithful**

Saints, there is no scriptural evidence that Isaac resisted God’s command. It simply says when they reached their destination, Abraham built the altar, arranged the wood, bound Isaac, and laid him on the altar.

**Genesis 22:9**

“Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood”

But as Abraham raised the knife, the angel of the Lord stopped him, saying,

**Genesis 22:12**

“Now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me”

Saints, then the Lord provided a ram that was caught in a thicket for the sacrifice and reiterated His promises and blessings to Abraham.

Because he believed and obeyed God, Abraham with his faith passed the test. Abraham’s story teaches us that we will never lose by obeying God.

Although He won’t ask us to literally sacrifice anyone, He will ask us to release people, things, or dreams we hold dear in order to faithfully obey Him. Although we may think that the only way to keep what we value is to hold it tightly, we’ll discover, like Abraham did, that blessings always follow obedience!

**In Closing:**

**1. What similarities do you see between Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son and God’s sacrifice of His Son for us?**

**2. Are you reluctant to obey the Lord in some area of your life?**

**3. What will obedience cost you?**

**4. What will disobedience cost you?**

**5. Is the Lord asking you to surrender someone or something to Him?**

**6. What do you think would happen if you obeyed?**

**7. How does Abraham’s story encourage you to trust God?**

**Let's Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace." '**