Lessons From The FlannelGraph

God Will See To It

We are continuing our series but we are also going to celebrate communion this morning. So I want to focus very briefly on the story of Abraham and Isaac as we prepare our hearts to come to the Lord's table.

Turn with me to Genesis 22. Abraham is an extraordinary figure in our Scriptures. Called by God out of paganism, he is the father of the Jewish people and a father to us as well. The Patriarch. It was Abraham of whom the New Testament speaks when it says he believed God and God reckoned it to him as righteousness. Abraham had an amazing faith in God.

You may recall that God spoke to Abraham when he and Sarah were still childless and told him he would make him the father of a nation. We don't have time this morning to tell the whole story, but the short version is that Abraham was almost 100 and Sarah past 90 when she miraculously gave birth to their son, Isaac. Talk about a beloved child. It would be through Abraham's son Isaac that all the nations of the world would be blessed. It was through his lineage that the Messiah would be born. It is with that understanding of how beloved and how important this son Isaac was to Abraham that we come to this unthinkable testing in Genesis 22.

The bible tells us some time later God tested Abraham and told him, **"Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about." Genesis 22:2**

Abraham left early the next morning along with two servants and his son Isaac. He traveled three days journey to the place God told him about. In faith he told his servants, **"Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you." Genesis 22:5**

Abraham knew what God had commanded him to do, to sacrifice his son as a burnt offering. He also knew that God had told him he would give him this son, Isaac, and that through him his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the heavens and the whole world would be blessed. Abraham knew these two seemingly contradictory statements God had made to him, so he also knew there had to be more to this story. He knew that God would prove himself faithful in this, even if it required a miracle. So in faith Abraham says to the servants, "we will worship and then we will come back to you." "I don't know how, but somehow, both

of us are coming down off of that mountain!"

The writer of Hebrews said it like this: **"By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, 'It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.' Abraham reasons that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death." Hebrews 11:17-19**

As Abraham and Isaac walked up the mountain, Isaac asked a most important question. Commenting that the fire and the wood for the sacrifice were there, he asked, **"...but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"** Where is the sacrifice? Abraham responded, **"God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son."**

What an amazing statement of faith from Abraham. God himself will provide the lamb. The Hebrew word that is translated as provide here, (it is the word we use in Jehovah Jireh) that word is a form of the common verb "to see." There are many uses of the word in Hebrew as in English.

"To see" can refer to our vision, our eyesight. I can see you sitting here. But it can also refer to mental perception. "Do you see what I'm saying?" You can see someone off at the airport and you can also see to your affairs. I can say to one of the associate pastors, "will you take care of this for me?" And they can reply, "I will see to it." It means they will provide what is necessary to get it done. This is literally what Abraham says to Isaac as they are walking up the mountain. Where is the lamb? **"God himself will see to it."**

They get to the top and build the altar. Dutifully, Abraham binds his son and places him upon the altar, ready to thrust the knife into his son when the angel of the Lord stops him. "Do not lay a hand on the boy. Now I know that you fear God because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." And Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place Jehovah Jireh, "The Lord will see to it." And to this day it is said, 'On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided." Genesis 22:13-14

A couple of things I want us to quickly consider in this story. It seems to me that Abraham could have made this sacrifice anywhere, but God told him to travel three days to Mount Moriah. What was so special about this place? This area? We see that name again

hundreds of years later in 2 Chronicles 3. **"Then Solomon began to build the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David." 2 Chronicles 3:1.**

Why travel three days to get to a particular mountain? Because this was the place where a son would die. Not Abraham's son, but God's Son would die as the sacrifice for the sins of the world.

And now to the central question: **Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?** That was Isaac's question and it is the question the human race has been asking all along. God had instituted the sacrifice of animals so the people would understand the principle of substitution. But surely as they thought about it, they too realized what the writer of Hebrews understood, that "It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" Hebrews 10:4. Those sacrifices were merely a shadow that pointed to the reality that was to come. So what could take away sin? Where could we find a perfect lamb that would take away our sins?

Where is the lamb for the burnt offering? Abraham was right when he said "the Lord himself will see to it." He is the only one that could provide the perfect lamb. How? Hundreds of years later a man named John is baptizing people in the Jordan river as a sign they had turned from their sins. As he is baptizing a man from Northern Galilee named Jesus comes to him and presents himself for baptism. As he comes up out of the water, the heavens open and the Spirit of God descends upon him like a dove and a voice from heaven says, "this is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." John said he had been told of these signs so he would know the one for whom he was to prepare the way. John testified that this one was the Son of God.

The next day John saw Jesus coming and said to those standing near by, **"Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" John 1:29**. Where is the lamb for the burnt offering? The Lord will see to it. Here he is. Jesus, the Lamb of God, the One who alone can take away the sin of the world. We could never find an adequate sacrifice, but thank God he will see to it. He provides the spotless lamb who takes away our sins by his atoning sacrifice.

One more thing I want us to see. After offering the ram on Mount Moriah, after this incredible experience, Abraham called the place "the Lord will see to it." Isn't it interesting that he put it in the future tense rather than in the past. "The lord will see to it" rather than "the Lord saw to it." He called it "the Lord will provide" rather than "the Lord provided." Perhaps

Abraham wasn't just thinking of his own past experience but was thinking too of all those folks who would come after him – all those folks like us that would also need a lamb for sacrifice. The writer of Genesis noted "and to this day it is said, 'On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.'" Genesis 22:14. Knowing the faithfulness of God, Abraham looked ahead and said, "the day will come when God will see to it for everyone. The day will come when he will provide the perfect lamb."

Listen to what Jesus said in John 8. Speaking to a group of Jews about Abraham, Jesus said, **"Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." John 8:56.**

The statement and the one following produced something of a violent reaction from the crowd that day. But what was Jesus saying? I think it would be fair to say that by faith Abraham did see something that day on Mount Moriah. I think he tasted just a bit of what our heavenly Father tasted as he prepared his son for sacrifice. As Abraham lifted the knife toward Isaac, he knew and felt the intensity of love a father has for his son. He caught a glimpse of the intensity of that love that was shown on Calvary. Moments later, as he placed the ram upon the altar as the substitute in place of his son Isaac, realizing that another would die in place of his son, what gratitude must have filled his heart. Perhaps he caught a glimpse of that overwhelming sense of gratitude that would come as we look at that rugged cross where Jesus took our place and died for us.

Where is the lamb for the sacrifice? Abraham looked and saw more than a ram that day. I believe he looked ahead in faith and saw the Lamb of God that would take away the sins of the world. That's why Jesus could say, Abraham saw my day and was glad! That's why Abraham could say, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided." He has provided salvation for all of us!

We gather at the Lord's table today and like Abraham, we have seen the day of the Lord and we are glad. We have seen the provision of the Lord. Where is the lamb for the sacrifice? The Lord himself will see to it. The Lord will provide the sacrifice for our sins.

Where is the lamb for sacrifice? He is the One slain from the foundations of the world, the One hanging upon that rugged cross in my place and in your place. So we gather today with grateful hearts. Rejoicing that our sins have been forgiven through the blood of Calvary's lamb.

“Where is the lamb for the burnt offering? Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!” “On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.”

On the mountain of the Lord it has been provided. He has seen to it. He has provided all that is needed for your salvation and my salvation. Now it is up to you. Will you come to Christ in repentance and in faith? Will you ask him to forgive your sins and to save you and give you eternal life? You can do it right now. I invite you to pray with me and open your heart to Christ and his saving grace.

Prayer

Communion