

Speaking to the soul



Sacrifices

**It was by faith that Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice when God was testing him. Abraham, who had received God's promises, was ready to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, even though God had told him, "Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted."
Hebrews 11:17-18**

This is a really tough passage. The idea of God apparently asking a parent to kill their child is hard enough. But it is infinitely more difficult when you consider that, on this occasion, God was asking Abraham to murder the son who was going to be the start of the great and mighty nation he had promised. It's all very perplexing. But we are invited to focus our attention on Abraham, the man of faith, because he was willing to do whatever God called him to do, knowing that it would all work out wonderfully. The writer observes that Abraham had worked out that if Isaac had actually been killed then God would have been able to raise him from the dead so that his plans could be fulfilled (v19). He was absolutely convinced that God could be trusted, so was happy to make any sacrifice.

Sacrifice lies at the heart of every loving relationship. When you truly love another person, you will gladly go to great lengths to please them – even if it is costly and difficult. And so we shouldn't be surprised that God looks to us to make sacrifices. He may call us to give up money, status, power and possessions in order to bless others. On the face of it, this might seem incredibly demanding and unattractive but, when it is seen as part of a loving relationship with a God who loves us so much that he made the ultimate sacrifice of his Son, it all makes sense.

None of this is to say that sacrifices are pain-free and easy. The pain in Abraham's heart when he prepared to offer Isaac must have been overwhelming. But as men and women of faith we can share his confidence in God, and know that any sacrifice we make is only a pale reflection of the sacrifice that he made for us when he sent Jesus into the world.

QUESTION

What sacrifices have you made for God, and what sacrifices would you be willing to make in the future?

PRAYER

Lord God, thank you for the ultimate sacrifice that you made in sending Jesus into the world. Amen

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