

Date : 1st March 2026
Theme : God's Story of Redemption from Genesis
Topic : God shares His Plan and Feelings with His friend.
Passage : Genesis 22
Key Verse : *Abraham to Isaac ...God Himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son. Genesis 22:8*
God said to Abraham... Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from Me, your son... Genesis 22:12

Introduction

- **God, the grieving Father, plans for our Salvation**

In Genesis 6, man's sin had become so great that every inclination of their thoughts and desires was continually evil. The people He loved had turned completely from Him, rejecting His ways. For 969 years, beginning from Methuselah's birth — God patiently waited for men to repent. His heart broke as humanity left Him with no choice but judgment. Yet even in the midst of His grief, He was already planning redemption through the sacrifice of His own Son. This is not the heart of a cruel God, but that of a grieving Father.

- **God, the covenant Father, invests in authentic relationships**

Abraham is the only person in the Old Testament who is called the friend of God. *Isaiah 41:8; 2 Chronicles 20:7.*

The term highlights his special relationship of faith, obedience and covenantal loyalty to God. (The Lord spoke to Moses as a man speaks to his friend *Exodus 33:11*, but Moses is never called God's friend).

How does Abraham relate with God as a friend (more than a Servant-Master relationship) and what does this relationship entail is our focus today?

1. How does Abraham relate with God as a friend?

My question is: How much does Abraham know about God in his journey of faith, before Genesis 22?

Time Period: How long has Abraham known God between Genesis 12 – 21:3?
30 years? 40 years?

a). Abraham's journey of knowing WHO this God is.

Friendship begins with connectivity and meaningful friendship developing over time.

- Immediately after his earliest encounter with God *Genesis 12:7-8*, Abraham builds an altar to the Lord (*I AM*) and calls on the name of the Lord (*YHWH*). *Genesis 13:4*
- Abraham discovers the Lord *EI-Elyon* = the Most High God. *Genesis 14:20*
- From Hagar's experience in the wilderness, he learns the Lord is *EI-Roi* = the God who sees and is deeply concerned for the needs of His people. *Genesis 16:13,14*
- Abraham describes the LORD (*YHWH*) as *EI-Olam* the Everlasting God. *Genesis 21:33*

- b). What has Abraham learned about **TRUSTING** God before Genesis 22?
 Progression from acquaintance to true friendship involves deepening trust during challenges and increased vulnerability.
- He Learned That God Has a Global Purpose (*Genesis 12:3*)
 - From his very first encounter, Abraham learns of God's purpose for the world ...*all families of the earth shall be blessed...* *Genesis 12:3*.
 - That He knows their fears *Genesis 15:1* and their unspoken thoughts *Genesis 18:13*.
 - That God does justice *Genesis 18:32-33*.
 - That God draws near in his vulnerability and struggles *Genesis 18:17-19*.
- c). How has Abraham experienced God's **MERCIES** in his decades-long walk with God?
 Abraham sees God's mercies repeatedly shown to his household.
- To Sarah's precarious experiences in the courts of foreign rulers: Pharaoh *Genesis 12:17*, King Abimelech *Genesis 20:17* (both due to Abraham's own self-serving deceptions).
 - To Hagar, when she flees desperately from Abraham's home *Genesis 16:7-9*.
 - To Lot, his nephew, whose foolish choice to locate at Sodom, almost cost his life *Genesis 19:16*.

Certainly, Abraham himself has experienced God's gracious, forgiveness and merciful care many times over in his deceptions about who his wife is and his co-operation with her to father Ismael.

2. Why does God share His Plan and Feelings with His friend?

Note: relationships based on convenience (close proximity, shared interests or same social circle) may even serve a purpose but not necessarily be true friendships.

True friendships demonstrate, amongst other things, being vulnerable and honest about your feelings. We are selective about **who** we share our innermost thoughts and feelings and **when** for timing is important for trust to be built on a solid foundation first.

- In Genesis 18:16 before judging Sodom and Gomorrah, God asks Himself ...*Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?*... God decides to share His plans with him. Friends share what is in their hearts.
- Genesis 22 reveals God's true heart even more clearly – His friendship with the one He trusts. Over the years through uncertainty and waiting Abraham has walked consistently with the Lord whom he has grown to trust and faith. He is not just another God's follower – he has become God's friend. Over the decades of waiting on God, God had been walking, speaking and sharing His heart with Abraham.

Now in Genesis 22, God shares His heartbeat with Abraham, His friend, for He reveals His deepest burdens only to those closest to Him. Here God invites Abraham to walk with Him into something deeply personal. Through Abraham and Isaac, God the Father reveals the most poignant declaration of His heart as God struggles with the decision to give His only Son for our sin — the cost of our redemption.

a). To reveal the Father's heart in the sufferings of His Son.

