



# THE TESTING OF YOUR FAITH

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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# The Testing of Your Faith

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Hebrews 11:17-19

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #2392

Throughout life, we will experience two kinds of tests: those that cause us to stumble, and those that cause us to stand. The devil will tempt us to do evil, while God tests us to do good and make our faith strong and pure.

But God may ask us to do something that surprises us, and our response will reveal our true faith. In Hebrews 11, we are reminded of when Abraham's faith was tested.

"By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called,' concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense" (Hebrews 11:17-19).

When we face trials and temptations, there are three questions we should ask ourselves to pass the test of our faith.

## **Can I trust God with the possessions He has given to me?**

God tested Abraham's faith by asking him to give back his only beloved son, Isaac. God wanted to know if Abraham loved Him more than he loved Isaac. God does not want a place in our lives; He desires, deserves and demands preeminence in our lives. We need to consider if there is anything we would not give back to God if He asked for it.

## **Can I trust God with the purpose He has for me?**

Adrian Rogers says, "Faith is not primarily believing God in spite of the evidence; it is obeying God in spite of the consequences, not having to know why." Obedience is the proof of our trust in God. We must be informed, intentional and impassioned about seeking the will of God for our lives.

## **Can I trust God with the promises He has made to me?**

God had already miraculously fulfilled His promises to Abraham before. Though he did not know how He'd do it, Abraham knew God would keep His promises again; and He did. God provided a ram to take Isaac's place on the altar and gave Abraham back his son.

Adrian Rogers says, "We don't live by explanation; we live by promises."

## **Life Application**

Is your faith being tested right now? Remember: the trials that come from God are tailor-made. He knows where you are and He knows your circumstances. Have faith in Him.



# The Testing of Your Faith

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Hebrews 11:17-19

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## 1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Warren Weirsbe said, "A faith that cannot be tested, cannot be trusted."
  - i) How would you like to get on an airplane that had never been tested?
  - ii) How would you like to have a doctor do surgery on you who had not passed some tests in medical school?
  - iii) We want people to have a faith that can be trusted so therefore it has to be a faith that can be tested.
- b) Hebrews 11:17-19
  - i) Isaac was the hope of all of Abraham's descendency.
  - ii) Abraham offered up Isaac as a sacrifice.
- c) God is going to give you some trials, some tests to see if your faith is real.
  - i) Genesis 22:1
    - (1) "Tempt" here does not mean a solicitation to do evil; it means a testing or a trial.
- d) Tests, trials and temptations come in two kinds:
  - i) The devil tempts us to do evil to cause us to stumble.
  - ii) God tests us to do good in order to cause us to stand.
    - (1) What God wants to do is to make our faith strong and pure.
- e) 1 Peter 1:7
  - i) When Jesus comes, don't you want to have a pure faith, like purified gold?
  - ii) God is going to put your faith in the fire.
- f) If you're going through a test, an ordeal and your faith is in the fire now, God means you no harm.
  - i) God wants you to know whether or not you have the real thing; real faith.
- g) Temptations from Satan are pretty well standardized.
  - i) The trials that come from God are tailor-made.
    - (1) God knows your circumstances and God may put you through a test.
- h) To understand what the writer of Hebrews is talking about here in chapter 11, we have to go back to Genesis 22.
- i) Genesis 22:1-14
  - i) God is not trying to get Abraham to sin, but to stand.
  - ii) James 1:13
  - iii) Genesis 22:2 is the first time the word "love" is found in the Bible.
  - iv) Abraham said that they would both return.
  - v) God had never before commanded human sacrifice.
  - vi) And now He has commanded Abraham to take the son of promise, the beloved son, and put him to death.



