

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides

April 2nd

Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)

1. This upcoming Sunday is Easter. Does your family have any Easter traditions? What is your favorite kind of Easter candy?

Bible Study Questions

1. Read Genesis 22:1-19. What do you notice about both Abraham and God in this story?
2. Why do you think that God chose to put Abraham through this test? What was God's aim?
3. Imagine that you were in Abraham's shoes. How would you respond? How would you process this request?
4. How would you describe Abraham's relationship with God at the end of the story? What Abraham learned?
5. Read Philippians 3:7-14
 - What does Paul describe as the aim in his journey?
 - Why is it so important for God to be central in our lives?
6. Pastor Michael talked about there being times in which God does a "severe mercy" in which he removes something from ourselves that we value in order to recenter us with him. Have you ever had that experience in your own life? If so, tell the story.
7. Isaac represents anything in our life that becomes a greater love than God. Is there anything in your life that you would struggle to give up if God asked you to? If so, then what can you do about that?
8. How does this story help you reflect on God's sacrifice of Jesus? How does God giving up his son for you impact the way that you worship him?

April 2nd: The Destination Genesis 22

Every journey has a destination. Sometimes that is a location, other times it is a specific experience that prompts the journey. The same is true of a journey of faith. There is a destination that God wants every one of us to arrive at. In Genesis 22, Abraham finally arrives at that destination.

I. The Test:

- **Abraham is told to give up his most prized possession:** God tells Abraham to sacrifice his beloved son, Isaac (Genesis 22:2). We are horrified by this, but we need to remember that child sacrifice was common in the culture of Abraham's day.
- **Does he trust that God will still fulfill his promise?:** God had promised to make Abraham into a great nation. To sacrifice Isaac though would be to give the very means by which God had promised to fulfill his word. Abraham was asked to obey God, and trust that somehow God would still be faithful in fulfilling his word.

II. The Result

- **God is proclaimed as the center of Abraham's life:** God appears to him and commends Abraham for not withholding his son (v. 16) and for his obedience (v. 18). Abraham's act of obedience confirmed that nothing would stand in the way of his love for God. Here we have the ultimate aim of the journey. Abraham was to become a man who was devoted to God and who viewed God as being his greatest treasure.
- **God is now able to fully lavish his blessing:** God responds by richly blessing Abraham (vs. 16-18). His descendants would multiply and God reaffirms his commitment to bless the world through him. God could only do this when he was confirmed as the center of Abraham's life.

III. The Foreshadowing of Jesus

- **God himself would sacrifice his only son on Mount Moriah:** God oddly refers to Isaac as being Abraham's only son, whom he loves (22:2). It points to Jesus, being the only son of God that is sacrificed for us. God tells Abraham to do this on Mount Moriah, which later would be the sight of Jerusalem and the death of Jesus.
- **Jesus would be the provision for us all:** Abraham calls Mount Moriah the "place where the Lord will provide (22:14)". Jesus becomes the provision for us in that place.

Conclusion: Jesus once described the kingdom of God as being like a treasure in which one would sell everything that they had to possess. Even in his call to discipleship, his followers were to leave everything behind to

follow him. The great reward of the Christian life is not the blessings of eternal life, but communion with Jesus, restoration to God himself. This is the destination that God wants each of us to reach on the journey of faith.