

CONSEQUENCES OF FAITH

Part 4 of Foundations 260 - OT. Genesis 22:1-18.

Peter Foxwell. The Cornerstone Church. February 1, 2026.

Dismiss the Middle School

GENESIS 22

Let's begin today's teaching by reading Genesis 22. This chapter was part of last week's Foundations 260 readings. How is F260 going for you?

Keep going; it's going to grow your faith in God deep and strong.

Have you ever had one of those moments when you just have to trust? Like when an airplane climbs into the clouds. The pilots can't see where they're going; they're relying on technology and past experiences, and air traffic controllers telling them it's all OK.

That's a pretty good picture of faith in God. We don't always know how it will work out. We're trusting God's character and promises.

Today, we're talking about faith in God. What are the ripple effects or consequences of faith in our lives? What happens when we have faith?

To see the answer, we're going back to one of the most powerful stories of faith in the Bible: Genesis 22. It's the story of Abraham and Isaac—a moment when faith met real fear, and trust was tested to the limit.

Through it, we'll find out what happens when we choose to believe God, even when we don't have all the answers, and we're flying through the clouds, so to speak.

GENESIS 22:1-18 (CSB)

1 After these things, God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham! ”
“Here I am,” he answered.

2 “Take your son,” he said, “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 I will tell you about.”

3 So Abraham got up early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took with him two of his young men and his son Isaac. He split wood for a burnt offering and set out to go to the place God had told him about. 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5 Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go over there to worship; then **we'll** come back to you.” 6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac. In his hand he took the fire and the knife, and the two of them walked on together.

7 Then Isaac spoke to his father Abraham and said, “My father.”

And he replied, “Here I am, my son.”

Isaac said, “The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering? ”

8 Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” Then the two of them walked on together.

9 When they arrived at the place that God had told him about, Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood. He bound his son Isaac and placed him on the altar on top of the wood. 10 Then Abraham reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son.

11 But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham! ”

He replied, “Here I am.”

12 Then he said, “Do not lay a hand on the boy or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your only son from me.” 13 Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught in the thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it as a burnt offering in place of his son. 14 And Abraham named that place The LORD Will Provide, so today it is said, “It will be provided on the LORD’s mountain.”

15 Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven 16 and said, “By myself I have sworn,” this is the LORD’s declaration: “Because you have done this thing and have not withheld your only son, 17 I will indeed bless you and make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your offspring will possess the city gates of their enemies. 18 And all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring because you have obeyed my command.”

SO MANY QUESTIONS

This is a strange story, and I have so many questions. The biggest question is this: Did God really intend for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac? Does God expect or approve of child sacrifice?

The answer is NO. And there are at least six reasons why it's NO:

1. **Verse 1** tells us that God's command was a “**test.**” We'll come back to that.
2. **In verse 5**, Abraham tells his servants that “**we**” will come back to you. So, Abraham expected Isaac to live.
3. **In verse 12**, the angel of the Lord said, “*Do not lay a hand on the boy ...*”
4. **Other Old Testament passages** explicitly condemn child sacrifice. For example: Leviticus 18:21; Leviticus 20:2–5; Deuteronomy 12:31; Deuteronomy 18:10.
5. **Verse 8** reveals that Abraham believed God would provide the lamb.
6. **Hebrews 11** explains more of Abraham's thinking: even if the lamb God would provide was Isaac...

Hebrews 11:17-19 (CSB) By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac. He received the promises, and yet he was offering his one and only son, 18, the one to whom it had been said, Your offspring will be traced through Isaac. 19 He considered God to be able even to raise someone from the dead; therefore, he received him back, figuratively speaking.

If you'd like to explore this further, I recommend the online articles listed in your study guide footnotes:

- <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/abraham-take-your-son>
- <https://learn.ligonier.org/articles/abrahams-great-act-faith>

Now, with that thorny issue set aside, let's dive into our teaching on faith.

Genesis 22 reveals two consequences of living by faith. This is what we should expect when we trust God and his promises.