- (1) Some theologians try to explain this away, but you cannot believe the inerrant, infallible Word of God and say this never happened.
- (2) Those who doubt that God is sovereign say that God could not do this.
- (3) Sovereign God can do anything He pleases. He doesn't have to get permission from anyone.
- vii) Isaac was the son of miracle birth, he is the son of promise, he is the beloved son.
- viii) The Bible says Abraham with no hesitation whatsoever set out for Mount Moriah to do exactly what God told him to do.
  - (1) Genesis 22:3
- j) God is going to test your faith by asking you to do something that may surprise you.
  - i) Not by giving up the wrong things and the bad things, but by giving up the good things.
  - ii) It would be relatively easy if God asked us to give up the bad things to show that we love Him.
  - iii) God had given to Abraham a possession.
    - (1) A wonderful son.
  - iv) God had given to Abraham a program that would come through that possession.
    - (1) "I'll make of you a great nation. You're going to bless the whole world."
  - v) God had given to Abraham a promise.
    - (1) "I will do it."
  - vi) And now God just seemed to be asking for all of it back.
- k) The test of faith Abraham faced was not what he was giving up for the Lord, but what he was giving back to the Lord.
  - i) All of the blessings he was promised.
- l) Are you able to give your blessings back to God?
  - i) Not are you willing to give up your sins for God.
- m) Three questions for your heart today to see if your faith can pass the test.

## 2) CAN I TRUST GOD WITH THE POSSESSIONS HE HAS GIVEN ME? (HEBREWS 11:17)

- a) The test was over a gift that God had given to him.
- b) Was the test because Abraham was coming to love Isaac more than he was loving God?
  - i) Was he coming to love the gift more than the Giver?
- c) God will never take second place in your life to anything or to anyone.
  - i) God does not want a place in your life.
  - ii) God does not want prominence in your life.
  - iii) God desires, deserves, and demands preeminence in your life.
  - iv) He will not be a part-time God with a duplex for a throne.
    - (1) Many of us like to have God in our lives, but how many of us say, "God, I love You supremely?"
- d) We have to be very careful that our blessings don't become curses.
  - i) Malachi 2:2
    - (1) God will curse our blessings.



- (2) God may have already cursed our blessings because we do not listen.
- ii) What is wrong in God-blessed America today?
  - (1) God is beginning to curse our blessings.
- iii) We have been blessed like no other nation on the face of the Earth and we spit in the face of God.
  - (1) More vileness.
  - (2) More immorality.
  - (3) More slaughter of the unborn.
  - (4) More disregard for God.
  - (5) More arrogance.
- iv) America has put God aside and concentrated on our blessings.
  - (1) It is frightening that God may turn our blessings to curses unless we turn back to Almighty God.
- e) It was not wrong for Abraham to love Isaac.
  - i) No one can truly love his son until he loves God as he ought.
- f) God knew that Abraham loved Isaac. What God wanted to know was, "Abraham, do you love Me more than you love Isaac?"
- g) After the resurrection, Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon, do you love me more than these?"
  - i) John 21:15
    - (1) Some people think He meant, "Do you love me more than all these other disciples love Me?"
    - (2) He's asking Peter if he loves Him more than his brothers, his way of life (fishing), "Do you love me more than these things? Peter, I will not take second place in your life."
- h) The test of faith is not primarily between love and hate but between two loves.
  - i) Those things we love dearly and that which we must love supremely.
- i) Do I have in my heart any love that is greater than my love for Jesus Christ?
  - i) If you think there may be any love in you that is greater than the love you have for God, God's message to you is, "Put it on the altar and sacrifice it as a burnt offering."
- j) List all of your blessings and those you love, and give everything to Him.
  - i) Life
  - ii) Health
  - iii) Family
  - iv) Knowledge of the Word of God
  - v) Job
  - vi) Home
  - vii) Clothing
  - viii) Retirement
  - ix) With an open hand, God, they and these are Thine.
    - (1) That's not easy to do. And you know when you've done it and you know when you've just said it and didn't mean it.
- k) Is there anything you would not give back to God that God has already given to you if He asked you for it?



- i) Why He might ask for it back is none of our business.
- ii) Anything God has given you, you can trust Him with.
- iii) And anything God has not given to you, you don't need.

