Good Morning!

This morning we have three more verses about Abraham. This is the most memorable account of Abraham’s faith – the offering of Isaac. It is Hebrews 11:17-19. This is built on the story found in Genesis 22 of the LORD asking Abraham to offer up his only son, Isaac. We know about the other boy, Ishmael, but God refers to Isaac as the “only” son of Abraham (Gen 22:12). Isaac was the son God had promised. He was the one that God had said, “Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.” (Gen. 17:19). So Abraham is offering up the one who already has an everlasting covenant.

From the Genesis story we don’t really know what is going on in the mind of Abraham. What is he expecting from God? What does he think God will do with this sacrifice? Here in Hebrews we are allowed into the mind of Abraham to hear just what he expected God to do.

When we look carefully at the text, we see that Abraham is bringing along wood because God is requiring a burnt offering. We recognize that this will not be a “simple” sacrifice and what God will make of it will have to be a miracle that no one has ever seen before.

As far as we can see in Genesis, Abraham just goes along with it. God leaves out so much history in the Bible. This is especially true of the emotional side of people. What doubts or hesitations that Abraham might have had, we just are not given. I think that God wants us to sit and think through the minds of these men and women and feel with them. He does not give us all the answers easily. We need to struggle with them, because that exercises our minds to think like those who struggled greatly. Often we don’t do this until we struggle greatly.

The Angel of the LORD does give us a bit of the back story when He says, “Now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me (Gen.22:12).” But “fearing God” is one of those terms we don’t comprehend correctly or appreciate very well in 21st century America. So we have it clearly in Hebrews, “He considered that God is able to raise *people* even from the dead (v. 19). Abraham believed that if he killed his son and gave him up as burnt offering, God was going to give him back to him *because this is a God who can be trusted to keep his promises*. God had promised; God will do it. So Abraham’s faith was justified [proven] at the sacrifice (James 2:21-22). No one could ever say that Abraham did not have faith in this God.

No one I know has been asked to make sacrifices like Abraham. But then again there is no other symbol of faith just like Abraham. He is our witness to admire and know that we have been granted faith like he had. The author of Hebrews is giving us this chapter to remind us that we join this number of the faithful: Abraham and Sarah and Enoch and Noah and Abel. They may be our spiritual fathers and mothers, but they are also our spiritual brothers and sisters. We do not fight the same battles, but we have the same faith in the same God. And He can be trusted to keep His promises to us just as He did to all of these men and women of faith.

Have a blessed day in the Lord!

In Christ Pastor EA