

If you are gathering as a Lifegroup on Good Friday and looking for ideas of what to do together, here are some suggestions. Feel free to use, or not!

Song suggestions: *In Christ alone. How deep the Father's love for us, Here is love, There is a redeemer.*

Reading: Read Luke 22-23 together. Get older children to help with this if they are able / willing.

Reflection and prayer: What stood out to you this time round as you read the story together? Share with the group what struck you. Pray over what has been shared as one big group or in pairs.

Communion: Share bread and wine/juice together as you remember Jesus' death together.

Life Group Notes

Sunday 25 March 2018

Speaker: Scott Taylor

Sermon Series: Confident Adventures

Title: Being Confident in the God of Our Adventures

Passage: Genesis 22:1-19

To conclude our sermon series in the life of Abraham we looked at what may well be the pinnacle of his journey of faith. We looked at the moment when God tests his faith to the edge of what we might think is reasonable! We looked at what we can learn from the life of Abraham on our confident adventures and we also then looked at the bigger picture on view.

So firstly, from the life of Abraham, we saw that tests will come. – This is such a bizarre request from God especially when we consider it is him that is against murder and it is him that has said Isaac is the promised seed. This is a test that God is always going to come through on because he cannot contradict himself. But it is a test. Now not all tests are sent from God, we only have to see the life of Joseph and Job to see that, but some tests are sent by God. Seeing as we have no way of knowing exactly which is which we learn to embrace them and walk as Abraham walked at this point.

How – by Being Confident in the God of our adventures - he says to the servants 'we will come right back': he says to his son, 'God will provide a sheep for the offering'. He holds onto his history in God and the promise of God. He is confident that even if he has to go through with this, that God would raise Isaac from the dead (Hebrews 11v17). His confidence is well placed as a ram is in the thicket, provided by God, a suitable and pleasing substitute offering. God then reiterates his promise, and this is the last we see God speak to Abraham. We get to be confident in God because we have a history with him and we have promises. Promises being the words of God taken directly from the bible, things like I will never leave you nor forsake you, promises like I will come back and get you (John 14). Prophecies are not promises but signposts for our journey. As much as we need to pray into them we are not to confuse them with a promise.

So we have much to learn from Abraham, but there is a bigger picture here at play. In this story we have an analogy of a father who takes his son on a three-day journey up a mountain. In his heart the father is prepared to sacrifice the boy, the boy has had to die in the father's heart because that is the word from God! The boy carries the wood of his execution fire on his shoulders. He is bound and placed on the wood. The death strike is about to be blown. This mirrors God the Father and God the Son. The father's heart having to give up the son on their three-day journey to resurrection. Jesus carries his cross, he's nailed to the cross. The difference being there is no lamb to save Jesus – why, because Jesus isn't a picture of Isaac, he is represented by the ram! So Jesus is killed!

Throughout Israel's history, the lamb became the picture of God's salvation, his redemption – through a lamb's blood on a door post at the Passover, to the temple times when a sheep was slain each day – to the promise of the messiah who would be lead like a lamb to the slaughter. Then on the banks of the river Jordan, John the Baptist declares, behold the lamb of God who will take away the sin of the world! Jesus lead away and becoming a sacrifice for us – the ram in the thicket, offered up by God to God as our substitutionary offering, so we can be free to go back to the camp.

Suggested questions:

- 1) What from Sunday stirred your faith afresh?
- 2) Make a list of promises as a group to be circulated as an encouragement.
- 3) Share stories of your histories with God and then pray to be confident in Him.
- 4) Why do you think we so quickly forget our history and the promises when troubles come?