### 3) CAN I TRUST GOD WITH THE PURPOSE HE HAS FOR ME? (HEBREWS 11:17-18)

- a) God had given Abraham a purpose and he understood that through his son, Isaac, he would have many descendants, a great people of faith.
  - i) And now God says, "Put it to death."
  - ii) That did not make sense.
- b) Faith is not primarily believing God in spite of the evidence; it is obeying God in spite of the consequences.
  - i) Obedience is the great proof of our trust and our faith.
- c) When we know that we have a word from God, we don't pass it past the judgment bar of our understanding.
  - i) We just simply obey.
- d) There's only one alternative to obedience: disobedience.
- e) We are to obey God.
  - i) It must be informed obedience.
    - (1) Don't just make some sort of sacrifice to show God how much you love Him.
    - (2) Listen to God as Abraham did and hear God speaking.
    - (3) Many Christians endeavor to do things for God that God doesn't want done.
      - (a) God has not promised to bless any endeavor He has not commanded.
    - (4) We must hear God in order to obey God.
  - ii) It must be intentional obedience.
    - (1) Report to God for duty.
    - (2) Real obedience is not mere absence from doing wrong; it is actively seeking the will of God for your life.
    - (3) Ignorance of God's will is not an excuse if you don't have intentional obedience.
  - iii) It must be immediate obedience.
    - (1) Genesis 2:23
      - (a) As soon as possible, Abraham got on the road to do exactly what God told him to do.
    - (2) Procrastination is a form of disobedience.
    - (3) If God has told you to say something, give something, do something, don't wait.
    - (4) Real obedience is immediate obedience.
    - (5) Sometimes the test will come and if you don't obey right away you may get into serious trouble.
  - iv) It must be impassioned obedience.
    - (1) Not reluctant.
    - (2) Not pouting.
    - (3) Not dragging.



- (4) We need to serve Jesus Christ in these days in which we live with a burning, blazing passionate, emotional love for Him.
- (5) No doubt it was a struggle to Abraham, but thank God he passed the test.

#### 4) CAN I TRUST HIM WITH THE PROMISES HE HAS MADE TO ME? (HEBREWS 11:17-19)

- a) Abraham offering Isaac as a sacrifice was antithetical to the promise of blessing that God had made.
- b) Abraham had already learned that God is the God of the impossible.
  - i) God gave him a son when he was a hundred years of age and Sarah was ninety.
- c) He knew that God is a God of miracles and his faith was steadfast to believe God.
  - i) Abraham did not know how God would do it; he just knew that God would do it.
  - ii) And God did do it; He did not let Abraham sacrifice Isaac.
- d) It wasn't Isaac that God wanted, it was Abraham.
  - i) God said, "Now I know that you love me more than you love anything else."
- e) If you love it, let it go. If it is yours, you'll get it back.
  - i) And if not, you will be saved from a fate worse than death, which is holding on to something that would impair your spiritual life.
  - ii) Mark 8:35
  - iii) The children's saying is, "Finders keepers, losers weepers" but God says, "Keepers weepers, losers finders."
- f) Hebrews 11:19
  - i) "Accounting" here literally means to reckon or calculate.
    - (1) It's the Greek word we get the words "logistics" and "logic" from.
- g) God gave him back his son.
  - i) Abraham called the name of that place, "Jehovah-Jireh," which means God will provide.
- h) There was a ram there to take Isaac's place.
  - i) It was there no sooner, no later than he was needed, for God is always on time.
- i) Is there any good gift that you're unwilling to surrender?
- j) Is there any obedience that you're not willing to perform in order to follow God's way for you?
- k) Is there any promise that you cannot trust God with when things don't make sense?
  - i) We don't live by explanations, we live by promises.

