

Laying down Idols in Our Hearts

Looking into Genesis 22 (Abraham sacrificing Isaac), we will reflect on God's invitation to identify and surrender idols in our hearts. Abraham's radical obedience is an example to us of a heart fully consecrated to God, which can stir personal revival that can transform a continent.

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I. Intro

A. Johnny Cash – one of the best-selling music artists of all time

1. Song 'Hurt' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8AHCfZTRGiI> (3:48 minutes)

- a. *'You can have it all. My empire of dirt. I'll let you down. I'll make you hurt.'* – illustration for idols

II. Background about idols

A. 'The human heart is an idol factory.' Tim Keller

1. 'Anything more important to us than God, anything that absorbs our heart and imagination more than God.'

B. Good things (love, family, career, and even our ministry) that have the danger of becoming the ultimate thing

III. Abraham and Isaac – Genesis 22:1-19

A. Test (v.1)

1. What is God testing? (v.12 and v.15)
2. Why is God testing? (v.18)
3. Abraham heart is like gold putting through fire

B. Price

1. 'Take your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac' (v.3)

2. The words 'son' or 'father' are repeated 14 times to show the intimacy of the relationship, the cost of what God is asking
3. What Isaac means to Abraham
 - a. His beloved son
 - b. His promise
 - c. His calling
4. God knows how valuable our idols can be

C. Obedience

1. Early next morning (v.3)
2. First thing he does with no excitement
3. Doesn't ask like he asked before (bless servant Eliezer in Gn 15:2 or bless Ishmael in Gn 17:20)
4. What about my son? What about the promise? What about the promise?
5. Has walked so closely with God that now he is in this place of total obedience and surrender
6. Faith – WE will come back (v.5) – Francis Schaeffer
7. Climax (v.10) – goes through the end
8. Again, his name (v.11). Again, Here I am (v.11).

D. Passes the test

1. The kind of heart that God will use to give birth to nations
2. Abraham loves God more than he loves his son, his promise
3. Passing the test unravels new revelation: 'The Lord will Provide' v.14
 - a. He now knows more of the nature of God
 - b. Climax of 25-year journey of faith that God will provide for his promises

4. God puts a stamp on his blessing
 - a. Message translation: 'I'll bless you – oh, how I'll bless you.' V.16
5. God found a heart like his own
 - a. For God himself will sacrifice his son, his only son
 - b. And through this heart God will write the history of humanity

IV. What is your Isaac?

- A. What is the thing in our hearts that God is jealous about? What is the idol in our heart?
- B. Question to help identify idols (Tim Keller)
 1. What do we daydream? What do we fear the most? Makes life worth living?
 2. Naming our Isaac, our idols, take the power away
 3. Effect of idols in our lives and those around us
- C. Personal stories about idols

V. Good news and repentance

- A. Jesus as the ultimate Isaac
- B. Because God did not spare his son, we can repent
- C. Ask the Holy Spirit: What is my Isaac?
- D. Joel 2:12-13

VI. Reflection and call to repentance

Suggested Readings:

- Timothy Keller
Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power and the Only Hope that Matters
- Bruce Wilkinson
The Freedom Factor: Finding Peace by Forgiving Others... and Yourself