

# When Obeying God Seems to Destroy Our Happiness

Genesis 22:1-24

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## Introduction:

In our Genesis sermon series, we have been looking at God's gracious blessing of Abraham, which shows us how God blesses His people.

- With Abraham, the promises for God's people in all generations are laid down.
  - And they are unfolded to us in the context of his life—the life of an ordinary human being—
    - Yes, a faithful godly human being, but still a man with passions like us.
- By unfolding His covenant promises to us in this way, God makes them much easier for us to access—to receive...
  - We see Abraham struggling along with famines and enemies and family problems and times of failure and times of success...
  - And all the while God is working in his life and helping him grow to great perfection...
    - and at the same time unfolding these amazing eternal gracious promises for all of His elect people in both the Old and the New Testament to embrace!
    - It is a marvellously helpful procedure and I cannot see how it could have been improved upon!

And today in Genesis 22, we come to a kind of climax in the life of Abraham.

- The Lord has been maturing him in his faith, and it is here that the LORD displays to Abraham and to us the maturity to which He has brought him!
  - Of course we must be careful to guard against pride, but at the same time we should not hesitate to acknowledge and rejoice in the work that God does in His people!
    - The Apostle Paul grew mightily in the Lord, and even he himself acknowledged that under inspiration when in 1 Cor 15:9-10, he said,
      - **For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.**
  - In Ephesians 2:10, we are told that all who are in Christ are God's **workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**
    - It is not boasting to acknowledge that God has caused you to grow.
  - And what we learn in Genesis 22 today is that God is often pleased to reveal His peoples' growth through testing.
    - And when He does this, He also uses the test in our lives to help us grow even more both in our obedience and in our faith!

Please give me your attention now as I read to you about the testing of Abraham.

- This is God's Word—Genesis 22:1-24  
**Genesis 22:1-24:** Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>2</sup> Then He said, "Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." <sup>3</sup> So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. <sup>4</sup> Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. <sup>5</sup> And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you." <sup>6</sup> So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid *it* on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. <sup>7</sup> But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?" <sup>8</sup> And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together. <sup>9</sup> Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. <sup>10</sup> And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. <sup>11</sup> But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." <sup>12</sup> And

He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only *son*, from Me." <sup>13</sup> Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind *him* was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. <sup>14</sup> And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said *to* this day, "In the Mount of The LORD it shall be provided." <sup>15</sup> Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, <sup>16</sup> and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only *son* — <sup>17</sup> blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which *is* on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. <sup>18</sup> In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." <sup>19</sup> So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba. <sup>20</sup> Now it came to pass after these things that it was told Abraham, saying, "Indeed Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: <sup>21</sup> Huz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, <sup>22</sup> Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel." <sup>23</sup> And Bethuel begot Rebekah. These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother. <sup>24</sup> His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah, Gaham, Thahash, and Maachah.

May the Lord bless to us the hearing of His holy and infallible word.

This account is certainly filled with much emotion.

- It can be deeply troubling and at the same time deeply encouraging to see what Abraham, the father of the faithful, was called to endure.
- Let us look at it to see what can learn from it as we are called to live before God in faith as Abraham did.

## I. The first thing I want you to see here is that God tests His people!

- If you belong to Jesus Christ, you can be sure that you will be tested too... not with this same test, but with various tests that God will send.
  - a. What a great test was given to Abraham!
    - i. He commands him to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering!
  - A burnt offering was one in which the throat of the offering was cut and then entirely burned on the altar to God.
    - It is sometimes called a dedication offering because it represents the total dedication that is required of the worshipper.
      - ii. Needless to say this was extremely difficult for Abraham to do.
        - 1. God acknowledges the deep love that Abraham had for the son of his old age.
          - How the words strike us when God says, **Take now your son...**
            - And then He adds, **your only son Isaac...**
            - And then on top of that He says, **whom you love...**
          - Abraham was not a dispassionate man!
            - You will remember how hard it was for him to send Ishmael away and how he was angry when Sarah suggested it...
            - Well now Ishmael is gone and he is commanded to offer up Isaac—his son—who now at least old enough to carry wood up a mountain (as we see in verse 6).
              - My guess is that if we were to be weighed in the balances, we would find that Abraham loved his son more than any of us love our children!
            - 2. But Abraham had another difficulty with this command from God that he had to overcome...
              - He knew that God's promised blessing to him, and to Sarah, and even to Isaac himself as well as to the whole world was in Isaac's seed.
                - God had emphasised this again and again.
                - And all those years Abraham had waited for the birth of Isaac as year after year his wife was barren and then long into menopause.
              - What was to become of the promise of God's salvation?
                - Abraham had lived his whole life in the hope of that promise!
                - He had left his homeland and had wandered about without a home into old age, all because God had promised to be his God and to bless him forever.
                  - And now the very one through whom that blessing was to come is to be offered up as a burnt offering!
      - iii. The test is: Does Abraham trust God enough to obey Him when obedience looks like it will destroy his own (and a lot of other peoples') happiness?

