

Service for Week 22nd -28th June 2026

By Chaplain Andy

Our Opening Prayer.

Loving God, we thank you that you are a God we can depend on, a God in whom we can put our trust. Your kingdom come, your will be done. In the name of Christ.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven

Amen

Bible Reading Genesis 22:1-14

Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. Then God said, "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."

Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to 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." Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together,

Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together.

When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

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 The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.

Holy words, Holy wisdom,

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

The idea of sacrificing living things as an offering to God is totally abhorrent to us today but it was part of the

culture of ancient tribes and continued in Old Testament times. It remained so in Jesus' time and was only ceased by the Romans around 70 AD when the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed.

So, when we read in our text from the book of Genesis that Abraham got the message to make a sacrifice to God, this wasn't anything out of the ordinary. What was extraordinary was that he was being asked to sacrifice his only son Isaac. But we learn that it was a test from God to take him to a moment before killing his own son before telling Abraham to stop and to put down the knife.

It is a very dramatic and powerful account but is it true? How could Abraham be sure it was really God who was telling him to kill his son? He could not have known that God would stay his hand at the last moment. We know from our history and even read today how some people are convinced that they have been told by God to start wars or to commit murders. That is never right and not the nature of a loving God. I believe this account of Abraham and his son Isaac is a story, but it is a story with a powerful message for us today.

Through this story the writer of Genesis, and it is thought there were several including Moses, tells us exactly how strong Abraham's faith really was. It also demonstrated the

very close relationship Abraham had with God. I do not think that we, like Abraham in this story, are deliberately tested by God for our faith. But there are times in all our lives when our faith in God is tested by our circumstances. This may be our health or disability; it can be in our relationships with other people or in our financial situation. We start to think – how can I believe in a loving God when things are going so badly for me?

It is in those times that we can gain strength from reading or hearing about the patriarchs and prophets such as Abraham. Hearing about their faith and their relationship to God which brought them through extremely testing times personally and as people of faith brought them through wars and persecution. We will not be asked by God to kill our own relations or anyone else. Remember the message about the faith of Abraham, in testing times in our lives, in times of need and desperation remember that God is there with us. Have faith that he will save us from the worst of times, and if not in this life ultimately in eternal life by his loving presence.

'The LORD Will Provide.' **Amen**

Closing prayer

Loving God, teach me to trust you without reserve, and grant that I may draw closer to you.

Through Jesus Christ my Lord,

Amen

Prayers inspired by Prayerfully Yours by Nick Fawcett