



**Sunday, June 12, 2022**



**Main Text: Gen. 22:1-4**—(1) And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, *here I am*. (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.

**Introduction:** Throughout history, God demonstrated His love for humanity. Naturally, God's desire is that we love Him as He loves us, and the Bible commands us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:33). However, when we develop a love for something or someone which displaces God, our relationship with Him is strained and the flow of His blessings into our life is restricted. To lead us back into a proper relationship with Him, God often requires us to surrender something we love for Him. That is what God did for Abraham when He commanded him to take his son, Isaac, and offer him for a burnt offering. Surrendering Isaac was the hardest thing Abraham had ever done. But his obedience to God's command enabled him to keep what he loved, and witness God's miraculous and marvelous blessings for years after his trial. In addition, Abraham's ordeal provides the powerful lesson that surrendering is the key to God's marvelous provisions.

### **Where is Your Treasure? Matt. 6:21, Gen. 21:2-5**

**Matt. 6:21**-- For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

**Gen. 21:2-5**—(2) For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. (3) And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. (4) And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him. (5) And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.

**Note:** When Jesus said, "where your treasure is, there will your heart be," He meant that we would pursue what is most valuable to us, be it earthly or spiritual things. For most people, family, money, and their careers top the list of what they value most. Other people value their pets, jewels, family art collections or other items. How do we know where our treasure is? By our actions! Actions reveal what is in the heart. The amount of time, money, and energy we expend to acquire, increase, and protect those things indicates what is most important to us. We all value something more than anything else and would go to great lengths to obtain more of it, protect it, or recover it if lost! Sarah gave birth to Isaac when Abraham was one hundred years old! Isaac was the beloved son Abraham had waited twenty-five years to receive. Of course, he loved him more than his own life! Isaac was his pride and joy—to use a common

phrase. I am sure that anyone who knew Abraham knew of his great love for Isaac, and so did God.

### **The Problem with Overvalued Treasures: Ex. 32:7-8**

**Ex. 32:7-8**—(7) Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. (8) They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, ‘These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.’

**Note:** One of the most often recounted incidences of idolatry occurred when Aaron made a golden calf for the children of Israel. Idolatry is image worship. In the Old Testament, most images were figures carved on stone, walls, or other material. But idolatry is not limited to stone or wood figurines. Anything can be idolized; even pictures or images; real or imagined! The value we place on the object can lead to idolatry. God told Moses that the people were corrupt because they “made themselves an idol” and “...bowed down and sacrificed to it...” In other words, they worshipped the idol. To worship something is to adore, respect, love or devote oneself to it. The people knew the idol was a false god because they made it! Yet they still worshipped it! In Egypt, they had grown attached to images made of gold and silver which the Egyptians worshipped, and they desired them. The Israelites valued the feeling of pleasure and extravagance they derived from “golden” images they could control more than the invisible God they could not control. When we place too much value on things, they can become our treasure and steal the desire and passion in our heart which should be for God alone. Eventually, our focus shifts from following Jesus Christ and eternity to the temporary, earthly thing(s) we value.

### **God May Lead us to Surrender What We Love: Gen. 22:1-4, 2 Chron. 32:30-32**

**Gen. 22:1-4**—(1) And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, *here I am*. (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.

**2 Chron. 32:30-32**—(30) This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works. <sup>31</sup> Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.

**Note:** To rescue us from the sin of idolatry and lead us into a deeper relationship with Him, God may test our devotion to Him by requiring us to surrender the person or thing we love to Him. For Abraham, that test was Isaac. “Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and... offer him there for a burnt offering...” (Gen. 22:2). The King James Bible reads, “God did tempt Abraham...” (Gen. 22:1). But the word, tempt, in that text means “to test.” The Bible teaches that God does not tempt men with evil (James 1:13). Sacrificing children was considered evil, because when God gave Moses the law, he forbade the Israelites to offer their children to false gods. Therefore, God would not have done what He would later forbid the Israelites to do. God did not intend for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. He only tested Abraham so that Abraham understood whom he loved more, Isaac, the son of his old age, or God who blessed him with a son in his old age. If a material possession has become our treasure, God may lead us to surrender it for Him.

## What does it Mean to Surrender? Luke 9:23

**Luke 9:23—(23)** And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

**Note:** According to the dictionary, surrendering means to yield to someone's authority. The dictionary gives definitions such as "to give up (something) to someone or something especially under compulsion, as in to admit defeat. But another definition given, which is more closely related to the biblical context of surrender is "to sign away (oneself); to sign away one's rights..." In the Bible, surrendering focuses on "dying to self" and "carrying our cross." Jesus said that if a person decides to follow Him, he/she should first deny himself. The Greek meaning of the word deny is to "to deny utterly;" "to disown." That is like signing away yourself, isn't it? When we surrender to Christ, we disown ourselves. We sign away our rights to govern or lead ourselves. But why do we do this? In the first century, the cross was a symbol of death—the most horrendous death possible at the time, crucifixion. Taking up your cross means being willing to die to follow Jesus. When we surrender to Christ, we are willing to die to self-control, self-interest, and self-will, and allow Him to reign and rule in our life. We are willing to give up what we value most for what God values most.