#### 5) CONCLUSION

- a) The faith that cannot be tested cannot be trusted.
- b) God wants you to be strong in faith. For without faith it is impossible to please God.
  - i) Hebrews 11:6
- c) Jesus said, "Abraham saw My day and was glad."
  - i) John 8:56
  - ii) He saw the coming Messiah.
- d) The Messiah that Abraham trusted is the one who wants to save you today.
- e) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.



- f) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) Acts 16:31
  - v) John 3:16



# The Testing of Your Faith

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Leviticus 2:11, 13

Hebrews chapter 11. In just a moment we're going to begin reading in verse 17 and read several verses. Be finding it. I want to talk to you today about, "The Testing of Your Faith."

Warren Weirsbe has reminded us that, "A faith that cannot be tested, cannot be trusted." For example, how would you like to get on an airplane that had never been tested? How would you like to have a doctor do surgery on you who had not passed some tests in medical school? I heard of a man who was having surgery and the doctor said, "You seem nervous." He said, "Yes, this is my first surgery." The doctor said, "Yes, I know how you feel. It's mine also." We want people to have a faith that can be trusted so therefore it has to be a faith that can be tested.

Now look if you please here in Hebrews 11 verse 17 and 18, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried," Do you see that? That word tried means when he was tested, when he was put to the test. "Offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, 'That in Isaac shall thy seed be called.'" That is, he's the hope of all your descendancy. Your children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren are going to come through Isaac. "'That in Isaac thy seed shall be called.'" And the Bible says that Abraham offered him up. That means he gave him as a sacrifice.

Now how could he do that? Well, look in Hebrews 11 verse 19, "According that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure," in a type, he received him. Now, friend, God is going to give you some trials, some tests to see if your faith is real. Now in the Old Testament, as we're going to see in a moment, the King James says in Genesis 22 verses 1 and 2, "God did tempt Abraham and said, 'Offer up Isaac.'" Well, the word tempt does not mean a solicitation to do evil there; it means a testing, a trial.

Now, tests and trials and temptations come in two kinds. The devil solicits us, tempts us to do evil to cause us to stumble; God tests us to do good in order to cause us to stand. Now this is one of those testings that we have. What God wants to do is to make our faith strong and pure.

Put in your margin this ancillary verse, First Peter chapter 1 verse 7, "That the trial," that is the testing, "of your faith being more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tested, or tried, with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus." When Jesus comes, don't you want to have a pure faith, like purified gold? Then God's going to put your faith in the fire.

Some of you right now probably have faith in the fire. Some of you are going through a test, an ordeal. God means you no harm. God wants you to understand whether or not you have the real thing. Now, temptation from Satan, these are pretty well standardized. But the trials that come from God, these are tailor made. God knows where you are, God knows your circumstances and God may put you through a test.



Now this is the New Testament commentary on the Old Testament story. To understand what the writer of Hebrews is talking about here in Hebrews chapter 11, you have to go back to the Old Testament. So let's just put a book mark in Hebrews 11 and go back to Genesis 22. Let's get the story. Let's find out what happened here when the Bible says that God put Abraham to the test. I'm going to read fourteen verses in a row, so just open your Bible, look along with me and hang on.

Genesis 22, 1 through 14, "And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham." Now remember, God's not trying to get Abraham to sin, but to stand. The Bible says, "God tempteth no man with evil, neither can He be tempted." God is testing Abraham. "And said unto him, 'Abraham.' And he said, 'Behold, here I am.' And He," God said, "'Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest,'" by the way, this is the first time the word love is found in the Bible, "'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.'" Can you imagine? Take your son and offer him as a burnt sacrifice.

Verse 3, "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. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, 'Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship,'" now watch this "'and come again unto you.'"

God had just said put him to death. He said, "We're going to go up there and worship God, make a sacrifice, and both of us are coming back again." "And Abraham took the wood and the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, 'My father;' and he said, 'Here am I, my son.' And he said, 'Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?' And Abraham said, 'My son, God will provided Himself a lamb for a burnt offering.' So they went both of them together. 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. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called out unto him, called unto him out of Heaven, and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here am I.' 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.' And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold 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," in the place, "of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-Jireh: as it is said to this day, 'In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.'" Ladies and gentlemen, that is an incredible story. God had never before commanded human sacrifice. And now He has commanded Abraham to take the son of promise, the beloved son, and put him to death.

