

The Test of Faith

By Faith: Pt. 8

We've been looking at Hebrews chapter 11 all this summer because we're asking ourselves...How can you live a life of power? How can you live a life so that no matter what comes at you, you face it with poise, you face it with strength? And we've said each week - in this introduction - that Hebrews 11 gives us a series of case studies of men and women who not only were enabled to *face* life, but they were enabled to actually face *down* life; not only to *survive*, but to *thrive*.

Now we're looking this week at one particular case study for the third time. That is the case of Abraham. And today is the last time we'll talk about Abraham because this morning we come, perhaps, to *the* thing that all we've been reading actually points to. We come to an incident in Abraham's life which is called a test. In **Genesis 22:1** it says, "*Some time later God tested Abraham...*". The Book of Genesis gives us the full account of Abraham's life - and I've encouraged you to read those chapters. But today's summary text from Hebrews starts with that same "test" language. So let's just right in and read our text for the morning.

The teaching this morning is based on **Hebrews 11:17-19**, "*By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, 18 even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." 19 Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.*"

Difficult text to be sure, but in it, we find the secret of a great life. Here it is: The secret of a great life is to understand you become great **only through tests**. And what we have to understand - how we're going to structure our time this morning - is that there *are* tests, *how* these tests work, *why* we need these tests, and *how we pass* these tests. So four points this week; knowing God's tests, understanding God's tests, needing God's tests, and passing God's tests. And if you understand those four things, you're equipped. Let's take a look.

The first point is, There are tests. You have to know they exist. So to start right off, you see both here and in Genesis 22, we're told God "tests". What's that mean? What is a test? Let's be real brief, but let's give a working definition. A test is something that *shows* you and *grows* you. A test is something that shows you where you are at in a particular area and *then* challenges you to grow and supersede it.

So think about a physics test, to be concrete. The physics test is coming up. Well first of all, it makes you say, “Do I understand the concept well enough? Do I understand the concept that is going to be tested?” So the first thing a physics test makes you do is look at and examine yourself. “Do I know this?” Then secondly, it makes you say, “How can I grow and advance in this area of knowledge so I can pass the test?” Tests both show you and grow you.

Now just a little sideline. We all know there are really two ways to administer tests. There are teachers - I’ve had them - who use tests only for the first purpose. They use tests simply to show you what’s wrong with you and leave you in despair. They use tests to get rid of people. This is freshman year at UT! They use tests to pare down the program. They use tests to get people out of the class.

However, a teacher can be just as hard a test giver, but introduce the test, and announce the test, and prepare students for the test in such a way that the test doesn’t just *show* them where they are, but *grows* them. By the way, if you want to understand the Bible, you have to understand that the Devil tests the first way and God tests in the second way.

It’s very interesting to read the book of Job, because there you have one guy going through the same set of tests with the Devil on the one side, only hoping the

tests will show him he’s not a servant so he’ll despair and God purposing that those very same tests *will* show Job that he’s not a servant, but that through that he’ll *become* a servant. Same tests, one teacher wanted to bring Job down and the other wanted to build Job up. Tests show you and grow you.

But regardless of how they’re administered, tests are horrible things. Let’s be real. Tests fill you with impending doom, a sense of disaster coming. They hang over your head like a Sword of Damocles. Be honest, some of us have been out of school for decades, but when you have the “back in school” anxiety dreams, isn’t there always an upcoming test involved? Tests are very unpleasant. Therefore, they’re effective. They make you look at yourself in a way you wouldn’t otherwise and they make you muster up what you can, and grow in a way you wouldn’t otherwise.

And that’s the reason **Hebrews 12:11**, says, “*No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*” Anyone who’s been mentored, anyone who’s been taught, anyone who’s been coached *well* has been repeatedly tested, formally or informally. And as a result, you’ve grown. So that’s the first thing we see, *that* God tests. You have to know that He tests.

But now secondly, let's talk about How these tests work. What is the nature of those tests? How do they actually operate? And you see that in **verse 18** when it says, "... *even though God had said...*" Now this is the essence of the way God tests. This is an archetype of *all* the tests God gives you in order to make you into something great. And that is, God's **command** seems to **contradict** God's **promise**. You see, what's on the other side of the "even though"?

