

Theme: If Christ is not Risen

1 Cor. 15:14

**And if Christ be not risen, then
is our preaching vain, and your
faith is also vain.**

Theme: If Christ is not Risen

Judaism was the only ancient religion that believed in a resurrection event [reuniting of the body and spirit]. Many believed in a reincarnation event where the personhood of a spirit would be lost in the process of being born as a new person. Other religions believed in a spiritual existence or even a spiritual transcendence [unification with the spiritual force of the universe] following death.

For other religions the Jewish belief in resurrection of the physical body was somewhat creepy as they viewed it as the reanimation of a corpse rather than a transformation of the person's very being. The Christian view of salvation comes from the Jewish belief in resurrection. We believe that Jesus Christ was the first to experience this physical resurrection God promised to humanity. But unlike the Jewish faith we believe that the resurrection is accomplished in a through Jesus Christ.

Theme: If Christ is not Risen



The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is central to our Christian faith. Primarily it verifies his claim to divinity. But in addition, it provides...

- ...an anchor in the midst of doubts
- ...hope in the most hopeless of situations
- ...recognition of God's power within us
- ...a full understanding of the meaning of salvation
- ...an understanding of who Jesus really is
- ...the purpose of Christ's suffering
- ... the goal God has for all creation.

“Confidence in a Crisis of Faith”

Genesis 22:5-8 & Hebrews 11:17-19

What happens when we face a crisis in our faith? A moment when we are not sure we can trust that God is good, kind or purposeful. Abraham faced this moment. When he was Abram before Isaac’s birth his relationship with God had been trusting in a promise and seeing miraculous events confirming that trust.

The Binding of Isaac –
Sunday School Card



Feb. 26, 2023

Garrison Church of God

Genesis 22:5-8 [ESV]

5 Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you." 6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together.

7 And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

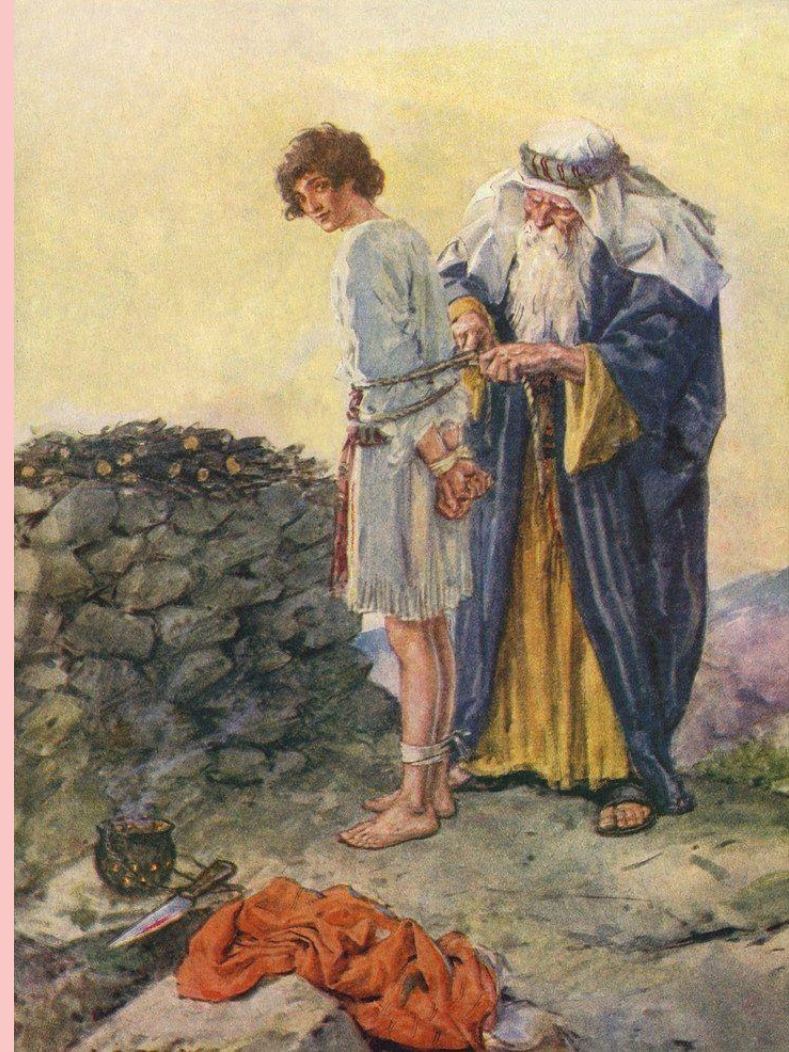
8 Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together.