Now the liberal theologians try to explain this away. But you cannot believe the inerrant, infallible Word of God and say, "This never happened." You cannot explain it away. Others who doubt that God is sovereign say, "God couldn't do this." God is sovereign God. God can do anything He pleases. He doesn't have to get your permission or mine either one. The command is given, "Take your son."



Now remember, this son, Isaac, was the son of miracle birth. He is the son of promise. He is the beloved son. And the Bible says that Abraham with no hesitation whatsoever sets out for Mount Moriah. If you look in Genesis 22 verse 3, "And Abraham rose up early in the morning." That is, he begins now with no hesitation to do exactly what God told him to do.

Use your imagination. Can you imagine, can you imagine before starting up that mountain that Abraham and Isaac are sitting there around the camp fire? Can you imagine what Abraham must have felt as he looks into the face of his dear son? Wondering how will I say this to him? How will I explain it? The memories that he had raising this little boy. All of these things, what will Isaac say? What will his last look at me be like? Put yourself in Abraham's place.

Now, God is going to test your faith by asking you to do something that may surprise you. Not by giving up the wrong things and the bad things, but by giving up the good things. Be relatively easy if God asked us to give up the bad things. Give up lying, and stealing, and cheating, and pride to show that we love Him. But that's not what God is asking. God had given to Abraham a possession, a wonderful son. God had given to Abraham a program. "I'll make of you a great nation. You're going to bless the whole world." And that program is going to come through that possession. And God had given to Abraham a promise, "I will do it." And now God just seems to be asking for all of it back. God is just saying, "Now, Abraham, give all of this back to me."

Now there's some things we give up for the Lord. But the test of faith that Abraham is facing is not what he is giving up for the Lord, but what he is giving back to the Lord.

Now, here's the question that I'm going to ask you, and that I've had to wrestle with before I preached this message. Are you able to give your blessings back to God? Not are you willing to give up your sins for God? Are you willing to give your blessings back to God? That's what Abraham was asked to do. I want to lay three questions on your heart today. And let's see if your faith can pass the test.

Question number one: can I trust God with the possessions He has given to me? Can I trust God with the possessions He has given to me? Now back to Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 17, "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son." Now the test was over a gift that God had given to him. Why the test? Could it be that Abraham is coming to love Isaac more than he is loving God? Could it be that he is coming to love the gift more than the giver? Could it be that God now is moving into second place? The angels said the test was to find out whether that was true or not. Listen to me, let me tell you something about our God; God will never take second place in your life to anything or to anyone.

Now many of us want to give God a place in our lives. May I say it clearly, God does not want a place in your life. Well, you say, "Then I'll give Him prominence in my life." God does not want prominence in your life. God desires, deserves, and demands preeminence in your life. He will not be a part time God with a duplex for a throne.

Now, many of us like to have God in our lives. But how many of us say, "God, I love You supremely?" You see, we have to be very careful that our blessings don't become curses. Let me give you a significant verse. Put it in your margin, Malachi chapter 2 and verse 2, "But if ye will not hear and if ye will not lay it to heart to give glory unto My name," listen, "to give glory unto My name," sayeth the Lord of Hosts,



'I will even send a curse upon you,'" now listen to this next phrase, "And I will curse your blessings." Did you hear that? "I will curse your blessings!" Blessings can become a curse. And God goes on to say, "Yeah, I have cursed them already because you do not lay it to heart." That is you're not listening.

May I tell you what is wrong in God blessed America today? God is beginning to curse our blessings. We have been blessed like no other nation on the face of the Earth and we spit in the face of God! More vileness, more immorality, more slaughter of the unborn, more disregard for God, more arrogance strutting through the Earth! America has been blessed like no other nation, but we put God aside and have concentrated on our blessings. America has been blessed. But I'm just afraid that God is going to turn our blessings to curses unless we turn back to Almighty God. Does that frighten you? It frightens me. Friend, God says, "I will not take second place to anybody, anything."

