

We Always Have God

(Phi 4:11) Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.
God can allow us to lose the gifts He gives us, but we never lose the Giver.

A. Gen 22:1-14 God tests Abraham's Obedience

Gen.22:1-3	Test of Abraham's obedience to God
Gen.22:3-4	Trip to the mountains
Gen.22:5-8	The two alone
Gen.22:9-10	Tied to the altar
Gen.22:11-12	Truly obedient
Gen.22:13	The thicket caught a ram

- 1. The test asked the question: do you reverence the Lord more than you love your son?**
 - 24 year wait to get Isaac, the promised heir and seed of Messiah – true lamb of God
 - Jn 21:15 Peter do you love me more? Who/what do we love more than God?
God allows His children to be tested to see if we will reverence & obey Him
- 2. The test required a 3-day journey and then he had to take his son's life.**
 - For 3-days Ab wondered if he could do it, how he would do it, why God commanded
 - He apparently never considered not doing it in spite of what he had to do & give up
Understanding is not necessary to obey – We always have God but not understand
- 3. Ab constructed a doctrinal rationale by using spiritual logic to combine promises.**

Gen 21:12 Isaac was the promised heir so he had to be alive to inherit Ab's possessions
Heb 11:17-19 – Ab decided that God would raise him from the dead if he died.

 - Burnt offering – God would have to reconstruct his body in total – burned up
 - Promised heir + Test + Ab knew resurrection = God would raise him back up
Nothing is impossible for God – We always have God - allowed us to be on His side
- 4. Ab envisioned terrible loss: tie Isaac then kill him – loss of trust & intimacy; Isaac would be dead for only God knew how long – loss of his presence.**
 - For 3 days Ab felt like he had already lost his only son that he loved more than anyone or anything – 3 longest days of his life
 - For 3 days he imagined doing the unthinkable – seeing Isaac's face as he cut his throat and then totally burning his body until it was consumed.
We can lose people and things of this life (gifts) – We always have God (Giver)
- 5. Ab decided that he would endure whatever came of killing Isaac and that he would give him up for as long as it took for God to raise him, to be loyal to the Lord.**
 - His reverence was true and real – pleased the Lord
 - His willingness was proven when he tied him to the altar and raised the knife.
- 6. Ab didn't have to lose Isaac, he only had to be willing.**
 - God intervened by providing the ram at the right moment to take Isaac's place
- 7. Ab knew that no matter who or what he lost, he always had God.**

Heb 13:5 – stay free from love of money, be content with what you have because God will never leave you or forsake you – **regardless of loss, we always have God**

Analogy: Abraham – GF; Isaac – Human Race; Ram – Christ the substitute sacrifice

- God protects us from the ultimate loss by providing the sacrifice for sins
- God took the loss on Himself so that we might have more than we need forever.

B. God delivered Ab from the loss of his beloved son

He waited for years for this son he loved – God finally gave him his heir – Now it seemed God was going to take Isaac away – Even ordered Ab to cut his throat/burn him

- God intervened and delivered Ab from having to suffer the loss of Isaac. Whew!!
- God provided a substitute sacrifice – worked out well for everyone but the ram.
- No evidence Ab asked to be released from the test – didn't withhold from God
Ab had God; God controlled of what Ab would gain, keep, lose – Ab still had God

C. Mt 26:36-44 – Another example of a man asking for deliverance from loss.

Jesus asked GF for another way to resolve the sin issue other than the cross

Vs 39 – Father, since it is possible – ei + PAI eimi = 1st CC – if & it's true

- He didn't ask "is it possible"? He states that it was possible – is it GF's will?

Vs 42 – Father since it is not possible - After 1st prayer He knew the answer, GF wanted Him to go to the cross He changed his desire & request

- 2nd prayer - expression of acceptance of GF will – Let your will be done!!
- Jesus was facing the loss of relationship with GF by being made sin on the cross.
- He was facing the pain of being the object of God punishing the sins of the world.
- He didn't want to lose His relationship nor take the pain of paying for sins.
- He asked His Father for what Abraham received – looking for a ram in the thicket
- GF answered, "you are the ram in the thicket" – My will for you is to suffer loss
- GF's will for Jesus was to suffer the loss of relationship and experience great pain
- He believed GF would resurrect Him Psm 16:10; Heb 12:2; **Always had God**

D. God has given us the privilege of sharing in the sufferings of Christ.

Underserved Suffering – suffering for growth and God's glory in the Angelic Conflict

(Phil 1:29) For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake. (Jn 16:32) in this world we will have tribulation;