“Confidence in a Crisis of Faith”

Genesis 22:5-8 & Hebrews 11:17-19

The challenge of our faith happens at inopportune times. It is a moment when we are challenged with our perception of God’s nature and purpose. Surprisingly this seldom comes when we are experiencing difficulty in life.

Often it comes when we are troubled by God’s decisions and actions in our circumstances or in other people’s circumstances.



The Binding of Isaac –
Sunday School Card

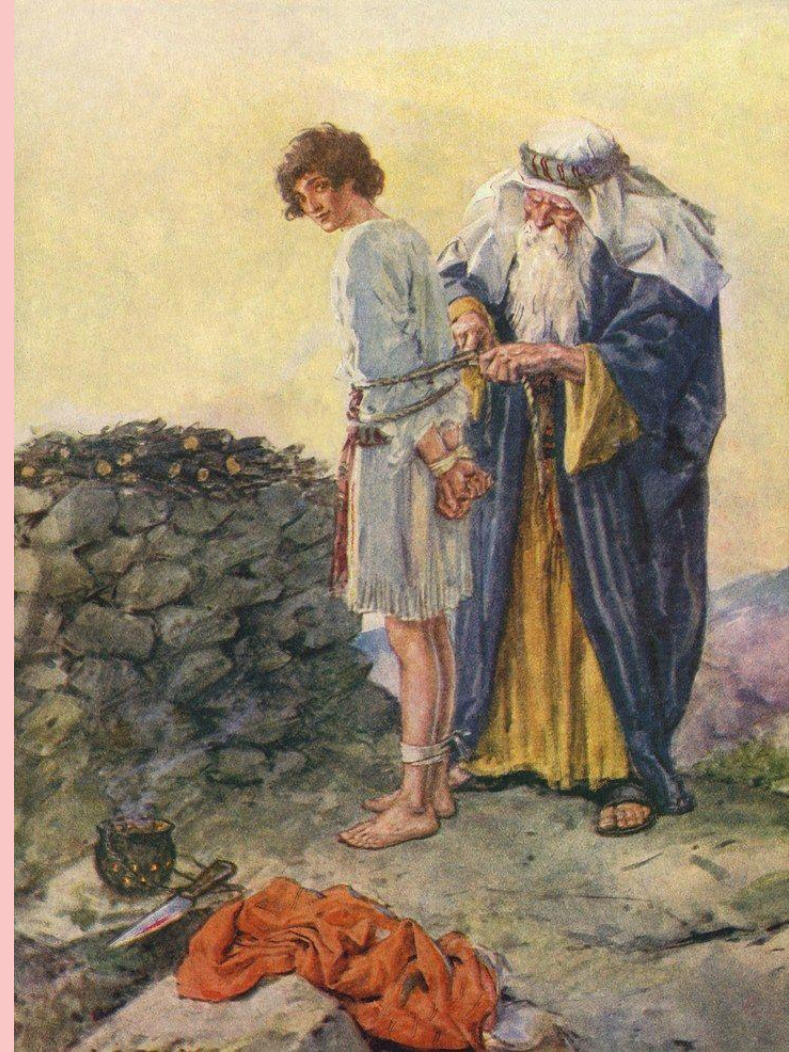
Feb. 26, 2023

“Confidence in a Crisis of Faith”

Genesis 22:5-8 & Hebrews 11:17-19

In Genesis 22 Abraham is asked to do something he believes is completely out of God’s character. Abraham knew that God condemned the Canaanites for their casual view human life and he knew that God had promised that Isaac would carry his lineage and heritage forward. Why would God ask that he sacrifice his son? Was God capricious in His nature?

In Hebrews we are given a clue.



The Binding of Isaac
Sunday School Card

Feb. 26, 2023

Garrison Church of God

Hebrews 11:17-19 [ESV]

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, 18 of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." 19 He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

“Confidence in a Crisis of Faith”

Genesis 22:5-8 & Hebrews 11:17-19

The writer of Hebrews views this experience as a test of Faith, but for what purpose? The aftermath indicated that God intended to keep His covenant with Abraham but there was no change to that covenant. However, in Genesis 26 when God renews the covenant with Isaac, He reminds Isaac of Abraham’s faithful obedience.



Sacrifice Of Isaac 1654-56 by David Teniers the Younger

“Confidence in a Crisis of Faith”

Genesis 22:5-8 & Hebrews 11:17-19

The writer of Hebrews picks up on a statement by Abraham in Genesis 22:5 to the two young servants accompanying them, “I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.” Based on this statement the writer of Hebrews sees Abraham’s confidence during this test of faith based in his belief in the resurrection.