God said in command, "Offer up your son as a burnt offering," *even though* He had said by way of promise, "Abraham, I'm going to bless you and the world through Isaac. I'm going to bring out of Isaac a great nation and a particular descendent through whom all the world will be blessed." So you have a command to obey that seems to contradict the promise. In other words, a test happens when to obey God looks to you to be **foolish** or even **wrong**.

You see, the promises of God are tremendous! The Bible is full of them. Let me give you three He says to all of us who believe. He says, "Not a hair of your head will be hurt." He says, "I will give you more than you can even dare ask or think." Thirdly He says, "I will meet all of your needs according to My riches and glory." Those are pretty good promises!

What is a test? A test is when to obey one of God's commands appears to pull you right out of the path of blessing. Here's God promising, "I will bless you. I love you. I want to shower you with blessings." And yet He says to do this, and to obey looks like it will lead to a disaster. It seems to contradict.

So let me give you some examples. What if you have a teenage son who's dying of cancer? You are not ultimately in a different place than Abraham was because you are called by the commands of the Word of God to continue to serve and obey God as a powerful and wise and loving God in spite of the fact that the light of your eyes is fading in the flower of his youth. That's a test. It seems to obey, to trust God in a situation like that, is leading you completely out of the path of blessing. His commands seem to contradict His promise. Any place your feelings strongly react against a command, and *your* wisdom looks greater than *God's* wisdom...that's a test.

For example, if you know that to tell the truth is going to lead to the loss of a lot of money, or even your job. Here's the command, but it's taking you *out* of the path of blessing. Let me give you one that is very, very common in Austin – although I think it's pretty much everywhere in the modern culture. People say, "I know the Bible says I shouldn't have sex outside of marriage, but I'm going to lose this relationship. And it feels so right. It feels so natural."

Don't you see the archetype is this? You haven't been tested...the test isn't even happening until you get into a situation in which your wisdom seems to contradict God's wisdom; until you get into a situation in which it looks like the path of blessing is over there, but God says, "Go this way."

Or let me put it to you in the starkest way possible. And it's very, very, very, very much what Abraham felt. You have not been tested until you see that to obey God looks like it will lead to a kind of **death** and it will require some **resurrection**. See Abraham was walking along and he was saying, "If I obey you, this will mean *death*. And how in the world can death bring blessing? But I know that it must be if I obey you and it leads to death, *somehow* you'll bring around a resurrection. Somehow." Now listen, whenever *you* get into one of these situations where you're being tested, that's what's happening.

You're saying, "Here's what the Bible says. God says to do this. It looks to me like that will lead to a death! *But...* I guess I will obey, and it will lead me to some kind of resurrection, some kind of intervention, something that I can't even foresee right now." That's what Abraham did. And whenever you find the command of God seems to contradict what *you* feel will bless you, you're in the arena. You're under the coach. You're under the teacher. The *test* has arrived. How are you going to do? What are you going to do?

That's how tests work. God says to do this *even though* He also promises to bless you, and it looks like His commands contradict His promises. Or actually, maybe some of you aren't even in a situation like that because you won't even *allow* it to happen. The minute you see a command of God which seems to contradict something you deep down feel would bless you, you don't even struggle. You don't even prepare for the test. You don't even let it make you look at yourself.

You say, "God wouldn't want me to do that. He wouldn't be a loving God." If *that's* how you define God - as a God of only love - you have a God who can never tell you to do something utterly against your deepest feelings. You don't *have* a God. You're your *own* god. Don't you see? You can say, "I believe in God," but if you don't have a God that can cross your will, you don't have a God. You have a figment of your imagination. You have a projection of *yourself*. You're godless.

Don't look for purpose. Don't look for meaning. If you don't want to let God cross your will, okay. But then don't turn around and say, "I have a God who will *care* for me, a God who will give me *purpose*, a God who will give me *meaning*." You don't *have* a God. You have something you've drawn up. You've taped God on your glasses, and then you look around and see Him everywhere. He's a projection of your *own* heart and everything that's in it.

