

## **Jehovah Jireh...The God Who Provides**

**Indescribable, part 2**

**Sunday, September 11, 2005**

Having come to understand last week that God wants us to know Him up close and personal, we come today to another name found in scripture, JEHOVAH JIREH . . . I AM THE LORD WHO PROVIDES. Now, if you have been around religious circles long enough, you have heard people say many times when talking about need, "Well, Jehovah Jireh, the Lord will provide." We so easily take catchy sayings and say them, not knowing at all what they mean or, more than that, if they are right.

So I want to ask the question this morning, "Can I really trust that God will provide for me?" The answer is yes and no. It all depends. Also, I want to ask if provision in time of need is the real message of Jehovah Jireh.

Well, before I get into that, let's read the story that we are going to base this talk around, found in Genesis 22:1-18 (Let's have someone read this scripture.)

### **Abraham's Up and Down Life**

Some have said that Abraham was a mountaineer: His life was peaks and valleys. But they say that when you come to this story, this was Abraham's Everest. As you look at his life, it's a life of major right and wrong decisions, times when he trusted God – times when he trusted Abraham; times when God was in control – times when Abraham was in control.

For instance, God called Him by a very distinct and direct calling to leave his homeland and, "Go to the place I will show you." He obeyed and that was a mountaintop for Abraham.

But, then the scripture says there was a famine in the land and Abraham, without any leading from God, decided to go down to Egypt. It was a disaster from beginning to end, and he got thrown out of that nation. That was a valley experience for him.

Then He comes to a place where a decision had to be made as to where he would live and where his cousin Lot, who had been with him, should live because the land could not sustain both of them. He let Lot make the decision, deciding that whatever happened God would prosper him if he put his life in His hand. Lot seemed to choose the best land, Sodom and Gomorrah, but God was with Abraham and blessed him. That was a mountaintop time for him.

God promised Abraham a son in his old age. Abraham and Sarah laughed at the thought and when they were getting older and nothing happening they decided to take things into their own hands and got one of the young maids to birth Abraham's son. Ishmael was born and that spelled disaster, too - another valley decision and consequence for Abraham.

So, you can see the track record was that when Abraham trusted God to provide, everything went well. But, when he took things into his own hands, everything went badly. Fortunately, after every valley decision, Abraham repented and asked God to forgive him and God did and a fresh start occurred.

As I look back on my life, I have had the same mountaintop - valley experiences. Fortunately, I learned the lessons of trusting God to provide very early on in life. I have come to see that trusting a loving, unseen God is not easy, but it's the only way to live.

There have been times when all I've had to cling to was that I believed I had heard from God. Every other voice has sometimes screamed, "It is the wrong way to go!" but His will has proven right. Every other voice has said, "You will miss out and be in a worse state," but His ways are always best. I have had times when I have listened to my own idea or I have listened to others who felt they had better plans than God, people who have had my best interest at heart and felt I was messing up. I have messed up at times, doing my own thing or doing what others have said was the best thing.

Listen, friends, God's ways are always, without exception, the best ways. God has always come through. He has always kept me, has always provided when I put my full trust in Him.

### **Abraham's Tested Life**

When we talk of God testing, we need to understand a few things. God does not test us to find something out about us . . . He already knows the state of our hearts. In a recent article, writer Ben Patterson said, "Only God knows the score, so I should not weigh too heavily or take too seriously what I or anybody else thinks of me." Profound words.

The reason for testing, friends, is not to tell God anything. He already knows. It's to show us the condition of our own hearts. Testing shows us what God already knows about us. God allows testing in order to show us the state of our own hearts and then to allow Him to change our hearts. The psalmist saw this. Listen to his words in Psalms 139:1-4:

*O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. NIV*

With Abraham, every mountain and every valley was a testing time where his own heart was revealed.

God knows the state of your heart, friend. He wants you to know so that you will be challenged to allow Him to change your heart so He can perform His perfect will in you. Every trial, every test is seeking to get us to trust Him more, to love Him more, seeking to get us to cry out, "Change my heart, Oh God."

When we come to the story of Abraham being challenged to sacrifice His own son, this was the ultimate time where God showed the condition of his changed heart. That condition is seen by the way he responded to the test of God. So, note the command of God in Genesis 22:2:

*"Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about." NIV*

Now, let's see and learn a few lessons from how he responded there.

Lesson of Obedience

Genesis 22:3 says, *Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. NIV*

Note the words "early the next morning." He was not going to allow any time for his mind to be changed from doing what God had asked. He knew from experience that if he waited around too long his own mind would have argued against his doing the will of God. He also knew that his well meaning family and friends would have tried to tell him how mad this request of God was and would have sought to change his mind. He wanted to be totally and quickly obedient to God's call. He learned here that his heart had changed from what it was in the past. No waiting – he moved quickly to do God's will.

Oh, let's decide that we are going to both find and do all of God's will without question. It's for Him to order, for me to lovingly obey.