Now it was not wrong for Abraham to love Isaac. I love my children with all of my heart. As a matter of fact, no one can truly love his son until he loves God as he ought. God is not asking Abraham, do you love Isaac? He knew he loved Isaac. What God wants to know is, Abraham, do you love Me more than you love Isaac?

After the resurrection, Jesus asked Simon Peter in John chapter 21 verse 15, "Simon Peter, lovest thou Me more than these?" Now some people think that means, "Do you love Me more than all these other disciples love Me?" But I don't think that's what He meant. I think He's standing there by the seashore and He's saying, "Simon, do you love Me more than these, your brothers? Do you love Me more than you love these fish and these nets and these boats and this way of life? Do you love Me more than these things? Simon Peter, I will not take second place in your life." Are you listening? The test of faith is not primarily between love and hate. But between two loves. Those things we love dearly and that which we must love supremely.

Here's the question I had to ask myself before I could preach this message: Adrian, do you have in your heart any love that is greater than your love for Jesus Christ? I challenge you to ask yourself that question.

Now, if there is in your heart, in your life, or if you consider there may be a love greater than a love you have for God, God's message to you from this passage of Scripture this morning is, "Get thee up to Moriah and put it on the altar and sacrifice it as a burnt offering." That's what God is saying to you this morning. You have to ask yourself this question is there anything? What could it be? I had to ask myself that question. As a matter of fact, I do this from time to time when I find that perhaps my heart is getting cold or perhaps I'm getting perfunctory, or professional in the ministry. I get alone and I don't make a list of my sins, those are relatively easy to deal with. But I list my blessings: my life, my health, my family, my darling, precious wife, my children, my incredible grandchildren, my knowledge of the Word of God, my ability to preach the Word, the gift of being the pastor of this church, my house, my clothes, any retirement income I may have laid by, just give it to Him. It's Yours! With an open hand, God, they and these are Thine! That's not easy to do. And you know when you've done it and you know when you've just said it and didn't mean it.



May I ask you a question? Is there anything you would not give back to God that God has already given to you if He asked you for it? That's a big question. And you say, "God, You gave it to me. Why would you ask it back?" That's none of your business. Is there anything God has given to you that you would not willingly give back to Him if He asked you for it? Now listen to me carefully. Anything God has given you, you can trust Him with. And anything God has not given to you, you don't need. Does that make sense? Anything God has given to you, you can trust Him with. Anything God has not given to you, you don't need. "Yes, I gave you Isaac! Now take him up to the mountain and sacrifice him to Me!" We're talking about the testing of your faith.

Second question I want to ask you: can I trust God with the purpose He has for me? We've talked about the possessions He's given to us. What about the purpose He has for us? Again, Hebrews chapter 11 verses 17 through 18, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac," that's the possession, "and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, 'That in Isaac shall thy seed be called.'"

Now here's the plan. Here's the purpose. God had given Abraham a purpose and Abraham said, "Okay, I'm tracking along. Now I know what's going to happen. I'm going to have a son and this son's going to have sons and sons and I'm going to have a great descendanty, people of faith." And now God says, "Put it to death."

You know, that didn't make sense. That did not make sense. Faith is not primarily believing God in spite of the evidence; it is obeying God in spite of the consequences. Not knowing why, not having to know why. Obedience is the great proof of our trust and our faith. When we know that we know that we know we have a word from God, we don't pass it past the judgment bar of our understanding. We just simply obey. There's only one alternative to obedience. You know what it is? Disobedience. We are to obey God.

Now let me tell you what kind of obedience it must be. It must be informed obedience. Don't go out there now and just make some sort of sacrifice to show God how much you love Him. You'll make a horrible mistake. Be in tune with God. Listen to God. Abraham heard God speaking. Many Christians are endeavoring to do things for God that God doesn't want done. And God has not promised to bless any endeavor He has not commanded. We must hear God in order to obey God. It must be informed obedience.