1. OUR FAITH WILL BE TESTED - vv. 1-12

Verse 1 tells us that God tested Abraham. The test was beyond anything we will ever face; a one-of-a-kind exam.

What was the exam question? Would Abraham sacrifice his son as a burnt offering simply because God commanded it?

The test got to the heart of Abraham's faith. Remember, Issac was the miracle child **promised** by the Lord and given to Sarah and Abraham well after they had given up waiting and long after the natural age for giving birth.

God promised to make Abraham into a great nation, and Isaac was the key to that. Now, God wanted Abraham to sacrifice his son. It didn't seem to make sense.

Genesis 12:1-3 (CSB) The LORD said to Abram: Go from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

Genesis 17:15-16 (CSB) God said to Abraham, "As for your wife Sarai, do not call her Sarai, for Sarah will be her name. 16 I will bless her; indeed, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she will produce nations; kings of peoples will come from her."

Genesis 21:1-3 (CSB) The LORD came to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. 2 Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time God had told him. 3 Abraham named his son, who was born to him — the one Sarah bore to him — Isaac.

God tested Abraham's faith at two levels:

1. **First, did Abraham trust God's character and promises?** Even when he didn't understand what God was doing? Even when it seemed to undermine God's promise to make Abraham into a great nation.
2. **Secondly, did Abraham value his son above God?** Verse 2 implies that. Had Isaac become an idol in Abraham's heart, someone he treasured above God?

God still tests our faith.

His goal is to prove to us that our faith is genuine by giving us instructions to obey even under pressure to do our own thing. If we obey God, it proves our faith is genuine, the real deal. Genuine faith obeys God.

- According to the apostle Peter, testing reveals "***the proven character***" of our faith, which is more precious than pure gold because genuine faith results in "***praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ***" (1 Peter 1:6-7).

What will the tests look like?

Everything is a test. Every day, in every way.

In every situation of life, we're faced with two choices: will we trust God and his promises and obey, or will we trust in something or someone else and do things our way?

Who will we trust when:

- Obeying God will cost us something like time, energy, money, reputation, or comfort
- We're hurting or lonely
- We're in a season of abundance of friends, money, or success
- The bills are mounting up
- Our friends let us down
- Our plans aren't working out
- We don't get what we want
- God hasn't answered our prayers on our timetable.

Abraham passed the test because his trust in God's character and promises held fast. He believed God, so he obeyed God, and God responded with affirmation:

*Genesis 22:11-12 (CSB) But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham! ” He replied, “Here I am.” 12 Then he said, “Do not lay a hand on the boy or do anything to him. **For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your only son from me.**”*

Now, let's move on to the second consequence of faith.

2. OUR GOD WILL KEEP HIS WORD - vv. 11-18

God provided the lamb, and Isaac lived.

But notice when God kept his word. It was at the last possible moment. God has his own timetable and reasons for delays.

I see Abraham weeping and shaking and hesitating; the knife was millimeters from Isaac's throat.

It was almost too late.

But not too late: Isaac lived and inherited God's promises to Abraham. God kept his word; his descendants became a great nation; the world has been blessed through Abraham, not least by his greatest descendant, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

It's a mistake to read the story and conclude it was mainly about Abraham's faith. That's missing the point; the story is about God and his faithfulness.

God kept this promise. He always does, but in his timing and in his way.

Romans 4 describes the dynamics of Abraham's faith:

*Romans 4:20-21 (CSB) Abraham did not waver in unbelief at God's promise but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, 21 because **he was fully convinced that what God had promised, he was also able to do.***

Faith is rational and logical because God never lies and his word never fails. We should expect God to keep his word. Balaam was correct:

Numbers 23:19 (CSB) God is not a man, that he might lie, or a son of man, that he might change his mind. Does he speak and not act, or promise and not fulfill?

We are called to live the wonderful “promise-driven life” because it honors God, who always keeps his promises. Faith proves that we know God as he truly is: the faithful, powerful, wise, promise-keeper.