Deanna and I were walking around in Target the other day and we saw an elementary age girl wearing a t-shirt that said, “Follow Your Heart”. And I told Deanna I wanted to go over and say, “Oh little girl, don’t do *that*! Following your heart is how you end up pregnant at 16 and don’t finish high school!” Don’t worry, I *didn’t*. I understand boundaries. But that’s the nature of the tests – will I follow God or will I follow my heart – which means to act like I *am* God?

You say, “Oh, so that’s what a test is. That’s pretty severe. Why would God do that?” And that’s the third point, **Why do we need tests?** Why would God send such severe tests to cross our wills, to say, ‘My wisdom against your wisdom?’” And the answer is, again, in the very request God makes to Abraham. He says back in **Genesis 22:2** “~~Then God said,~~ “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.”” Now it’s important to see what kind of sacrifice God has asked for.

See, in the Old Testament, there were a lot of different kinds of sacrifices. If you had a thank offering, you would bring the offering - whether it was an animal or produce from your field - and you’d offer up *part* of it. You’d burn it as a way of saying this is God’s.

But on the other hand, you would eat part of it, too. But the whole burnt offering was different. A whole burnt offering was to be burnt *entirely*. Why? Because a whole burnt offering represented the giving of *yourself* - all you have, and all you are - to God without reserve or remainder.

Now you say, “Why did God ask for that from Abraham? Why did Abraham need to give this *particular* son as a whole burnt offering?” When God originally came to Abraham as we just read, he didn’t just say “take your son”, did he? Didn’t just say “Isaac”. Do you remember? “*Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac...*”. That’s who you are to take up the mountain and offer as a burnt sacrifice.

Now, the fact of the matter is actually Isaac *wasn’t* Abraham’s only son. Abraham also had a son through his servant, Hagar, named Ishmael. The point of the matter, however, is as far as Abraham was concerned, Isaac was his *only*. Isaac was the little “only” of his life. The old Canadian pastor, A.W. Tozer, put it this way in his famous work, *The Pursuit of God*: “From the moment he first stooped to take the tiny form awkwardly in his arms, [Abraham] was an eager love slave of his son...As he watched him grow from babyhood to young manhood, the heart of the old man was knit closer and closer with the life of his son, till at last a relationship bordered upon the perilous. It was then that God stepped in to save both father and son from the consequences of an uncleansed love.” (24)

And what's so ironic about it is Abraham became the love slave of his son for all good reasons. There was nothing *bad* about Isaac. Isaac was a wonderful blessing. Abraham had waited and waited and waited for years, because God had said, "I will give you a son through your wife Sarah who will be your heir." He waited for years. And so when the day finally came, Isaac was special because he represented the faithfulness of God. See for all the good reasons, Abraham became a love slave of Isaac. And therein is a lesson for us.

Sin is a Judo master. What does a Judo master do? A Judo master says, "The bigger they come, it doesn't bother me. I don't care that my assailant is 400 pounds and I am 110. It doesn't bother me." Judo uses its enemy's forward motion and weight against them. What sin does is takes the best motives and the best things in your life, and turns it up too high. Now, this is the advanced calculus of the Christian life. You don't get this until you've been at it a while. This will surprise some of you, but I promise it's true: The real enemy of God in your life is not your sins; it's your good things. It's these wonderful things that become your little "only's".

Do you know what that means? "Take thine *only* and offer it up." What's your "only"? When sin takes a good thing and turns it into your "only", your bottom line. "If *only* I was married, everything would be great." You don't say that out loud, but at a deep level you believe it. And what happens to you if you do?

"If *only* my career would just get to this place. If *only* my achievements got to this place. If *only* I had a certain kind of beauty. If *only*...If *only*...Then my life would be fine."

Those good things have become Isaacs. And they're sapping your energy and your strength because when those things become your "only's" and they get in your life, your life is full of "drivenness." An Isaac fills your life with "drivenness" to achieve it. An Isaac fills your life with despair and anger and bitterness when it is taken from you. Isaacs fill your life with tremendous anxiety when they're threatened. You see, concern becomes "drivenness" only if something has become an Isaac. Anger becomes bitterness, worry becomes despair, only if these things have become Isaacs.

In **Jeremiah 17:7-8**, it says, "*But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green.*" Do you know what it's saying? It says if you are despondent, if you are in despair, if you are bitter, it's because something besides God has become your trust. God looked at something in Abraham's life that had become his little "only". It had become the ultimate. It had become the bottom line. And as a result, Abraham was a slave. And God had to do something about that.