God gives a command to Abraham ...*Take your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.*

Abraham responded immediately. Early in the morning, he departed and ...*took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son...Genesis 22:6*

- This is not merely about God testing Abraham; it is about God trusting His friend. Not punishment, but friendship. Not about God demanding pain, but about God quietly sharing His own pain. Deepest grief cannot be explained with words. They can only be understood through experience. Only a close intimate friend is invited into that place. This is the relationship that God desires.
- The Lord Jesus said of Abraham... *Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad... John 8:56.*
What *day*? As Abraham watched his son climbing the hillside with wood on his back, he also saw Jesus of Nazareth carrying the cross to give eternal life to all the families of the earth. Abraham experienced a prophetic vision of what would take place on Mt. Moriah 2,000 years later, when God gave His beloved Son.
- *Moriah* (in Hebrew, to see, have vision, be shown)
...*go to Moriah* (to see, be shown) *Genesis 22:1.*
...*God will provide the lamb* (God will see to that) *Genesis 22:8.*
...*In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided* (it shall be shown) *Genesis 22:14.*

God called Abraham to sacrifice Isaac so that His ultimate sacrifice of His only Son on Calvary would *be shown* to Abraham and to us.

b). To partner with God as a covenant friend

God invites His friend to partner with Him so that faith becomes active, obedience becomes relational, and covenant friendship is lived out in trust, hope, and surrender. Such a partnership transforms the heart and enables us to participate in God's purposes.

i) Faith responds - Abraham exercises faith in relating with God

Jesus said...you are My friends if you do whatever I command you...I do not call you servants...but I have called you friends ...I have made known to you.

John 15:13-15.

Jesus links friendship with obedience and knowledge: God shares truth and plans so that His friends can respond actively in faith, not merely receiving passively. By sharing, God deepens Abraham relationship of trust, not calling him to blind obedience. The "why" is relational and covenantal: God shares to strengthen Abraham's faith within their covenant friendship.

- Jesus also shared His "Moriah" with His disciples (in Mark's Gospel) seeking to draw them into a close relationship with God through His own vulnerability and sufferings.
- True friends are rare in our fallen world, yet God finds such a friend in Abraham. He knows Abraham deeply (*yada*) as a friend. He invites Abraham into grief, into trust, into the cost of obedience — not as a slave, but as a friend.

Genesis 22 corrects every wrong picture we have of God.

- God is not cruel— He stopped the knife.
- Not heartless — He provided the ram.
- Not a joy-killer – He returned Isaac alive and restored Abraham’s joy.
- Not like pagan gods demanding child sacrifice — He spared Abraham’s son.
- Does not ignore our feelings — He felt the pain with Abraham.

Instead, He is a Father who knows the cost of love, who feels and gives. 2000 years later, God did what Abraham never had to do — He did not spare His only Son. He gave Him up for us all despite unimaginable pain, so that we would never be separated from Him. That is the greatest love. But it came with the greatest cost and the deepest pain.

He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all — how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things? Romans 8:32.

ii) Obedience surrenders – Abraham obeys and surrenders in hope trusting God

On the third day Abraham ...saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, Stay here... I and the boy will go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you... Genesis 22:3-5.

Upon reaching Mt. Moriah, Abraham builds an altar – of worship, surrender and encounter with the living God. An altar built out of obedience and trust in the One whom He knows ...*God will provide a lamb Genesis 22:8* and by whom He is known. On this altar, Abraham willingly surrenders all that he has, in anticipation of the full surrender of Jesus, who would surrender and trust completely in His Father.

3. Application

- When we cannot understand *why?* ...trust the heart of the Father. Genesis 22 is often concluded as God testing Abraham. But today, we see that the pain of sacrifice originates not from God demanding obedience, but from the heart of the Father Himself. Sin has distorted the way we view God’s relationship with humanity — we assume He is always testing us, always pushing us to fail, breeding fear and mistrust.

In truth, Genesis 22 reveals something radically different. It is not mainly about testing; it is about God trusting His friend. God’s command ...*Take your son, your only son, whom you love...* is not only about Abraham or Isaac. God is revealing His own heart of grief, the heartbreak, the cost of giving His Son. The cost Abraham faced was only a shadow of the great cost God Himself would one day bear for the world. This is an invitation to friendship, not mere obedience.
- If God did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all *Romans 8:32*, how can you trust Him to provide for everything you fear losing?