John Piper made some excellent observations about the promise-driven life:¹

How many times do I come to the end of a day and I shake my head and say, “It’s been eight hours since I thought about trusting a promise.” I haven’t even thought about it. But do you know what else I’ve had in those eight hours? Anxiety. Murmuring. Where do they come from? Not trusting promises. This takes some of us a lifetime to learn … take a promise, believe it, and don’t let it go until it has an effect on you. And then turn your resolve, by that power, into a deed.

Whatever situation you face, look at it through the lens of God’s faithfulness and his promises.

- It could be a general promise: “I will never leave you” (Hebrews 13:5)
- Better still, find a promise about something specific to what you’re facing: being generous, blessing your enemies, resisting sexual temptation, risking your life, identifying as a Christian, boldly sharing Jesus, etc.

One book taught me how to have faith in God’s promises: John Piper’s *Future Grace*. Download it for free.²

Also download for free Spurgeon’s *Faith’s Checkbook*.³

¹ <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/living-by-faith-in-future-grace/excerpts/the-promise-driven-life>

² <https://www.desiringgod.org/books/future-grace>

³ <https://www.monergism.com/faiths-checkbook-daily-devotional-ebook>

The preface reads:

A PROMISE from God may very instructively be compared to a check payable to order. It is given to the believer with the view of bestowing upon him some good thing. It is not meant that he should read it over comfortably, and then have done with it. No, he is to treat the promise as a reality, as a man treats a check.

He is to take the promise, and endorse it with his own name by personally receiving it as true. He is by faith to accept it as his own. He sets to his seal that God is true, and true as to this particular word of promise. He goes further, and believes that he has the blessing in having the sure promise of it and therefore he puts his name to it to testify to the receipt of the blessing.

This done, he must believably present the promise to the LORD, as a man presents a check at the counter of the Bank. He must plead it by prayer, expecting to have it fulfilled. If he has come to Heaven's bank at the right date, he will receive the promised amount at once. If the date should happen to be further on, he must patiently wait till its arrival; but meanwhile he may count the promise as money, for the Bank is sure to pay when the due time arrives.

Some fail to place the endorsement of faith upon the check, and so they get nothing; and others are slack in presenting it, and these also receive nothing. This is not the fault of the promise, but of those who do not act with it in a common-sense, business-like manner.

God has given no pledge which He will not redeem, and encouraged no hope which He will not fulfill.

FAITH IS NOT OPTIONAL

We've discussed that our faith will be tested, but for good reasons: 1) so we can know it's genuine, and 2) because our trust in God brings glory to God.

For example, if we trust even when we're going through hard times and living by faith feels really difficult, but we choose it anyway, our faith is most likely the real deal.

Our Lord Jesus Christ faced his own moment of decision. Would he offer himself up as the atoning sacrifice on the Cross? Would he trust in God's power and promise? The Bible says:

Hebrews 12:1-2 (CSB) Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, 2 keeping our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

What was the joy set before him? His resurrection, ascension, and glorification. And, also, our salvation, resurrection, and glorification.

Thankfully, Jesus chose to live, and die, and obey by faith. We should do the same.

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Review

- Review Peter's February 1st teaching and study guide.
- What were the main insights of Peter's teaching?
- What questions do you have about the passage or Peter's teaching?
- What were the main applications or takeaways for your life?

Discuss

1. When you hear that God still tests our faith, what emotions rise up in you (comfort, fear, confusion, gratitude)? What do those emotions reveal about what you actually believe about God's character?
2. Abraham obeyed even when God's command seemed to contradict God's promise about Isaac. Where in your life do faith in and obedience to God feel like they clash with what you expected God to do for you or through you?
3. In what ways can good gifts from God (family, ministry, career, reputation, health, comfort, etc.) quietly become idols we love more than God himself? What might it look like, practically, to "place that idol on the altar" this week?
4. "Everything is a test. Every day in every way." If you viewed your current circumstances as a faith test from God, how would that change the way you respond to your situation?

Prayer Focus

- 247: "Lord, please add daily to the Cornerstone those who are being saved."
- Pray for more grace to trust in God and his promises in every situation.