

March 31, 2024
Easter Sunday
Pastor Matt Duerr

God's Narrative: God Will Provide

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God, our Father and from Jesus Christ our LORD, Amen. I've been asked the question, 'Pastor Matt, how in the world are you going to work God's narrative into the Easter message? We're in the Old Testament. It's not the Easter message!' And my answer is simply this, 'We're staying with Abraham.'

You know, Abraham, the guy who was told to go to the land that I will show you, just as we've been told to go and make disciples of all nations. And we're supposed to trust the Lord in that, that He'll give us the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit will give us the words that we're speaking.

Last week we saw how Abraham interceded on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah and how Jesus came into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday with that goal of interceding for us. Likewise, we have now interceded on behalf of each other as we pray and bring others concerns to our morning and prayer. We can. You heard it this morning there in Genesis 22, where God speaks to Abraham, Abraham, and I love Abraham's response. "Here am I. Here I am." Abraham, take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will tell you. It is very similar to that first call.

Now you might be asking Pastor Matt, where's Mariah? Mariah is where Jerusalem is. And it is where the temple would be built. And so, the message again, is go. Trust me, when you get to the area, I'll show you the mountain. What do we read? So, Abraham rose early in the morning, and he set out. He set out with some young men, with Isaac, his son and what they needed. It was a three-day journey to the land of Mariah. We read that when he got there, he saw the place. And he told the young man, the servants that were with him, to stay with the donkey. And he said, listen carefully, I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you. I want you to remember that, but log that in the back of your mind. We're going to worship and come again to

you. We read that Isaac then carried the wood for the offering, and Abraham carried the fire, which would have been a torch or a lantern kind of thing, as well as the knife. And they left the young men behind. And began to go up this mountain. The obvious hit Isaac his young son and he said, "My father, we hold the fire and the wood, where is the lamb for the offering? And again, I want to just make a quick note here, Abraham had done a good job of being a father. Isaac at this young age, he understands what's needed for a sacrifice. Abraham had taught him. And he continued to teach Isaac. God will provide for Himself the Lamb for the offering my son. And I want you to think about that. "God will provide for Himself the sacrifice." Of atonement was a sacrifice to God. God was the recipient of the sacrifice. And Abraham says God will provide for Himself, God will provide His own Sacrifice. Log that one away again, also in the back of your mind. We're going to come back to it.

And so, they get to the top of the mountain. We read they built an altar. Put the one on the altar. Set Isaac on the wood. Took out his knife to, I quote, "slaughter him," his only son. And a voice from heaven comes; "Abraham, Abraham, Here am I. You should not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him. For I know that you fear God, seeing that you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." And then? There's a ram in the thicket providing what was needed for the sacrifice. And so Abraham named that that place; "The Lord will provide." And then Moses adds a little thing to that. He says, "as it is said to this day," so this is now several hundred years later. As it is said to this day, I quote, "On the mount of the Lord,(or Yahweh) on the mount of the Lord, it shall be provided."

Now with modern times, we hear this account, this narrative, and people will say that is so cruel. It was child abuse, and that was an inhuman test that God put Abraham through. And my response to those kind of things is, "well, now hold on just a second. Don't judge Abraham by your emotions." And I have had it said back to me. 'I'm not criticizing Abraham but God. God did this.' And my response is no, no, no, no! It's Abraham. Because God was using Abraham to give us two major critical lessons.

Let's listen to Abraham. "I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you." He follows that up with "God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." Abraham knew what was happening.

He knew. His faith was so great that he knew God had promised him a son through Sarah, and that son was Isaac. He knew that through Isaac, God had promised that he would become a great nation. He knew that through Isaac, God had said all nations would be blessed. And so, we move to the New Testament, to Hebrews Chapter 11, which is called God's hall of fame of faith. We turn to verse 19 and the author to the Hebrews writes, "Abraham considered that God was able even to raise him Isaac from the dead." Abraham went up that mountain knowing God made me a promise that Isaac was my heir, and all the promises were coming through him. Even if he has me kill him, God has a reason for it. God will raise him, and I'm going to have Isaac, so I'm going to do what God says.

Lesson one, have faith. Trust God's word, trust His promises, and listen carefully to His call like Abraham did. Lesson number two, Abraham was right. God would provide for Himself a lamb, The Lamb of God, Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord. So often we see at games and wherever they're billboards with John 3:16. And it's a great verse, "For God so love the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." Abraham knew this. Abraham knew that God loves the world. And God used him to send the message that God would give His only son to be the sacrifice.

And this image of Abraham with Isaac up on the mountain shows us, yes, a tremendous lesson in faith by Abraham, but a tremendous lesson in love and that God loved Abraham so much that He stopped him from sacrificing his son and gave us the image of His love, that He would not stop Himself from sacrificing His Son, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. He would not hold his Son back. He did not stop Himself from sending His Son. He did not stop His Son from going to the cross. He did not stop the Jews from crying out, 'Crucify Him.' He did not stop the Romans from driving the nails through His hands and His feet.

No, why not? Because of His love. And we are His creation, and He loves us and wants us to be with Him forever because of His justness. He is the good Judge who doesn't do like we do today, where if you steal up to \$950 it's a misdemeanor and there is no charge. The wages of sin is death. That's the Law. That's the penalty. The good Judge enforces it. And God is just, and the penalty must be paid, and He paid it for us.

And He did it because He's big, He's God, He's Creator, were the creation. Only the Creator is big enough to cover the price of all of the sin of mankind. And He is powerful. He alone could defeat death. Man's been trying for a long time, and we aren't even close. That resurrection that we come here to celebrate, today is God's power for our salvation. Which takes us back to Abraham, takes us back to our series of the "I Am's" that Jesus said, it takes us back where we started: Ash Wednesday, where Jesus speaking to the Pharisee, says, 'your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.'

Easter, it is the ultimate expression of everything about God. It all comes down to today. The resurrection shows us His love, shows us His mercy, shows us His grace, shows us His power, shows us the fulfillment of the prophecy. It shows us our salvation. And us? We need to be like Abraham and trust it all. Why? Because He's alive! Look at what He lives to do.

That's why we're singing all 8 verses of **I know That My Redeemer lives.** And as we finish our service today singing it, I'd like you to look at each line of verses 5,6,7 and 8. Each line begins with "He lives." He lives? Yes. He lives to silence all my fear. He lives to wipe away my tears. He lives to calm my troubled heart. He lives all blessings to impart. And it's all "He lives" until the very end. Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives. I know that my Redeemer lives! In His Name, Amen.