- There is his immediate happiness in losing the son that he so dearly loved and to be the instrument of his destruction—how awful to think of slitting his throat and burning him...
  - And the eternal happiness—the blessing of reconciliation with God—that God had promised in Isaac.
  - Did Abraham trust God enough to obey Him and leave it to God to work out how the blessing would come? That was the test!
- b. God tests us in similar ways.
- i. He brings us into situations in which obedience seems incompatible with our own happiness!
    - 1. We have testing according to our ability.
      - If we are in the third grade as a Christian, He gives us tests that are appropriate for a third grader.
        - If we are in the graduate school, He gives us tests at that level.
        - Of course when you are in the third grade, your test may seem to you as if it is much harder than the tenth grade test that your Christian sister is having...but God does not test us beyond what we are able.
          - 1 Corinthians 10:13 assures us of that!
      - Abraham had had tests that were much easier when he was not as far along in his walk—
        - sometimes he had done quite well, and sometimes not so well,
          - but over the years he had made great progress and he was ready for this test or God would not have given it to him.
          - You have enough growth in grace and enough immediate grace for whatever God sends your way...
            - Never forget that.
      - 2. Well what are some examples of these tests that God gives to us?
        - a. Well, there are the tests that come when there is something that we think would make us happy that God forbids...
          - Perhaps you are lonely and you meet someone who is quite taken with you, but that person is not a believer. It is a test!
          - Or maybe you have always wanted to prove that you are a success and you have a job offer that will take you away from your family. It is a test!
          - And there are those things that are just plain sinful temptations...
            - To look at pornography—and I am not just talking about nakedness, but any seductress—even if she has clothes on...

- You think it will make you happy to look...and of course it will give you a temporary happiness of sorts...but no lasting happiness...
- Or to gossip—when you have a great story about someone you feel threatened by...
  - You think it will make you happy to indulge...
- Of the temptation to eat or to drink when you have already had enough to bless you and to be thankful for...
  - but you want more because you have not received it from God with thanksgiving and are not satisfied...

b. And then there are those things that God calls you to do that it seems will make you unhappy if you do them...

- Like tithing when you want to use that money for your retirement—of course so that you will not have to depend on your children—not because you are selfish or anything...
- Or like telling the truth when a lie seems like it would serve you better...
- Or like disciplining your children when you are tired and it seems like it doesn't help anyway...
- Or like arranging your schedule so that you can pray—when it means giving up your video games or your television—which you hardly watch at all anyway!

c. Sometimes obedience may even seem, as it did with Abraham, to contradict God's promised blessing!

- If I obey Christ, it will turn my children off and they will not follow God...
- If I keep the Sabbath holy, it will make me seem strange to my friends and hinder my witness to them—and God wants us to be good witnesses!
- If I worship God according to His commandments, I am afraid my heart will dry up—
  - I want to sing songs that speak more to my heart than the songs that God has given us in the Bible.
  - I find sermons hard to listen to and I would get more out of a small group where everybody shares their experiences.
- I know that the Bible says that wives are to submit to their husbands, but my walk with God is much better when I do what I think is best.

➤ So you will be subjected to all kinds of tests.

ii. When you are tested, the question is, “do I fear God?”