Sacrifice Of Isaac 1654-56
by David Teniers the
Younger

1 Peter 1:3-9 [ESV]

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born **again** to a living hope **through the resurrection** of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 **to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you**, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, **if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials**, 7 **so that the tested genuineness of your faith — more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire —** may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 **obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.**

“Confidence in a Crisis of Faith”

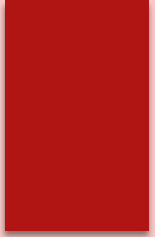
Genesis 22:5-8 & Hebrews 11:17-19

“The
Sacrifice of
Isaac” by
Caravaggio
[1603]



“Confidence in a Crisis of Faith”

Genesis 22:5-8 & Hebrews 11:17-19



It is difficult to understand the confusion that Abraham had at this moment. Caravaggio comes close to giving us a feeling of the confusion and terror of the moment. It is easy to miss the struggle of the moment. The angel is in light because he understands, Abraham and Isaac are in shadow for the reason they don't know.



“The Sacrifice of Isaac” by Caravaggio [1603]

Isaiah 48:10-13 [ESV]

10 Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction.

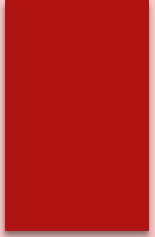
11 For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.

12 "Listen to me, O Jacob, and Israel, whom I called! I am he; I am the first, and I am the last.

13 My hand laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand forth together.

“Confidence in a Crisis of Faith”

Genesis 22:5-8 & Hebrews 11:17-19



Even in those difficult moments when Abraham was angry with God when he was forced to send Hagar and Ishmael away he still trusted that God was good, purposeful and kind. But this task was different.



“The Sacrifice of Isaac” by Caravaggio [1603]

“Confidence in a Crisis of Faith”

Genesis 22:5-8 & Hebrews 11:17-19



Peter tells us that it is our trust in the resurrection that allows our pure faith to emerge from the furnace. The writer of Hebrews [11:17-19] indicates that it was Abraham’s faith in the resurrection that allowed him to persevere in his faith in God despite the seemingly capricious test.



“The Sacrifice of Isaac” by Caravaggio [1603]

Proverbs 17: [ESV]

3 The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, and the LORD tests hearts.

“Confidence in a Crisis of Faith”

Genesis 22:5-8 & Hebrews 11:17-19

Was there purpose, kindness or even righteousness in God’s test? What could Abraham count on in this new relationship with God. As Christians we sometimes come to a crossroad in our faith where we struggle with the question of God’s nature.

Litharge
cake



Roman crucible –
A double layer of clay. The outside layer was designed to protect the crucible when heated.

“Confidence in a Crisis of Faith”

Genesis 22:5-8 & Hebrews 11:17-19

Litharge cake is created when silver is purified through a process called “cupellation”. The silver after smelting is combined with copper, lead, zinc, arsenic and nickel. This is heated in a crucible filled with burned bone or crushed shell. The unpurified metal was heated to molten state and a bellows was used to blow oxygen into the furnace or the crucible was removed from the furnace momentarily and air blown across the top causing the non-precious metals to oxidize and fall to the bottom where they were absorbed by the calcium carbonate in the crushed shell/limestone/bone. The silver was collected as “buttons” on top when cool.



Litharge cake



Roman crucible – A double layer of clay. The outside layer was designed to protect the crucible when heated.

“Confidence in a Crisis of Faith”

Genesis 22:5-8 & Hebrews 11:17-19

The writer of Solomon in Proverbs speaks about the refining of our character through these tests of faith. Solomon tells us about 2 processes that ancient peoples used to refine silver and gold. The other is described as an oven process. Both were a ‘refining’ moments. For Abraham it was a moment that would change him and deepen his relationship with God. None of us search for such crisis moments but if they come upon us how do we make it through them?



Litharge cake



Roman crucible – A double layer of clay. The outside layer was designed to protect the crucible when heated.