(Rom 8:17) sharing His suffering = sharing His glory; **(2Cor 7:9)** Godly sorrow → repent;

(1Thes 3:3) destined to suffer; **(2Tim 1:12)** suffering associated with ministry; **(2Tim 2:3)** part of being a soldier for Christ; **(2Tim 2:9)** charged as a criminal & in prison; **(1Pt 2:20)** endure suffering for doing good pleases God; **(1Pt 3:14)** suffer for +R – blessed; **(1Pt 3:17)** better if it is God's will to suffer for doing good not evil; **(1Pt 4:16)** if anyone suffers as a Christian, don't be ashamed but praise God; **(1Pt 4:19)** suffer acc to God's will, entrust their soul to faithful Creator by doing good; **(Rev 2:10)** do not fear what you are about to suffer, devil is about to put some of you in prison

- We pray for God to deliver us from the suffering that brings honor to Him
- Sometimes He provides a ram in the thicket; other times we are the ram
- Believer dominated by OM: focused on & dependent/slaves to the earthly; pray that God will provide a ram to deliver us from loss; won't see beyond earthly prosperity
- Believer under OM always reads earthly deliverance into every promise of God
- Bel/OM expects & demands that God provide a ram to deliver us from earthly loss
- Earthly loss → disillusioned → discipline? → revenge? → faith crisis: is He real?

Robert & Regina's Story

Robert & Regina grew up in a good local church and were both spiritually advancing believers. They married young and wanted to start a family but Regina couldn't seem to get pregnant. They went to the doctor who told them that it would take a miracle for her to become pregnant. So they prayed and asked the Lord to provide the miracle of a baby. They read the scripture about other couples who had struggled with the same issue. They read about Abraham and Sarah and they read about Hannah who had prayed and made a vow that if God would allow her a son that she would dedicate him to the Lord. So they prayed year after year and made the same vow. Finally they decided to give up on having a child of their own and inquired about adopting one. It was at this point that God answered their prayer and gave them the miracle of a little boy. When he was born, they named him Samuel Isaac and they worshipped the Lord and thanked Him for His grace to grant them such a beautiful boy. They were very happy and loved Sam very much.

The headaches started when Sam was 8. At first they didn't think too much of them and the doctor prescribed the normal medications. Sam was 8 years, 7 months old to the day when they sat in the car having seen the specialist. They would do everything they could but it was too deep in his brain and this type didn't respond to chemo. They were stunned; they cried on each other and drove home to share the news. So, again they prayed. They put Sam on every prayer list anyone knew about and hundreds all over the world began to pray diligently for little Sam. Again they read the scripture, returning to their favorite couple, Abraham/Sarah. They read about the ram in the thicket and reasoned that God had provided a ram for Abraham; he would provide one for them. After all, they had waited so long and God had performed the miracle for Sam to even exist. They were certain He would provide another miracle now so that they would not have to go through the loss of their beloved Sam. They claimed this promise from the life of Abraham and Sarah and prayed believing that God would spare his life and remove the tumor from his little brain.

It was a little over 4 months later in the hospital that Sam closed his little eyes and passed into the presence of the Lord. Regina was beside herself with grief but Robert was not finished yet. He made a strange request of the hospital, that they hold his body and not send it to the funeral home to be prepared for burial. He was holding on to the logic of Abraham that God would raise Sam from the dead. Surely God was using them for some special purpose and he maintained that God would finally honor the promise. The hospital honored his wish for a few days but finally called an end to it. The couple was devastated, disillusioned and not sure they could ever trust God again. He had failed to live up to the promise they had read into the life of Abraham and Sarah.

1. Isaac was promised specifically by God to Abraham as the heir to his estate and the seed of the Messiah. Sam was not the seed of the Messiah that he must live to pass on his genetics to the next generation.
2. Robert & Regina read into the bible what they wanted to see to deliver them from the pain of losing their loved one. There was no promise to deliver Sam.
3. Robert & Regina claimed scripture, prayed and believed but they believed what they had read into the bible, not what God had promised.
4. They were disillusioned with God because of the fantasy they had created and then demanded that God accept as His will.
5. God had given them 8 wonderful years and then allowed them to share in the suffering of Christ by losing their child. Sam died because of Adam's sin that passed sin and death to all of us.
6. Sam died and went to heaven: no more suffering in the presence of the Lord and they would be reunited with him forever when they died.
7. They had been given the gift of suffering great loss and had the opportunity to trust God for His will and honor Him by submitting to being the ram/thicket.
8. Robert & Regina misunderstood because they were slaves to their earthly attachment to Sam that they were unwilling to surrender. They failed the test as we compare them to Abraham and Jesus.