

Sermon Text: *Genesis 22:1-19, Hebrews 11:17-19*
Sermon Title: Abraham's Faith: Part II

Quick review from previous sermons: (a) faith has an object (better a little faith in the right object than a lot of faith in the wrong object); (b) the Christian "lives by promises, not appearances"; (c) *faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*

1. What is a simple definition of the word "credibility". Do you agree that we live in a political and social climate where people in authority often lack credibility?
2. Three descriptors were used to describe the credibility of a leader: their position, their person, and their performance. Abraham, by God's design and call, was the first patriarch of Israel. He held that position, but in our text God is testing (not tempting) his person and his performance. How has God tested your person and your performance as a Christian? What was the result of this testing in your life? What did you learn from it?
3. God's command to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac was incredibly costly. Give examples from your own Christian pilgrimage where God has required something you believe to be costly (witnessing, forgiving/reconciling with another, tithing, etc.). What keeps us from obeying God when His command to us seems as though it costs us too much? [When I Survey, vs. 4]
4. God's holy commands are often counter-intuitive, counter-carnal, and counter-cultural. Give an example from your own life where you have wrestled with such a command. In what way is the gospel counter-intuitive, counter-carnal, and counter-cultural? What does it mean to "learn to write with the opposite hand"? How is a "crisis of obedience" usually a "crisis of faith"?
5. In what way is "Abraham's problem ultimately God's problem"?
The fulfillment of God's promises depended on Isaac's survival . . . the impression we get from the biblical narrative is that Abraham treated it as God's problem; it was for (up to) God, and not for Abraham, to reconcile His (God's) promise and His command. [F.F. Bruce, Commentary on Hebrews, p. 311]
6. Respond to this quote: "There are things that God has put into our hands and there are things that belong only in God's hands; wisdom is knowing the difference, and learning 'to trust and obey.'"
7. In the history of humanity, what is the biggest "dilemma" that God has ever faced? How does the gospel answer that question?
8. Do you want a leader in your life that has all three "P's" (position, person, performance)? Who will that leader be, and why? What can you expect from that leader?
9. [Karen Watson, American missionary killed in Iraq in 2004]: "Care more than some think is wise. Risk more than some think is safe. Dream more than some think is practical. Expect more than some think is possible. I was called not to comfort or success, but to obedience."