Feb. 26, 2023

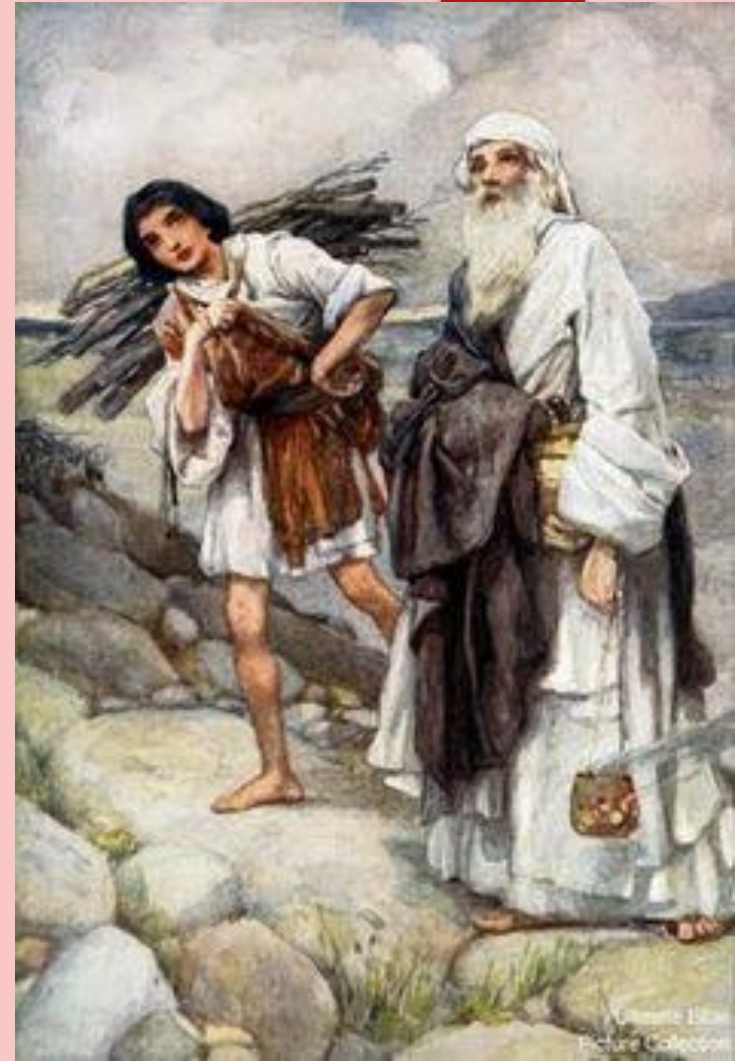
Zechariah 13:9 [ESV]

9 And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'They are my people'; and they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

“Confidence in a Crisis of Faith”

Genesis 22:5-8 & Hebrews 11:17-19

Zechariah tells us that at some future time God will take 1/3 of the people of Israel and refine them as silver first and then as gold. The cupellation method produced electrum [an alloy of silver and gold]. To produce pure gold, the electrum needed to be refined in a furnace or kiln. It is the deep struggles of faith that really test our belief in God’s purpose and character.

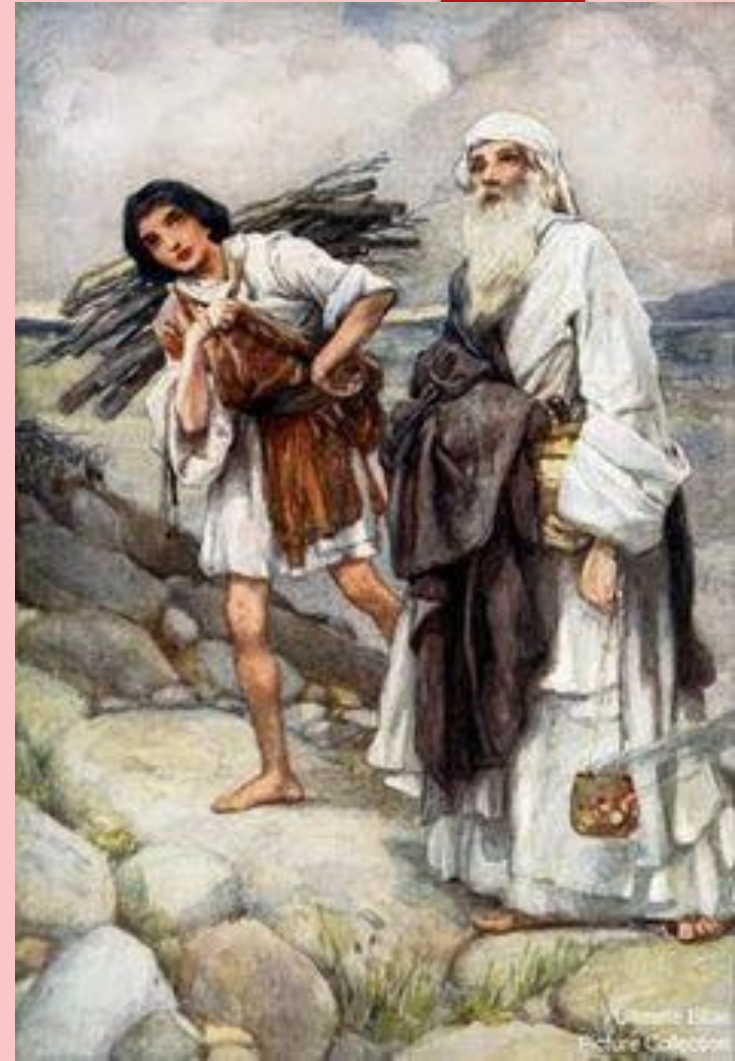


**Abraham and Isaac going up Mt.
Moriah – Sunday School Card**

“Confidence in a Crisis of Faith”