Number two, it must be intentional obedience. You say, "Well, I'm not informed." May I ask you a question? Are you listening? Are you listening? Do you report to God for duty? Real obedience is not mere absence from doing wrong; it is actively seeking the will of God for your life. Ignorance of God's will is not an excuse if you don't have intentional obedience. Informed, intentional and immediate.

You know, back in Genesis chapter 2 verse 23, God gave the command and the Bible says, "And in the morning he rose up," There's no wait. There's no delay. As soon as possible he got on the road to do exactly what God told him to do. "Be quick my soul to answer Him. Be jubilant my feet." Procrastination is a form of disobedience. Has God told you to say something, give something, do something and you're waiting? Don't wait! Real obedience is immediate obedience. "Ours is not to reason why. Ours is not to make reply. Ours is to do or die." Sometimes the test will come and if you don't obey right away you may get into serious trouble.



When I was in college I pastored a little church. On a big Sunday morning we may have forty present, on a big Sunday morning. And I loved those people and they loved me. When I graduated from seminary I was offered the pastorate of a couple of small churches in Florida. I got the letter out of the post office box the same day. One on top of the other, both of them said, "Mr. Rogers we feel that you're to be our pastor. We've prayed over it." Well, I knew that one of them had to be wrong. I felt most likely, then, both of them were wrong. And I wrote back and said, "Thank you, but no thanks."

The little church in Fort Pierce wrote me back. They were running a little less than a hundred in Sunday school. They said, "No, we believe you're God's man." I couldn't get that out of my heart because frankly, after eight years of study I was hoping for something a little more than a hundred in Sunday School. But I said, "Alright, I'll come." And I told my little church there in Waveland, Mississippi. I said, "Folks, God has called and I must go." And I knew that some of them would want to argue with me about it, so I tried to be a little poetic. I said, "A nail-pierced hand has pointed to Florida and I must follow." And I thought, who could argue with a nail-pierced hand? And that was the rhetoric I used that morning. Yet I had not told the church in Fort Pierce that I would come. But I already had the offer.

No sooner had I walked out of the pulpit, went home, even before our lunch I got a phone call from a man on a pulpit committee from the First Baptist Church of one of the biggest, if not the biggest city in Florida. He said, "We've heard about you. We want you to come and be our pastor." He told me about the staff and about the budget and about the amenities. And I had just told that little church that I was going to this other little church. I'm telling you, if God had written it from the ceiling of that room that I was in in box car letters, it could have been no plainer. "Adrian, this is a test. Don't fail it."

I said to that man, "Mr. Rainer, I have made up my mind that I am going to thus and such a church. God has called me. I cannot talk with you anymore." Hung up the phone. I don't say that to pat myself on the back, but I say it to testify to God that when those tests come you must obey God immediately. If not, you can get into serious trouble, serious trouble. And I want to say that I had one of the happiest times in my life in that precious church there in Florida that God sent me to.

It must be informed obedience. It must be intentional obedience. It must be immediate obedience. And it must be impassioned obedience! Not reluctant! Not pouting! Not dragging! We need to serve Jesus Christ in these days in which we live with a burning, blazing passionate, emotional love for Jesus Christ. Oh, to obey Him, not moderately, not carelessly. I'm sure it was a struggle to Abraham. But thank God he passed the test.

Now here's the third question, and I must hurry to it: can I trust Him not only with my possessions and the program that He has given me, but can I trust Him with the promises He has made to me? Hebrews 11 verses 17 through 19, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son." Now that's antithetical to the promise. Because the promise said, "In this son you're going to be blessed." "Of whom it was said, 'That in Isaac shall thy seed be called.'" How did he do it? Well, thank God verse 19 is there, "Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."