### Three Things that Lead to Surrender

- **Faith: Gen. 15:6--** "And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness." **Heb. 11:19—(17)** By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, <sup>18</sup>Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence he received him in a figure.

**Note:** There is a reason Abraham went down in history as the father of faith; he believed God! He believed God could do anything, and that God would fulfill every promise He made! Abraham's faith moved him to obey God before he physically saw any of God's promises fulfilled. Abraham believed that even if he sacrificed his son to God, God was able to raise him up! The Bible teaches that without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). Faith is more than a mental acknowledgement that God is real or that Jesus died for our sins. Faith is alive! Faith moves us to act on what we say we believe, like Abraham. Without faith in God, we will always find it difficult to surrender our hearts or anything else to God. Because when we lack faith in God, our value and dependency on other things such as family, money, careers, or other earthly things increases until what little faith we had in God is swallowed up!

- **The Right Prayer: Matt. 6:9-10**

**Matt. 6:9-10—(9)** After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. <sup>10</sup>Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

**Note:** The need for prayer is vital! But there is a right and wrong way to pray. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, He gave them a model. Remember, the most important thing for us to do with our life is to bring glory to God! Therefore, it is not surprising that the first three elements of Jesus's prayer model relate to what we are to do for God, not what God does for us! The third thing in the model is to desire God's will to be fulfilled on earth, as His will is fulfilled in heaven. That means we want God's will to be done in our lives as well!

As Pastor and author, Michael Youseff aptly stated, “prayer is not to inform God...persuade God... manipulate Him or cajole Him. Prayer is about surrendering to God’s purposes.” When we pray “Thy will be done...” we are saying, “I surrender any and everything I have to your will...even the thing most precious to me!” I have no doubt that Abraham was not only praying after God’s command came, but many years before. Anyone who can wait on God as Abraham did was no stranger to praying and praying the right prayer. Many people do not realize that they are not seeing God’s marvelous provision in their lives because they are not praying the right prayer! They are not honestly and consistently praying to surrender to God! They keep praying, hoping that God will surrender to their wants, whims, and wishes! Afterall, they are hurting. They were fired from a job! They need a blessing—better yet, a miracle! What they do not understand is that the thing they value above God is the thing which is holding up that miracle.

- **Obedience: Gen. 22:8-9**—(8) And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. (9) And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. (10) And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

**Note:** If there is one word that says more to God about where our treasure is than any other word, it is obedience. How we obey God when we sense, understand, and know His will tells others and God where our treasure is! We can only imagine how heart-broken Abraham was, because the Bible does not give any details about Abraham’s feelings or a discussion with his wife about God’s command. All we know is that Abraham was determined to prove to God that he would surrender all he had to Him—even the son he loved more than his own life. When you read about Abraham’s trial, you will notice that Abraham followed God’s instructions to the letter! He did not deviate! Disobedience is another reason prayers are hindered, and people forfeit God’s marvelous provisions. They do not completely obey God! They obey the parts they find easy or feel comfortable obeying! Partial obedience to God is not surrender; it is disobedience! Partial obedience to God is a sign that something else has taken up residence in our hearts and has become our treasure. We hold it in such value that we cannot fully obey God. If we will see God’s provision, we must be like Abraham and obey all that God commands.

### **Surrender Unlocks God’s Marvelous Provision: Gen. 22:11-13**

**Gen. 22:11-13**—(11) And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here *am* I. (12) And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son* from me. (13) And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind *him* a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

**Note:** As Abraham was about to take Isaac’s life, God’s angel stopped him! The angel said, “now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.” Miraculously and marvelously, out of heaven, there was a ram caught in the thickets by his horns. With God, nothing is impossible. The Bible is replete with examples of how God came through miraculously for those who surrendered their will to His will. Abraham passed his test and saw the marvelous provisions of God—and God never tested Abraham again after that day. As for Abraham, he lived for a hundred and eighty years on the promises of God and enjoying His marvelous provisions.

**Summary :** The Bible teaches us to love God with all “the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength...” (Mark 12:33). But sometimes we develop love for something or someone that displaces God. When that happens, God may lead us to surrender the object(s) we love for Him. God commanded Abraham to surrender Isaac, and Abraham willingly obeyed God, because he valued his relationship with God above his love for Isaac. In response to Abraham’s willingness to surrender his only son, the angel of the Lord stopped Abraham from offering Isaac and provided a ram for the sacrifice instead. Surrendering things we love to God may be difficult! It requires faith; prayer to surrender to God’s purpose; and a willingness to obey everything God commands. Our ability to surrender anything that jeopardizes our love and relationship with God, is the key to experiencing God’s marvelous provisions. If we can surrender what we value most to God, like Abraham, God will meet our every need and fulfill all His promises in our lives.