Genesis 22:5-8 & Hebrews 11:17-19

Peter in 1 Peter chapter one calls this struggle of faith a “refining” process. Gold was refined in ancient times by a process called “salt cementation”. The materials were pretty simple: electrum hammered into sheets; salt; crushed brick dust; urine. This was placed in a ceramic container with a lid and sealed with clay. The container was heated in a kiln [brick oven] for at least 24 hours to produce a purer form of gold.



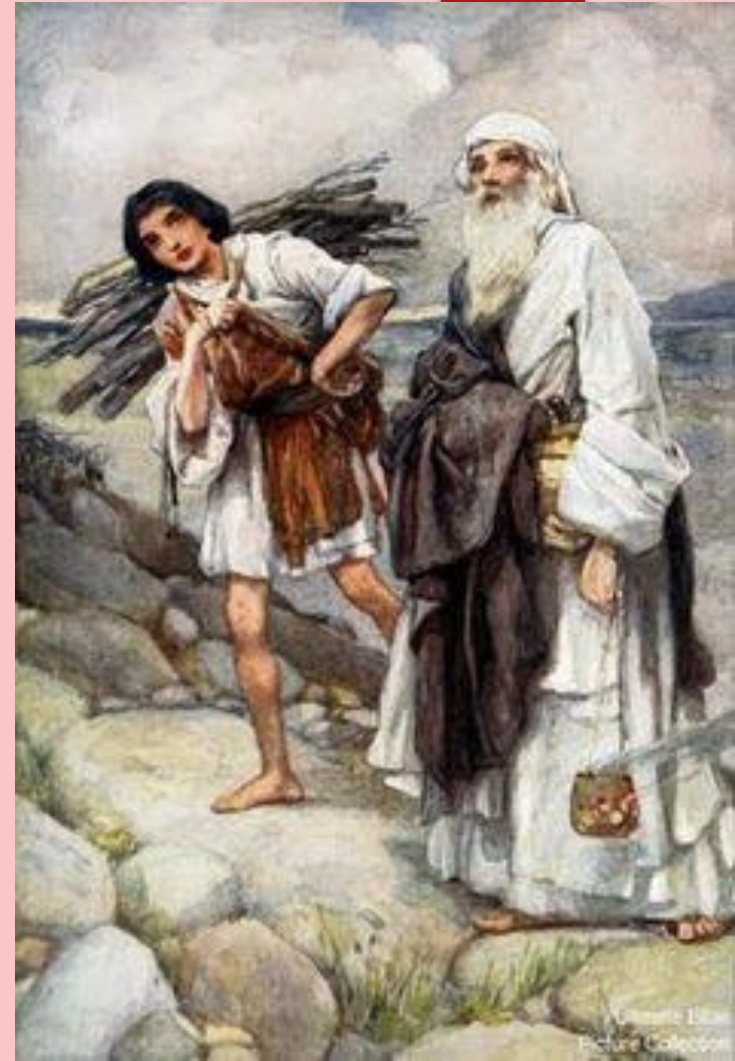
**Abraham and Isaac going up Mt.
Moriah – Sunday School Card**

“Confidence in a Crisis of Faith”

Genesis 22:5-8 & Hebrews 11:17-19

Often the process would stretch into 3 days. This would involve heating and cooling cycles. At the end of the process, the gold would be in excess of 99% pure.

Peter tells us that it is our trust in the resurrection that allows our pure faith to emerge from this furnace experience.



**Abraham and Isaac going up Mt.
Moriah – Sunday School Card**

Feb. 26, 2023

Malachi 3:1-4 [ESV]

1 "Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. 2 But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. 3 He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD. 4 Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

“Confidence in a Crisis of Faith”

Genesis 22:5-8 & Hebrews 11:17-19

Malachi promises that when the Messiah comes God’s purpose will be revealed and the Levites will be refined and become an aroma of praise before God. Peter calls us a “kingdom of priests”. The resurrection was the anchor for Abraham’s faith in the midst of doubt. It is our anchor, assuring us in dark times of doubt that God will bring everything out right.



**Abraham and Isaac by
Harold Copping, 1908**