You see, if you want to master life, your “only” has to not be subject to the circumstances of life – we talked about that last week. Don’t you see that? It has to be God! Because the only way you can overcome that kind of tremendous worry, up and down, tremendous despair, is if those things which are in your center get de-centered. And that’s what tests do.

They’re *God* coming and saying, “These things are sapping you of your strength and sapping you of your peace and sapping you of your greatness. We have to move it off the center. We have to get it to the periphery. We have to demote it.” Don’t you see? We *need* tests, because what God’s saying is, “Abraham, I want your heart as a whole burnt offering. And you won’t be free until it’s up there on the altar. *All* you have and *all* you are, without reserve and without remainder.” Alright, there’s the fact of the test, there’s how the test works, that’s why we need them.

But fourth and last, How we pass these tests?

Abraham passed the tests in two ways. Let me mention them, and then let me go back over them. One of the ways in which he did it was *he reasoned*. That’s the one we’re told here in the Hebrews 11 account. But the second thing he did was *he looked to the Lamb*. He reasoned and he looked to the lamb. Let’s look at the both of them.

First of all, he reasoned. Notice what it says there in that last verse. It’s just amazing. Abraham was told by God, “Offer your son up as a burnt offering.” It says Abraham went. Why did he go? **(V.19)** “*Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did...*” What does that mean? This is wonderful. First of all, it shows Christian obedience is never thoughtless. It always comes through reasoning. It’s always filled with thinking. It’s never a *blind* leap, though it’s constantly a leap. It’s a leap based on your thinking.

What did Abraham do? Some people say Abraham *knew* God would raise Isaac from the dead. That’s *not* what it says. That would have been presumption, not faith. You don’t see Abraham whistling a happy tune going up and saying, “This is going to be great! I wonder how God’ll do it.” There’s nothing like that because it does not say, “Abraham reasoned that God *would* raise Isaac from the dead.” It says, “Abraham reasoned that God *could*...” Abraham looked at the capability of God and he began to think about the big picture.

So the first principle is this. Something that looks, in the narrow, crazy to obey God, but if you stand back and look at the whole picture, if you look at who God is and who you are and what He’s done in the past for you, obedience is always utterly reasonable. In other words, there’s nothing more reasonable than to obey God when it looks crazy. Did you hear that? If you stand back and look at the whole..it only ever looks crazy if you’re too narrowly focused. This is why Abraham could reason.

This is the final test. This is not his first test. Abraham was continually tested. He was told, “Get out, but I won’t tell you where.” He was told, “Settle down, but I won’t tell you when.” He was told, “I’ll give you a son, but I won’t tell you how.” And if you read the story of Abraham, you will see again and again Abraham *failed* the tests because he didn’t trust God. He saw the command of God going this way and the apparent blessing going that way, and he took the apparent road.

Do you know there’s a place where he lied twice about Sarah being his sister, not his wife, because he didn’t trust God to protect him? That’s another story. Wouldn’t that be interesting to go into? The fact is he did not at the time trust God’s promise that he would give him Isaac. He slept with his slave woman, Hagar – that’s problematic for a *number* of reasons! - and had a son by her, and as a result all kinds of tremendous problems came about in the family. Polygamy, of course, is a terrible thing and it always oppresses everybody. All kinds of problems went that way.

So here’s Abraham now and he’s reasoning. He’s saying, “Lord God, every time I have tried to pit my wisdom against you, I’ve lost. Every time I’ve thought I was wiser than you, I’ve screwed my life up. Every time I tried to save my life, I lost it. But every time I consented to lose my life through obedience to you, I’ve saved it. I’ve found new joy. I will *not* be fooled again! You’re capable of raising him from the dead. Maybe it will be a literal resurrection. Maybe not. I don’t know what it is,

but I know *this*; This obedience, though it looks like death, will lead to a resurrection I cannot foresee.”

Friends, if right now you know that to tell the truth looks like death to your business, death to a lot of money...*obey*. Stand back and look at the whole. This is the all-powerful One. This is the One who created the cosmos. This is the One who knows far more than you do. How *reasonable* is it for you to pit your wisdom against God’s? That’s what Abraham was saying. It looked like a death, but there’ll be a resurrection. There’ll be some way in which God will bring glory and redemption out of it.

