

Offering Isaac

Scripture Reading — Genesis 22:1-19

Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." — Genesis 22:8

We've taken several camping trips over the years with our children. We gather our gear and anticipate the thrill of being in the woods together.

That's not how it feels with Abraham and Isaac's camping trip. Dread hangs over this dark story as soon as they set out. Somewhere along the way, Isaac points out the obvious: they've forgotten something essential, and it's not tent stakes. It's the lamb for the sacrifice. Abraham chokes out an assurance: "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son."

When the moment comes, and Abraham raises the knife over his only, beloved son, we feel his horror and grief. We wonder, as Abraham must, what kind of God would ask such a terrible price?

Even when God does provide a sacrificial ram at the last moment, our relief is tinged with horror. The child's escape from death was too close to forget, and rightly so. Many lambs are sacrificed throughout the Bible's story, but not a son. Not until Jesus, the one whose birth we celebrate. All of this points to Jesus' sacrifice for us. God himself provides, and it's his own Son who dies in our place, paying the price for our sin.

As you prepare your heart for Christmas, keep in mind the depth of God's love, how far he goes to restore us to himself. Thank him and live for him!

Prayer

What wondrous love is this, O God, that you would send your beloved, only Son to die for us? We are eternally grateful. In his name we pray. Amen.

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