



THE GREATEST TEST

THE GREATEST TEST PART 5 - THE FEAR OF THE LORD

In part 5 we are going to unpack verses 9-12, so let's look at them.

Genesis 22:9-12 Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

Let's put ourselves in Isaac's shoes. What do you think would have been going through his head in this moment? It was only a short time ago that he asked his father where the sacrifice was, and Abraham replied that God would provide the sacrifice Himself. Now he finds himself tied up and laid on the altar on top of the wood about to be sacrificed!

He watches his father raise his arm, knife in hand, knowing that the next step will be his own father bringing his arm down and thrusting the knife into his chest, literally ending his life. His trusted father who only moments before declared, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering."

Now let's put ourselves in Abraham's shoes. These shoes certainly seem the most difficult shoes to be in. I have heard many followers say they could never do what Abraham was doing. How could God even ask him to do such a thing? This is a very normal and natural response if we don't have the same kind of faith that Abraham had.

People say the trust factor must have been massive and I say yes, in the case of Isaac, but not in the case of Abraham. Abraham had something greater than trust. For Abraham it was the faith factor which was massive as per the previous resource.

The faith of Abraham birthed within him a fear of the Lord, fear being an awe and wonder of the reverence, holiness and purity of the Lord, and it was this fear, which was greater



in Abraham than the fear (feelings/emotion) of losing his son. Abraham could have been paralysed by being afraid of what God was asking but he was the exact opposite.

Q. Do we have this kind of reverence and awe for the Lord because of the kind of faith we have and are growing in?

This faith also empowered Abraham to hear the angel of the Lord when He instructed Abraham to put the knife down. Abraham was tested by God, and he proved to be not only a faithful man but a man full of faith. He proved he was full of faith by the wisdom he demonstrated, in preparing to sacrifice his one and only son.

James talks about having faith and deeds and the need to be a people who have deeds which follow their faith. This is a perfect example of this. Abraham's faith is not empty faith which is wishful thinking. Abraham's faith is being expressed through an eternal demonstration of wisdom.

This will be something we all live out as well if we truly are disciples of Jesus Christ.

Abraham clearly demonstrates that his heart was completely empty of himself and anyone or anything else. His heart was the Lord's. There was not one inch of real estate in his heart that was not the Lord's, and we are to be no different. This is what it means to be wholehearted in our worship and devotion to God. Anything other than this position is to be indifferent and to have a divided heart.

The wisdom which Abraham demonstrated externally, was due to the wisdom which was in his heart internally. There was no separation between what the Father instructed, and what Abraham demonstrated. All this was made possible, because of the kind of faith Abraham had in God. His deed was a direct result of his faith.

Revelation 22:12-13 "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."



These are the words of the Alpha and Omega, the great I AM and he does not lie.

Followers who truly live in the fear of God, meaning the awe and wonder of who He is, withhold nothing from Him, not even their own lives. There is nothing they will put before Him or hold back from Him, neither person nor possession.

Q. Do we have this kind of heart?

QUESTIONS

1. Put yourself into Isaac's shoes and describe what you might have been feeling while being laid on the altar?
2. If you haven't already discussed this question, do so now. "Do we have this kind of reverence and awe for the Lord because of the kind of faith we have and are growing in?"
3. How empowering is this fear of the Lord?
4. Why do followers fail to have this kind of heart towards God?
5. Why is it essential our deeds are birthed and based in, and of, faith and not in, and of, flesh or emotions?
6. How aware are you of the reward that Jesus brings with Him?

Watch the accompanying You Tube video here: https://youtu.be/L16T2G0_XPI