

Text: Genesis 22:1-19

Title: "The Provision of the Mount of the Lord"

Time: 10/5/08 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction: You have probably heard the term *the sinner's prayer* before. That term is a reference to the prayer of the publican in Luke 18, one of the two men who went up to the temple to pray. The other man was a Pharisee, and his prayer failed to save his soul. But the sinner's prayer, "God be merciful to me, the sinner," caused the publican to go down to his house a justified man. Unlike the Pharisee's prayer, the sinner's prayer recognizes the need for God's mercy and God's provision of a salvation no man can earn or deserve.

I believe that we may have an Old Testament parallel to the sinner's prayer in verse 14 of our passage this morning. As Moses writes he notes that even in his day, four centuries after Abraham, people still said, "In the mount of the Lord it will be provided." When the people of Moses' day said these words about the mount of the Lord, they referred specifically to the place that God described for Abraham (v. 9), the location of the events of Genesis 22.

What happened in this chapter taught following generations about the importance of the Lord's provision in regard to their own salvation. That is what the passage teaches us today as well, and so I want us to see three important truths that we are taught here about the provision of the mount of the Lord.

I. God's test for Abraham pictures the provision of the mount of the Lord (vv. 1-8).

Illustration: There are few things as heart wrenching as the loss of a child. Perhaps there is no greater agony that a human being can experience. We are praying for the Vaughn family over the loss of their son Daniel. Dr. Vaughn is scheduled to

be one of the speakers at the ACCC conference this year. Dr. Vaughn described his son for the local paper as “a brilliant young man, brilliant and full of life.” He said that “he brought much laughter to the people who knew him and loved him.” Perhaps only those who have lost a child can fully appreciate the nature of the test that God brought to Abraham’s life in this chapter.

Application: God tests Abraham this way (v. 1), and God still tests His people with equally difficult trials. God requires us to love Him more than the precious gifts He has given to us, even more than our children.

I want us to see a couple things about the testing of God’s servant from this passage:

1. God’s test came at a specific time (“after these things”, v. 1).

God did not bring this test to Abraham haphazardly. He brought it to him at a specific time. God knows when to test us. He knows when we are ready, even though we would argue that we are not ready for what He is asking of us.

The Scripture promises that the Lord is always faithful when He tests us to never test us above what we are able by His grace to endure. 1 Cor. 10:13 promises, “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.” God gives us tests only when He knows that we are ready to pass them.

2. Trust and obey is the only way to pass God’s test.

Our passage describes a number of details of Abraham’s trust and obedience before the Lord:

- v. 3, "so Abraham arose early in the morning";
- v. 4, "on the third day" - (Abraham did not turn back);
- v. 5, "we will return to you";
- v. 8, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering"

Abraham does what he can to reconcile what God was asking of him with the faith that he had that God is a good and promise-keeping God. The writer of Hebrews tells us of this faith of his, which was the foundation of his incredible obedience in the face of this test (Heb. 11:17-19, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, 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: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure").

Notice that Abraham did not have everything completely figured out correctly. It turns out that Isaac did not die, and so God's plan was not to raise Isaac from the dead on this occasion. But Abraham did understand that God is trustworthy even in the face of the test, and that faith caused him to faithfully obey.

You will notice that v. 17 of Hebrews 11 emphasizes that Isaac was Abraham's only begotten son, and that v. 19 tells us that Isaac was a type or picture of something else. As you read Genesis 22, you come to the conclusion that God personally and compassionately understands the nature of the test that He was placing on Abraham (v. 2, "your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac"). This is where the test of Abraham becomes an illustration of the provision of the Lord for our salvation.

God has a Son, an only Son whom He loves. When He said those words to Abraham, the Lord knew omnisciently but also experientially the truth He spoke of. The sins of mankind

required that God send His only Son whom He loved to the mountain of sacrifice, Mount Calvary and the cross.

Rom. 8:32 explains, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on Him will not perish, but have everlasting life."

God understands what it is to sacrifice His Son when there is no one to cry out "Stop!" Instead, the crying out came from His own Son – "My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken Me?" Our God experienced that to provide for our salvation in the mount of the Lord.

And so God's test for Abraham pictures the provision of the mount of the Lord, which is the great need of each of us for salvation this morning. In the mount of the Lord it will be provided. God, be merciful to me the sinner. Have you prayed these prayers? Are you saved by this salvation?