1. You can see that this is the question regarding Abraham because after he is tested, the LORD says, in verse 12, **“Now I know that you fear God because you have not withheld your son, your only son.”**
- So testing confirms that we truly do fear God.
    2. What does it mean to fear God?
      - a. Well what does it mean to fear anything?
        - It means that you believe that thing, whatever or whoever it may be, has the power to bless or to curse, to make you happy or to make you miserable.
          - There are many things that we fear—
            - Some people fear human approval—they believe that they will be miserable unless they have it (and perhaps they are miserable because they don’t have it)...but they live to have it depending on how much they fear it.
            - Some people fear authorities—in the wrong way I mean—so that they will obey them instead of God because they feel that it will be worse to displease them than to displease God.
            - Some people fear political enemies, like ISIS...they are more worried about being hurt by ISIS than they are of being judged by God.
            - Some people fear failure, and when we speak of fear in this way, we could say that they fear success in the sense that they believe success is the ultimate source of happiness and that failure is the ultimate source of misery.
          - So you see that the thing that you fear is the thing that you hold in the place of having the most influence on your wellbeing.
            - b. So when you fear God, it means that you trust Him so much that you obey Him even when obedience seems to be against your own happiness...
        - You reject the notion that you can secure your own happiness by holding on to something that God does not want you to have...
          - or by refusing to do something that He commands...even if it is hard or distasteful to you.
3. If God is indeed the one who has the final power to bless you or to curse you, then it is absolute folly to disobey His will in an effort to obtain some happiness...
    - I mean, really, does it make any sense at all to reject your relationship with God so you can hold onto something in this world?
    - I recently addressed a man who had forsaken his wife for another woman he was clinging to—a man who was a minister, and I asked him,

- Is it worth it to reject your God, your conscience, the wife of your youth, your witness to your children, your hope, your peace, the blessing of eternal life, just so you can hold on to this woman?
  - The man had no fear of God!
  - He fears life without this babe, but he does not fear eternity without Jesus!
    - Whatever his reasons may be, that man is a fool!

TRANS> But now let's look at Abraham.

## II. What an excellent example we have in dear old Abraham!

- The LORD, having tested him, presents him to us as an example of what it is to fear God!
  - a. You see that Abraham simply obeys!
    - i. Right from the start, we are not told how Abraham felt about this command.
      - 1. We are simply told that he obeys right away!
        - Verse 3 says: **So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.**
        - He does not go to get counsel; he does not take some time to think about it; he does not look for clarification or explanations...
          - He knows what God has said—it is clear—and he sets out in obedience.
        - 2. And look at all that he has to endure to obey!
          - Not only does the Lord tell him to do this, but he stresses that Isaac is “your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love...”
          - And besides that, he sends him on a three day journey to do it—all that time of travel—travel with his son—all that time to have second thoughts or to make excuses, but there is none of that.
          - And then when they arrive at the place—what pangs he must have felt when he first saw it and knew that they had arrived...
          - And then leaves the servants behind, perhaps in case they might try to interfere when they saw what he was doing...
          - And then he had to endure the painful question of his son—who tenderly addresses him as “my father” as verse 7 says,
            - **But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” Then he said, “Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”**
          - What a wise answer the father gives to his son...
            - **8 And Abraham said, “My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.”**

- And then the tenderness continues as it says in the rest of verse 8, **So the two of them went together**, father and son, side by side, to the slaughter.
- There is much dignity in the text—we are not given all of the details about how Abraham told Isaac,
  - but he binds him as was done to sacrifices so that they would not get away—
    - and for him to bind this lad who was big enough to carry the wood indicates that Isaac did not resist him.
    - He actually lays him on the wood and raises the knife, probably to slit his throat as was done with sacrifices.
- ii. What a helpful lesson this is for us today.
  1. We live in a day when people consult their feelings instead of God’s word.
    - We live feeling oriented lives instead of a commandment oriented lives.
    - We have gone so far with this, that even many who claim to be Christians determine the will of God by their feelings and desires!
      - They sanction fornication, homosexuality, divorce, idolatry, almost anything because of their feelings.
      - If they have a strong desire for this or that, they take that as if it were a God-given desire.
  2. How helpful it is to have Abraham’s simple obedience to God without consulting his feelings!
    - Peter says that Christ suffers for us that we **no longer should live the rest of our time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For we have spent enough of our past lifetime doing the will of the Gentiles (1 Pet 4:2-3).**
    - Now it is time for us to do the will of God—like Abraham!
      - Live by the commands of God, not by your feelings!
    - It doesn’t mean that we have no feelings—in fact, as we obey God we will have much deeper, much richer feelings, than those who are past feeling because they constantly follow their own lusts!

TRANS> But Abraham’s obedience will make no sense to you if you are an unbeliever.

- b. What is at the heart of this radical obedience to God? It is his faith in God’s promise to him.
  - i. You see, with God’s command to offer up Isaac, there are for Abraham two things that are seemingly contradictory...
    - There is God’s promise to bless him through the seed of Isaac, and...
    - There is God’s command to offer up Isaac.