Abraham had already learned that God is the God of the impossible. Because God had given him a son when he was a hundred years of age. Can you see him coming out on a cane out of the maternity ward, "It's a boy!" One hundred years old! Sarah, ninety years of age! Her womb dead, dried up! He knew that God is a God of miracle. And his faith was steadfast to believe God. Abraham did not know how God would do it. He just simply knew that God would do it. And God did it.

God did not let Abraham sacrifice Isaac. Why? Listen to me, it wasn't Isaac that God wanted, it was Abraham! And He said in Genesis 22 verse 12, "Now I know that you love Me more than you love anything else!" What is the heart of the message? Listen, here it is: if you love it, let it go. If it is yours, you'll get it back. And if not, you will be saved from a fate worse than death and that is, holding on to something that would be an impairment to your spiritual life. Jesus said in Matthew 10 verse 39, "If you love your life, you lose it. If you lose it for My sake and the Gospels, you'll find it."

When we were children we use to have little saying, "Finders keepers, losers weepers." Did you ever say that? God says, "Keepers weepers, losers finders." "Lose your life for Mine and you will find it." The Bible says in Hebrews 11 verse 19, he was, "Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead." The word here accounting literally means considered. It literally means to reckon. It literally means to calculate. It's the Greek word we get our word "logistics" from, that we get our word "logic" from. Abraham is calculating. He's saying, "God look, look God, You gave me this boy. I can trust You with him. Lord God, You have a purpose. I can trust You with it. Lord God, You made a promise, then I reckon on it! God, You're going to keep Your word. You cannot lie! I don't have to understand. I don't have to parade it past the judgment bar of my knowledge." And God gave him back his son. Genesis 22 verse 14, "And Abraham called the name of that place, Jehovah-Jireh," God will provide. There was a ram there to take Isaac's place. He was there no sooner, no later than he was needed. For God is always on time.

Now let me ask you this question. And I want to tell you, I have had to ask myself this question before I can preach this message. Is there any good gift that you're unwilling to surrender? I'm not talking about the bad things. I'm talking about the blessings. It may be your finances. It may be your health. It may be your grandchildren. Is there any obedience that you're not willing to perform even though it seems contradictory to what you think is God's way for you. Is there any promise that you cannot trust God with even when it doesn't make sense? Remember, we don't live by explanations, we live by promises.

You didn't like today's sermon. I didn't like it. "Oh no, God, I don't want those kind of tests." The faith that cannot be tested, cannot be trusted. God wants you to be strong in faith. "For without faith it is impossible to please God." Do you know what the Bible says about Abraham? Jesus said, "Abraham saw My day and was glad." He saw the coming Messiah.

Would you bow your heads in prayer? The Messiah that Abraham trusted is the one I want you to trust today. He's the one who wants to save you today. He is the one who will save you. I promise on the authority of the Word of God, He will forgive every sin. He will come into your heart and life with a peace and a presence and a power that is supernatural. And when you die or when He comes again, He will take you home to Heaven.



If you would like to be saved, I want to guide you in this prayer. Now you may already be religious. You may already be moral. You may already be a church member and baptized. But you've never really settled this matter of salvation. You've never really had that absolute assurance that if you died this moment, you'd go straight to Heaven. It's time to get it settled. I want you to pray this prayer, silently but fervently, "Dear God, I'm a sinner. I'm lost. I need to be saved. I want to be saved. Jesus, You died to save me and promised to save me if I would trust You. I do trust You." Tell Him that. Right now, "I trust You. I receive You into my life by faith. Jesus, I believe You're the Son of God. I believe You shed Your blood on the cross to save me. I believe God raised You from the dead and I receive You into my life now as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sin, cleanse me, save me, Jesus." Precious friend, pray that, "Save me, Lord Jesus." Did you ask Him? Then pray this way, "Thank You for doing it. I stand on Your Word. I don't look for a sign or ask for a feeling. And I will make it public. I will not be ashamed of You. If You'll only give me the strength. In Your name I pray, Amen."



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