II. God's replacement for Isaac pictures the provision of the mount of the Lord (vv. 9-14).

Illustration: One of the wonderful things about Sunday School is the emphasis that ministry places on teaching boys and girls to memorize passages of Scripture. As a parent, there is nothing quite as wonderful as hearing the recitation of Scripture on the lips and from the memory of one of my kids. Sunday School has a way of condensing and focusing memory verses down for our youngest ones.

I can remember the first Sunday School memory verse my son Kent learned when he was around four years of age. His Sunday School teacher, Mrs. Jones, taught it to him. It was a condensed version of 1 Pet. 5:7, "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." Kent just had to learn that last part,

“He careth for you,” and I can remember how proud he was repeating that phrase over and over again.

Little did Kent know that when he repeated that phrase, he had summed up what some have called one-third of the teachings of the Bible.

Application: We have a key phrase like that in our passage that I want to call your attention to in v. 13. The phrase, “in the stead of his son,” says an awful lot about the nature of the work of Christ our Savior in our behalf.

Jesus is the Lamb of God that was slaughtered on the cross. But we need to understand also that Jesus is the Lamb that was slaughtered on the cross instead of me. This doctrine we call the vicarious atonement of Christ. He took my place before the wrath of God on sin. He bore my sin and guilt and punishment. That Christ did what He did on the cross “in the stead of me” is the great gospel that saves our souls.

Isaiah 53 makes the point powerfully: “Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; . . . But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.”

The passage goes on to say that He was like a lamb, dumb before His shearers. He was like the lamb of Gen. 22 in the mount of the Lord, who was slaughtered in the place of Abraham’s son. Christ was slaughtered in your place. God’s replacement for Isaac pictures His provision in the mount of the Lord for your salvation and mine – a vicarious and atoning sacrifice.

Notice again the proper response to all this (v. 14): “In the mount of the Lord our salvation will be provided.” This provision is not available anywhere else, because this is the place where the Lamb took our place on the cross. This provision and this alone saves, and we must respond to that provision with the faith of simple acceptance: “Salvation was provided for me in the mount of the Lord by the Lamb of God. God, be merciful to me the sinner.” Do you have this saving faith this morning? Have you prayed the sinner’s prayer?

III. God’s oath to Abraham guarantees the provision of the mount of the Lord (vv. 15-19; Gal. 3:16).

Illustration: We are cautioned today by the principles of good business that we need to get things in writing. We went through an issue with our insurance company recently over the use of our church van, and they finally said that yes we could use it to transport children to Christian school. At first they merely told me that over the phone, and after hearing that I asked for the same information in writing. Written authorization carries more authority than my claim that I was told something over the phone should this issue ever have to be litigated in a court of law.

Application: Better than any human written agreement, the guarantee that the Lord gives regarding the mount of the Lord in this passage is based on ultimate authority. (vv. 15-17a). As God issues a guarantee regarding the provision of the mount of the Lord, He does so by the highest authority available to this guarantee – Himself (v. 16).

The highest guarantee possible is the Word of God. God swears by Himself because He can swear by no higher authority. Heb. 6:13 says, “For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself.” This is what the Lord does once again in our passage here.

This kind of ultimate authority demands and deserves the obedience of simple faith. Abraham is a wonderful example of that faithful obedience in this passage (vv. 16, 18, “because you. . .”).

So the trustworthiness of God’s guarantee is wonderful, but so is its amazing content. This guarantee ensures the multiplication of Christ (vv. 17b-19). God’s design for this age is the multiplication of the seed of Abraham. The seed of Abraham is Christ and His people. Our mission as the people of Christ, as the body of Christ, is multiplication in the trustworthy guarantee of Abraham’s God. We need the burden for the lost that the One who swore this oath to Abraham has for them.

Conclusion: In the mount of the Lord salvation has been provided. Our hymn book contains an old gospel song that captures this truth with words that have challenged the hearts of generations of believers. It is called simply – “At Calvary”:

“Years I spent in vanity and pride,  
caring not my Lord was crucified,  
knowing not it was for me He died  
on Calvary.

“Mercy there was great, and grace was free;  
pardon there was multiplied to me;  
there my burdened soul found liberty  
at Calvary.”

Are you still spending your years in vanity and pride, caring not that the Lord has provided for your salvation at Calvary? No longer can you claim that you do not know that it was there that God’s Son died for you. Perhaps this morning in the mount of the Lord, God’s mercy, grace, and pardon will be multiplied to you.

Here one last refrain from the song calling us to Calvary:

“Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan!  
Oh, the grace that brought it down to man!  
Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span  
at Calvary.”

In the mount of the Lord, at Calvary, salvation is provided.

“A man came—I think it was actually in Philadelphia—on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction—the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

—David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*