- Abraham knows what God has commanded him to do with Isaac and he knows what God has promised to do through Isaac...
  - But he does not know how God can bless him and Sarah and all the nations through a nation that will come through Isaac if he kills him.
  - But this is the key—He trusts what God has said!
    - He does not have to know in order to obey.
  - ii. So Abraham’s obedience shows that trusted God enough to leave the matter of how God could bring the blessing through Isaac when Isaac was sacrificed with God!
    1. Abraham knew that it was not for him to figure out how God would accomplish the blessing...
      - It was enough for him to do the obeying and leave it to God to do the blessing.
      - 2. And Abraham asserts as much—even in the wise words that he spoke to Isaac which are recorded for us... **My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering.**
        - Somehow God will provide...the word provide means that God will see the sacrifice—that is, He will see to it—He will provide it—He will take care of it!
          - Abraham was sure of that, so he is prepared to offer Isaac—he is sure that God will do *something!*
        - Hebrews tells us that he believed that God was able to raised Isaac up.
          - It does not say that he believed that God *would* raise him up, just that God was able to do so—that or whatever was necessary...
            - Somehow God would provide so that His promise through Isaac could be fulfilled.
        - It was his part to obey and it was God’s part to keep His promise!
          - This is the obedience of faith that John takes about when he says,
            - **1 John 2:3: Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.**
  - iii. This is so very powerful!
    - Oh that all of us could learn to live this way!
    - To be so sure of God, of His promised grace and blessing, that we would simply obey Him without question—
      - even when we cannot fathom how obeying Him will not destroy any hope of happiness!
    - That is the way of wisdom!
      - The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom!
      - The wise man knows that all his hope for happiness is in the Lord, never in going contrary to His will!

### III. Through Abraham's example, we see how God graciously gives us greater assurance when we obey Him in times of testing.

- Remember that Abraham is a model for us of how God deals with all of His people.
  - a. The Lord tells us that our trusting obedience is proof that we fear Him.
    - i. In verse 12, He tells Abraham that his trusting obedience demonstrates that he really does fear God.
      - He says, **“for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”**
      - Abraham showed that he feared God more than giving up Isaac...
        - He knew that it was the LORD, not Isaac who had the power to bless, and if God required him to offer up Isaac, he was prepared to do so.
        - ii. In the same way, God tells you in His word that you know that you truly fear God when you keep His commandments...
    - Thus, in 1 John 2:3, it says: **Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.**
      - We come away with greater assurance that we know Him when we obey Him in times of testing!
      - We show that we are looking for His promised blessing in Christ.
  - b. The Lord also gives us greater assurance of His provision of Jesus Christ for our sins when we look to Him to provide.
    - i. Abraham left it to God to provide when he prepared to offer up Isaac, and God did provide.
      - 1. You can see in verse 11 how the angel of the LORD stops him from slaying Isaac: **But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” So he said, “Here I am.” And He said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him...”**
        - And then in verse 13, you can see how God provides a lamb in place of Isaac: **Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.**
          - 2. This is a provision in a figurative way.
            - Of course the ram was not equivalent to Isaac...
              - but by providing it in this way, God shows Abraham in a clearer way than ever that He will provide the sacrifice that He requires!
            - Abraham is shown to his great comfort that God will take care of this!
          - 3. Abraham is so encouraged by the hope of God's provision that he names the place for that hope...
            - **Gen 22:14: And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, “In the Mount of The LORD it shall be provided.”**

- It bears mention that the location of this sacrifice is probably the very place where the temple was built...
  - **2 Chronicles 3:1 says, Now Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.**
- And now the LORD has sent Jesus as His promised provision!
  - ii. And of course now all who look to God to provide are given even more assurance in God's faithful provision for our sins!
    - 1. Abraham saw the ram in the thicket, but now we have seen Jesus Christ on the cross—the very Son of God!
- There is no excuse for us to suppose for a moment that it is up to us to provide for our own salvation!
  - We have the Son of God, crucified for us on the cross!
- God the Father has done what He called Abraham the father to do with his son.
  - He has not withheld His only Son, and His Son has laid down His life that the blessing of salvation might come to the whole world.
- And now we know that God truly provides the Lamb for the blessing of His people!
  - He has held nothing back that is required for our blessing!
  - Surely we have every reason to lay down our lives for Him.
    - 2. If you fear God, God will continue to show you more and more just how complete and perfect a Saviour Jesus Christ is.
- He rewards trusting obedience with more and more revelation of the sufficiency of Jesus Christ to make us completely righteous in His sight.