Some of you know the Bible says don’t marry outside of your faith. You say, “If I obey that, that’ll be a death.” Abraham says, “Look at who this is! He’ll bring a resurrection of glory and redemption out if it that you cannot now foresee.” In *all* tests, obedience looks like a death. Abraham stands back and he looks at everything he’s done. He looks at everything God has been to him. He says, “This looks crazy in the small, but in the large, it looks absolutely reasonable. How unreasonable would it be to go against God?” He thinks about his *past*. Maybe he’s the one who wrote the little hymn:

His love in time past
forbids me to think
he’ll leave me at last
in trouble to sink

Actually that was John Newton, same guy who wrote *Amazing Grace*.

But you see, Abraham felt to obey about Isaac would be a death. Moses thought to obey and go to Pharaoh would be a death. Jesus thought to obey and go to the cross would be a death. In the first case, it was a near-death. In the second case, it was no death. In the third case, it was a *real* death. But in *every* case, God brought redemption and glory out of it. And everybody who was inside experiencing that test and outside witnessing that test will praise God for the rest of eternity that those people obeyed. It's unreasonable to disobey God. It's reasonable to obey...even when it looks crazy.

The second and last thing, the way to pass the test: Abraham looked to the lamb. Now look, you're not going to understand how he did that unless you understand a problem people have had with this story over the years. A lot of people have said, "What bothers me most about this example is God's command to Abraham in this case doesn't just contradict His promises, it contradicts His other moral commands. God is asking Abraham to do an immoral act. God is asking Abraham to *murder*. That's just ridiculous!"

But you don't understand. God doesn't say, "Please go tonight into Isaac's tent and slit his throat. Stab him in the heart." That's not what he's saying. He says, "Make him a burnt offering." And the reason Abraham is *not* complaining that this is unjust is for this reason.

We know in the Old Testament God came to His people - you can read about it at the end of Exodus 22, you can read about it at the end of Numbers 3 - and in those passages, God came and said, "The firstborn sons are mine. Their life is forfeit to me, *but* you can ransom their lives. If you pay five shekels to me, I'll save them from death."

Now why did God do such a thing? Why *that* symbolism? Here's the reason why. In the near-Eastern cultures, not just the Jewish culture, but *all* the near-Eastern cultures, the firstborn son got *every bit* of the wealth. It was passed to him - the law of primogeniture. And because of that, the firstborn son represented everything the family was. The firstborn son was the representative of the family and of their hopes. And what God was saying is, "Your firstborn son, as a representative of the family, his life is forfeit. Why? Because you're sinners."

See the symbolism taught is that because all of you are sinners, your representative should be slain. "*But*," he says, "I will take payment. I won't judge your firstborn sons for your sins. Five shekels, please." Over the years, the Israelites would pay this, and they only vaguely understood what the imagery was. They understood the imagery meant they were all sinners and their lives were forfeit to God. They understood that.

But they must have been thinking over the years, “What does the *payment* point to? How is it God would let us off the hook year after year with only *symbolic* sacrifices and payments? What does this payment *mean*? And so you see, when God comes to Abraham and says what He says, Abraham doesn’t say, “This is immoral.” Abraham realizes God is saying, “You must pass judgment. I *will not* take payment for him. You must take his life for real.” And so Abraham’s struggle was not that this was immoral.

Abraham’s struggle was, “I know you’re just. I know you have the right. I’m a sinner. He’s a sinner. You have a right to his life. But you *promised* you would let him live. You promised that great things would come out of him. Oh Lord God, how can you be both just and justifier of Isaac? How can you both be just - and you have right to be just - *and* this merciful God that you’ve promised to be? I don’t see. Why can’t Isaac be paid for? Why can’t Isaac be redeemed? I’ve got five shekels, I’ve got animals. Why do I have to actually carry out the sentence?”

You see the old man under the stars wrestling, not knowing why. But he got up and he went. And we’re told when he got to the foot of the mountain, he told the servants to stay behind. He said, “We’re going up alone.”

