

# HOW TO BE BLESSED

SERIES ON THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM

## PLACE YOUR ALL ON THE ALTAR (Week 7)

**OPENING:** Can you recall all seven principles on *How to be Blessed*?

### DIG DEEPER:

This remarkable part of Abraham's life is without precedent or parallel in Old Testament; Read **GENESIS 22**.

*A heartbreaking scenario.* In those days, it was common practice by surrounding pagans to sacrifice their children to their gods. It was "culturally acceptable." But it seemed an illogical command because the son of promise is being asked to be sacrificed to the God who provided him. Up until this point El-Shaddai had never demanded any human sacrifice. The request God made must have pierced Abraham's heart. It was a test, but Abraham didn't know it was. For him it was a sacrifice being demanded by his God. When he received the request, Abraham did not tell anyone anything about it. **Anything that has not been tested cannot be trusted.**

### I. OBEDIENCE WITHOUT QUESTION OR HESITATION- verses 1-5

It is important to note that Abraham heard God's voice and wasted no time. The verse says "*The next morning Abraham got up*" and prepared for the most difficult journey he will ever take. God cares about our heart. He tests the purity of our love and the consistency of our obedience. Tests are always sure to come will come. God is serious about our relationship with Him. This is one of the most important lessons we find in the life of Abraham. *He obeyed without question.*

- What areas in your obedience do you struggle with the most?
- Do you ever bargain with God, saying, "I'll obey if...?"
- Read Hebrews 3:15 and 1 Samuel 15:22. What do these verses teach?

### II. EVERY BLESSING IS MEANT TO GLORIFY GOD- verses 5-8

The blessings of God are meant to point others and our hearts to God. Sometimes, we can be so attached to the blessings we receive, they take the place of God and can become more important to us than God Himself and the purpose for which we received them. This test is meant to help Abraham (not God) to get his heart checked. It is perfectly right and normal for a father to love his son, but God wants us to love Him more than anything else in this world. He gave this great commandment for this very reason, Deuteronomy 6:5. All that Abraham ever dreamt and looked forward to having has come true and blessing he received had taken God's place in his life. God always wants to keep our hearts on check, so there are times when He whispers, "*Take now your son . . .*"

God is our first love and His kingdom is our priority. There are times when we get so engulfed with the gifts God gives that we leave our first love (read Rev. 2:4). Sometimes, God takes back some blessings to help us get back on track to recognize Him as our first love, priority and source of blessings (Job 1:21).

- Conflicting of priorities happens to us so easily. Are you struggling with conflicting priorities between God and something else?
- We must never lose our love and excitement for God and His kingdom. How can we have fresh love for Him all the time?

### III. LAY ALL ON THE ALTAR- verses 6-12

Abraham laid everything down on the Altar. He was willing to go through until God put a stop to it. God never intended to take Isaac - only to test Abraham. And the test was not for God's sake, but for Abraham's. God intended to bring Abraham to full surrender to Himself and to full faith. Read Hebrews 11:17-19. In Genesis 22:5, Abraham told his servants "we" will come back to you. Abraham believed in El-Shaddai, that even if his son dies, He has the power to resurrect Isaac or provide a substitute. That's how strong his faith was.

- Are you willing to put everything down on the altar? What might God be asking you to give up?
- This is the ultimate test that prove whether you TRUST AND OBEY.
- The Lord will provide. What are believing God to provide for you this year? How are you preparing yourself for it?

### A REFLECTION OF FUTURE SALVATION

- God had earlier promised Abraham that he would make a great nation of him through Isaac, which forced Abraham to either trust God with what mattered most to him or to distrust God. Abraham chose to trust and obey.
- This incident foreshadows several truths about Jesus: Jesus Christ was sacrificed by the Father on the cross at Calvary, for the sin of the world. God's great love required of himself what he did not require of Abraham. But also, the ram is a symbol of Jesus being a substitute that God provided in our stead.
- Mount Moriah, where this event took place, means "God will provide." King Solomon later built the first Temple there. And it was on a mountain in the land of Moriah that our Lord became our sacrifice (2 Chron. 3:1). Today, the Muslim shrine The Dome of the Rock, in Jerusalem, stands on the site of the sacrifice of Isaac!

- **PRAYER AND FASTING WEEK – SEPT. 4-9**
- **FAMILY FALL FEST - SEPT. 11 (After church. Invite your friends.)**