TRANS> But look, the LORD does even more to encourage us...

- Not only does He show us that He provides the Lamb that is required...
  - c. He also assures us of the blessing we have in the Lamb.
    - i. You see that the angel of the LORD calls to Abraham a second time for the purpose of giving him this assurance that God will bless him.
- It says (v. 16-17), **“Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said, ‘By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—’**
  - He renews the promises that He had made to him in the beginning and expands upon them—because of Abraham's trusting obedience...
    - 1. First, He says, **“blessing I will bless you.”**
- That is the infinitive absolute construction where the key word is repeated—
  - Instead of simply saying “I will bless you,” it is “Blessing I will bless you.”
    - In other words, I am going to really pile on the blessing!

- God Almighty is saying this—He who has the power and the wisdom to bless us beyond our wildest dreams...
  - Like I said, God’s blessing is everything!
- 2. And then He gives him and us a second infinitive absolute saying, **“multiplying I will multiply your seed.”**
- God had no intention of only having a few people in His kingdom—not God!
  - No, He told Abraham there would be a great expansion of people who would find their life in His saving grace!
  - And here we are my brothers and sisters—God is so faithful!
- Before He had told him that they would be as the stars in heaven, and now He adds that they will be **as the sand which is on the seashore!**
- 3. And next He adds that they **will possess the gate of their enemies (v. 17)**
- This too is an expansion—before the LORD had told Abraham that He would give the land to him as a possession,
  - But now the fact that this means dominion of the cities that the ungodly rule—for the gate is the place of government.
  - This is the promise that Jesus will reign over the entire earth and that all nations will be subject to Him.
    - This will reach its ultimate fulfillment at the resurrection when everything will be put under Christ.
- 4. And you see that it is stressed that indeed this rule of Christ (the true seed of Abraham) will be a great blessing to all nations...
  - **“In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”**
- The one that God will provide for Abraham because Abraham has obeyed God will be the same as the Lamb that God will provide!
  - He is the one who brings blessing to all the nations of the earth so that at the resurrection the whole world will be reconciled to God and the wicked will be cast into Hell.
  - Those who have trusted in the LORD, looking to Him for His promised blessing, will be gloriously perfected!
- The LORD renews these promises to Abraham because he has obeyed.
  - ii. We too can count on God to give us assurance of His blessing for us in response to our trusting obedience.
- When we live as if His blessing is everything, He will show us more and more that it is everything!
  - We see how sure and how precious His blessing really is.

- As Jesus says in Mark 10:29-30: **“Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life.”**

TRANS> But there is one thing to note well...

- d. God’s blessing is not always evident in this world in a worldly sense.
  - i. We have seen that Abimelech saw that God was with Abraham in all that he did, but that is in part because God revealed this to Abimelech...
- In this verse 19, after this great mountain top experience, we see that Abraham returns to, from all that we can tell, a rather ordinary life at Beersheba.
  - **19 So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.**
- We should not suppose that though we have magnificent promises from God, our lives in this world will be remarkably different than those who do not have eternal life.
  - ii. The Spirit of God tells us that Abraham received news of his brother Nahor...
- Now Nahor had not been called to leave his homeland or to sacrifice his son.
  - He had not been given the promise of eternal life and an eternal inheritance and a seed that would bless all the nations.
- But when you look at his life in this world, he has twelve sons to Abraham’s one son,
  - And he has enjoyed a settled life in his homeland, presumably enjoying the wealth that Abraham’s family had.
  - In many ways, Abraham’s life has been, as far as we know, much more difficult than Nahor’s.
    - But Abraham was not living for a city in this world, but the city that God had promised him that is eternal.
- It is very important to be clear about the promises of God.
  - They bring us great blessing in this world in many ways, but when the world compares us to what they have, it is often quite similar.
  - True faith rests in the promises of God, not in the things that are seen but in the things that are not seen.

**Conclusion:** As we have seen today in our text,

- Our faith will often be tested in this world...
  - Obeying God will look like the very thing that will destroy our happiness and blessing,
  - but if you have true faith, you will continue to obey God anyway and trust Him to bring you the blessing that He has promised to His people in Jesus Christ.

- Your prayer will be that of Psalm 106:4-5: **Remember me, O LORD, with the favor You have toward Your people; oh, visit me with Your salvation, that I may see the benefit of Your chosen ones, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Your nation, that I may glory with Your inheritance.**