

***The Testimony Of Abraham
The Refining Of Faith
Hebrews 11:17-19***

Introduction:

1. Look Again At Abraham's Faith!
 - Mentioned Twice - Man Of Great Faith!
 - First - The Call Of God Changes Things!
 - Changes Your Heart, Mind, Will!
 - The Obedience Of Faith!
 - Here - The Refining Of Faith!
 - How? Trying / Testing Of Abraham's Faith!
2. Read Hebrews 11:17-19!
 - Looks Back At Genesis 22:1-14 - Read This!
 - Abraham Was A Man Of Great Faith!
 - But, As A Human, A Sinful Being, Even Faith Needs To Be Refined, Purified, & Perfected!
 - How Is This Accomplished?
 - Many Times, Through Testing!
 - This Testing Is Different Than A School Test!
 - School Test - Reveals What You Know!
 - Many Times, You May Never Have To Go Back & Study What You Missed!
 - This Test - Reveals What You Lack!
 - So You Can Go Back To The Source Of Your Faith, To Have Him Increase, Strengthen & Purify Your Faith!
3. God Called Abraham To Offer His Son As A Sacrifice To Him In Order To Refine Abraham's Faith!
 - Much Like The Process Of Refining Gold!
 - Imagine If Gold Could Think & Talk!
 - It Would Have No Idea What Was Coming Next!
 - Once, Quietly Existing With Other Rocks In Something Called Ore!
 - Until:
 - Mr. Miner Uses A Pick Axe Or Explosives To Get It!
 - Then High Pressure Water To Clean It!
 - Then A Mill Grinds It To Separate It From Other Rocks!
 - Then Acids Eat Away Other Impurities!
 - Then It Is Heated & Melted To Finally Get To Pure Gold!
 - "Why Did You Do This To Me?"
 - Because You Are Valuable – Priceless!
4. When A Christian Goes Through The Process Of Faith We Have Seen So Far (From Abel To Sarah) - It Is Time For It To Be Refined (Like Abraham's)!
 - To Be Tested, You First Must Have Faith!
 - "Refine" - Process Of Purification - "To Reduce To A Pure State!"
 - Many Times Our Own Faith Becomes Tainted, Weak, Or Misplaced!
 - Perhaps Our Faith Needs To Be Refined As Well!
 - God Doesn't Test Our Faith For His Sake!
 - He Knows Our Faith & Hearts!
 - He Doesn't Need To "See" If You Are Sincere!
 - God Tests Our Faith For Our Sake!
 - He Wants To Expose The Weakness Of Your Faith To You! To Increase Your Need & Dependence Of Him, So That You Will Go Back To Him!
 - Reveals Who You Are!
 - Not That You Are Able, But That God Is Able! Not That You Can Triumph By Your Faith, But That God Can Triumph Through Your Faith!
5. What Was Abraham's Testing Like?
 - Affected 3 Areas Of His Life:

1. *Tested Who He Would Believe!*

- 11:17a - "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac!"
- Would Abraham Believe The Works Of God's Power?
 - That He & Sarah Had Seen?
 - Or, More Importantly:
- Would Abraham Believe The Word Of God's Promise?
 - That He Had Heard?
 - See 11:18 - "Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called!"
 - Genesis 21:12 - "And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called!"
 - Foundation Of Faith – God's Word And His Faithfulness To His Word!
- Abraham's Response:
 - He Believed In God's Power & Promise & "Offered Up Isaac!"
- When Your Faith Is Tested:
 - Who Will You Believe?
 - The Words & Advice Of Men?
 - Consider Job & His Friends!
 - The Word Of God!

2. *Tested Who He Would Live!*

- 11:17b - "And he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son!"
- Called To Offer His Son!
 - "Only Begotten" - Monogene - Stresses Uniqueness And Purpose, And Reflects The Relationship Between God The Father & God The Son (John 3:16)!
 - Genesis 22:2 - "And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of!"
 - "Every Word Was A Trial!" (Matthew Henry)
- Look At When This Was Said!
 - He "Received The Promises" Already!
 - "Receive" - To Take Into His Own Arms! No Longer Had To Live By Faith But By Sight! No Longer Had To Rely Upon The Lord, But Upon His Own Raising Of His Son!
 - How Could It Have Affected Abraham?
 - How Would It Have Affected You?
 - Begin To Raise Some Questions In Your Mind?
 - About God's Nature?
 - Is He Just & Good!
 - Brings You Back To How He Has Revealed Himself To You Through His Word!
 - About God's Promises?
 - Is He Going To Keep Them? Can He?
 - He Has! He Will!
 - About God's Demands?
 - Is He Tempting To Evil?
 - He Can't! He Won't!
 - James 1:13 - "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man!"
- Abraham's Response:
 - "He Offered!"
 - His Love For God Was Greater Than His Love For Isaac!
 - Rather, He Knew God's Love For Him Was Greater Than His Love For Isaac!
 - John 21:15 - "Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?"
 - Matthew 10:37 - "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me!"

- When Your Faith Is Tested:
 - Who Will You Love?
 - Perhaps He Is Testing Your Love & Devotion To Him!
 - Not Other People! Not Other Things! Not What Is In This World! (1 John 2:15 - "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him!")

3. ***Tested Who His Hope Would Be In!***

- 11:19 - "Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure!"
- Abraham Did Have Questions!
 - "Accounting" - Thinking / Deliberating / Considering!
 - He Reasoned About These Things & Came To A Powerful Conclusion!
- Abraham's Response:
 - "Able God" – "God Was Able!" / "God Is Able!"
 - Even To Raise One From The Dead, In Order To Keep His Promise!
 - Concluded This Even Before He Bound Isaac!
 - Look At Genesis 22:5 - "And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you!"
 - His Hope Was In The Lord! Not In Isaac!
- When Your Faith Is Tested:
 - Who Will You Hope In?
 - Your Hope Is Not In "The Younger Generation!"
 - Your Hope Is Not In The Programs Of A Church!
 - Your Hope Is Not In A New Dynamic Speaker!
 - But Does Your Hope Rest In The Lord!

Conclusion:

1. What Happened As A Result Of This Test?
 - To Abraham, It Was As If Isaac Was Resurrected! In His Mind, He Was Already Dead – He Had Already Obeyed & Killed His Own Son, Out Of Obedience To God's Command!
 - He Did Not Hold Out For God To Intervene In The Way That He Ultimately Did!
 - And, Abraham's Faith, Love & Hope In The Lord Grew!
 - It Drew Him Closer & He Realized He Must Continue To Live By Faith!
2. The Testing Of Your Faith Will Do The Same Thing!
 - If You Let It & Respond To It The Right Way!
 - Really Thinking About God & Not Just About The Circumstances Of The Test!
 - The Testing Of Your Faith Will Refine & Revive Your Relationship With God!
 - Why Does He Test Your Faith?
 - Because He Loves You & You Are Valuable To Him!
 - 1 Peter 1:7 - "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ!"
 - "God never moves without purpose or plan, when trying His servant and molding a man. Give thanks to the Lord though the testing seems long. In darkness He giveth a song. Oh rejoice in the Lord, He makes no mistakes. He knoweth the end of each path that I take. For when I am tried and purified, I shall come forth as gold."
3. How Will You Respond To The Testing Of Your Faith?
 - Remember:
 - Romans 5:1-5 - "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us!"
 - James 1:2-4 - "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing this, that the

trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing!”

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