He put the wood on which Isaac would be sacrificed on his back, and they walked up the hill. And suddenly Isaac spoke up and said, “Wait a minute. There’s something wrong here. Here’s the wood for the fire. There’s the knife. Where’s the lamb?” And at *that* moment, Abraham said, “At the top of the mountain, God will show us a lamb.”

I know the translation we read says “God will *provide* a lamb” but it’s literally the Hebrew word for “see”, which means “God will show us”. God will show us the lamb. Because at that moment, Abraham said, “Some kind of payment must be possible. God will do it. God will finally show us a way in which He can be both just and the justifier of us.”

He got up, and he laid the sticks out. He put Isaac on the pyre, and he raised the dagger. And then God said, “Stay thy hand!” **Genesis 22:12**, “*Do not lay a hand on the boy,*” he said. “*Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.*” He’s no longer your little “only”. He’s out of the center. He can’t kill you the way he was. You’re not a love *slave* to him anymore so you can *truly* love him now. Look, here is an offering, a ram in the thicket.

Now Abraham was able to meet the need and pass the test because he *vaguely* looked to the Lamb of God. But we actually see it. Abraham said, "I can obey because God *will* show me the lamb." But we're in a position of even greater advantage. We should be *far* more true to our principles, far more courageous, far more unflappable because God *has already* shown us the Lamb. Do you know where this was? We read Mount Moriah. Do you know what Mount Moriah was? It was the place where the Jerusalem temple was eventually built. It was right next to Calvary.

Here's what *we* see. Like Abraham, we see God, centuries later, walking up into those same mountains with His Son. Like Abraham, we see God putting the wood for his Son's sacrifice on his back. Like Isaac, Jesus cried out to his Father. Isaac said, "Where's the lamb?" Abraham said, "I don't know," and kept going. But in the end, all Abraham offered was his heart. But when Jesus cried out and said, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken *me*?" God kept going. There was nobody there to say to *him*, "Stay thy hand." And because God *did* offer up His firstborn as a sacrifice for sin...Abraham didn't have to offer his. And I don't have to offer mine. And you don't have to offer yours. None of us has to go up there.

What does this all mean? If Abraham could have seen what God did on Mount Calvary - and maybe he did - do you know what he would have said? Do you remember how God said to Abraham, "Now I know..."? Abraham would have said to God what all of us should be saying. If you want to have lives of greatness, you will say it. "*Now I know* how you can be both the God of command and the God of promise. *Now I know* how you can be both a God of justice and the justifier of those who believe. *Now I know* that you love me because you did not withhold your only Son, whom you love."

That is how you get to be a great person. What are you facing right now? Can't you see it in terms of this? You feel like, "Oh my gosh. There's an assault on my life." Yeah, what you're facing right now seems to be an assault on your life because your whole life is wrapped up in these things God is trying to de-center. That's why it looks like an assault on your life. It's not. You need to say, "Now I know that you love me. Therefore, what do I stand to lose by being faithful to you? It's nothing compared to what *you* lost by being faithful to me! Your love overwhelms me. This is good news, great news."

What are you facing right now? Don't you see that no matter what it is - no matter what anger you're struggling with, what despondency you're struggling with, what anxiety you're struggling with - it's because something needs to be de-centered. How can it be de-centered? How can you obey God and trust God and move that thing off the center? Only by looking at Him and saying, as you see Him go up the mountain, "*Now...I...know* that You love me. And if You were willing to give this up for me, I'll give up what I have to give up for You. It's nothing compared to what You've done for me."

Do you know what they named the mountain? Here's the old KJV, (**Genesis 22:14**) "*And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.*" On the mountain of provision, it *will* be seen. Don't say before you go up, "I want the script. I want the full blueprints. I want to know *exactly* what's going to happen up there. If I'm going to face death, I want to know *how* the resurrection is going to come." You can't because this is what Abraham said, "In the mountain of the Lord, it will be revealed. In the *mountain* of the Lord, it will be provided."

You have to go *through* the mountain of obedience to get clarity. It's only *as* you obey, not *before* you obey, that the wisdom comes. It's only *as* you obey, not before you obey, that the resurrection happens. Don't demand something that would destroy the test. And yes, it is a test – and there will be plenty to come. But now we know why the tests must come. And now we know how to pass them.

Let's pray...