



# Life Guide

applying God's Word to life

## Sinners Conquer Only Through Christ 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent: Feb 21, 2021

*Genesis 22:1-18*

<sup>1</sup>Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. <sup>2</sup>Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.” <sup>3</sup>Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded 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. <sup>4</sup>On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. <sup>5</sup>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.” <sup>6</sup>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, <sup>7</sup>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?” <sup>8</sup>Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together. <sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. <sup>11</sup>But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. <sup>12</sup>“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.” <sup>13</sup>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. <sup>14</sup>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.” <sup>15</sup>The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time <sup>16</sup>and said, “I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, <sup>17</sup>I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, <sup>18</sup>and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

1. Did you/have you given something up for Lent? Why might this custom serve a good purpose? Why could it turn dangerous?

Luther says in the Small Catechism, “Fasting and other outward preparations may serve a good purpose.” Jesus fasted 40 days in the wilderness. It may serve as a way to rely more fully on God, or for discomfort to keep you mindful of the devil’s traps. But whatever it is you give up should only help you to reflect and focus your heart privately. So Jesus says, when you fast, “Don’t make it obvious to others but only to your Father” See Matthew 6:16-18.

2. What was a time where God had a great test in store for you? What were the temptations as you looked to follow his will?  
My friends had started to call me Job. In the course of one year, my mom had died. My Grandma died. My allergies were making my face break out in patchy eczema. I blew out my knee. Allergies to pain medicine brought more eczema. My wife caught a parasite after a vacation trip that wasn’t found for months. The temptations were endless—to look for the fastest relief in sinful fixes, getting angry at God, giving up on prayer, and just downright moping. I know you’ve faced similar trials. One of the keys is not to face them alone.
3. Sometimes we are tempted to feel like God is overburdening us with a particularly hard test or long period of testing. Review the series of tests that God had in store for Abraham. See Genesis 12:1, 14:14, 15:2-5, 17:17, 21:11-12, 22:1-2,17. What is God using these tests to do?  
God had called Abraham to leave his home town and go to a totally different land. Lot was captured and Abraham had to go rescue him. Abraham still remained childless years

and years after God had made the promise. Then when he tried to circumvent God by having a child with Hagar, God told him to listen to Sarah and send Hagar and Ishmael away. All of that leads up to the most difficult test yet, to take that beloved son Isaac and sacrifice him. At the end of it all, God repeated his promises once again and Abraham's faith was strengthened.

4. How does the Bible change our perspective on facing trials and tests in James 1:2,3,12?

Consider it joy to face trials?? That can only happen through faith, realizing that God is strengthening our faith and producing perseverance. At the end of it all, he looked to bless us with the crown of life.

5. When God asked Abraham to sacrifice his Son, Luther remarked, "This must have seemed like a command of the devil." For what reasons would this command have seemed so opposite of God's will?

Later on, God specifically forbids the pagan practice of child sacrifice. It goes against the 5 commandment not to murder as well. Most of all, God had said the line of the Savior would come through Isaac specifically. So for God to command Abraham to kill Isaac seemed like it would do away with the Promise of the Savior as well. But Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead and he remained steadfast in his faith.

6. What are similarities and differences between Isaac on his way to Mount Moriah and Christ on his way to Mount Calvary?

Isaac carried the wood. Christ carried the cross. Isaac asked about the lamb, but went quietly forward and submitted in faith to his Father's will. Christ the Lamb went uncomplaining forth, like a sheep before her shearers is silent. He submitted to the Father's will in the garden of Gethsemane, and went to sacrifice himself as the Lamb of God. Isaac, however, was not sacrificed, but the ram instead.

The ram was type of Christ, pointing ahead to the Lamb who would take away the sin of the world.

7. God called Abraham to go to the region of Moriah, to a specific mountain. Read 2 Chronicles 3:1. What was eventually built on a mountain named Moriah? Christ was sacrificed outside the walls of Jerusalem, where the temple was built on Mount Moriah. What seems to be the connection between all of these?

On the mountain of the Lord, it will be provided. First on a mountain in the region of Moriah, the Lord provided a ram in place of Isaac. Then the Lord had Solomon build the temple on Mount Moriah, where every morning and evening a lamb would be sacrificed for the people. This lamb had no power to forgive but only pointed ahead to the Lamb of God. Calvary's exact location is somewhat debated, but is very near to the temple Mount. On the mountain of the Lord, he provided the Lamb of God, 2000 years after the ram for Isaac.

8. Abraham named that mountain, "The LORD Will Provide." As we look at every test we face and every idol we are called to give up, it seems hard, impossible even. What comfort does the name of that mountain give us as we climb the mountain of trial and testing in our lives?

When we think about confessing our sin, giving up our idols, or carrying out a hard command of God, we get discouraged by what might happen, the consequences or the fallout. Yet God calls us forward, trusting and conquering on through Christ. He will provide the strength we need as we do what he asks.