One lady said recently to me, "I don't know how God will turn my marriage around, Pastor, but I believe God can do it." Another said, "I don't know how I will be able to exist if I tithe to God, Pastor, but I believe he wants me to do it so I am going to." Another said, "I am turning down a very lucrative job offer, Pastor. It would have taken me from Peoria, but I know God wants me here so I'm turning it down to do what I believe is God's will." Oh, these people have had their hearts changed by God. They now rush to do His will.

### Lesson of Faith

Early in the story we find Abraham speaking the words of faith. Genesis 22:7-8:

*Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?"*

*"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.*

*"The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"*

*Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." NIV*

*"God Himself will provide the Lamb."*

Apostle Paul puts this whole faith thing into plain view in 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, even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.*  
NIV

Oh, what a change in his heart from the time when he felt he had to help God out to get a son. His heart had been changed. Now in faith he was saying, "What ever happens, God will provide – Jehovah Jireh."

The people who peddle their prosperity gospel claim we need to just name it and claim it, or put another way, blab it and grab it. They claim that whatever we want is ours for the asking. Real faith says that whatever He wants for us is the main thing. Whether I get anything or nothing, I am going to trust the God who provides – Jehovah Jireh.

The language of faith is found in the words of the prophet Habakkuk, in Habakkuk 3:17-18:

*Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.*

Quickly, another lesson was the

#### Lesson of Willingness to Go All the Way

Note what Abraham said to his servants in Genesis 22:4-5:

*On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you." NIV*

Note what it says: "Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance."

How many know that the decision to go all the way in the will of God can be a lonely decision? You have to be prepared to go alone. Be prepared to go where others may not be able to travel. God is after all your heart and will, and no matter what others do, no matter what others say, you have to be prepared to go all the way. No matter what the cost, I have to say "all the way."

Can you imagine what would happen if Jesus would have said, "I am prepared to go to the upper room, but not all the way to Calvary? I am prepared to go to the Garden of Gethsemane, but not all the way to Calvary?"

The hymn writer said, "Jesus shall lead me all the way. Jesus shall lead me night or day. His divine will is sweet to me, for I remember Calvary." I believe that God is going to raise up a new generation of young people who say, "I am prepared to go all the way. I may not earn great money, may not have anywhere to lay my head at night, may not have many who will travel with me, but I am going to go all the way."

One more lesson, friends - it's the

#### Lesson of Extreme Sacrifice

Abraham was willing to give up Isaac. Genesis 22:9-11:

*When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. NIV*

This was extreme sacrifice. It was Abraham being shown by God that he had learned the lesson of total surrender. It was Abraham saying, "God, you don't have to take my son from me. I am giving him up to you."

Pastor William Sangster went into a hospital room to visit a little girl who was losing her sight. Fear seemed to grip the youngster as, with nearly blind eyes, she turned her face toward the preacher. "Oh, Dr. Sangster, God is taking away my sight."

God's servant leaned over the trembling child and said tenderly, "Don't let Him take it; give it to Him." Oh, my friends, you have to see this.

Isaac was Abraham's greatest love on earth. He was his son, his only son, the scripture says. In the past he would have been seeking ways of not having to give up his son to God. In the past it would have been a fight with God over God wanting to take his son. If God wanted His son, He would have had to fight for him.

But, now, Abraham's heart was in the place of total surrender and total trust. His life was in God's hands. "You won't have to wrestle me for my son, God," Abraham said. "I give him to you."

Oh, God was not after Abraham's son, friends. He was after his heart. He was after his love and passion. God was wanting Abraham to love Him more than anything else on earth. And God is after your whole heart, friends.

It may mean the surrender of your marriage.

It may mean the surrender of your children.

It may mean the surrender of your health.

It may mean the surrender of your wealth.

It may mean the surrender of that relationship.

It may mean the surrender of that career.

It may mean the surrender of that secret sin.

On and on it could go here. He wants all or nothing of you . . . and asks for your total surrender.

### **Abraham's Rewarded Life**

Genesis 22:11-14:

*But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham!  
Abraham!"*

*"Here I am," he replied.*

*"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."*

*Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided." NIV*

Abraham actually got a double reward, friends. He got his son back and the ram for the sacrifice. I cannot promise you such a reward today. All I can promise is God:

God's love

God's friendship

God's closeness

God's plan

God's personal attention

God's desire for the rest of your life

God's continued preparation of your life for heaven

I can only promise you Him. But what more would you want? If you have God, you have everything. I cannot promise your marriage will be turned around, cannot promise your finances will magically come right, cannot promise new jobs, an easy life, a healthy life. All I can tell you is – God will provide.

I can promise you this: God will never fail you, never let you down. I can promise He will come so close to you that your life will be lost in His. I can promise that you will look back and say, "Jehovah Jireh, the LORD has provided."

## **Conclusion**

When Abraham raised that knife to plunge it into his son's heart, he had no idea God would stop him. It was the hardest thing he had ever been challenged with, the hardest thing he had been called to do. And, for some of you here today, the very thought of surrendering that area of your life that you are called to surrender causes you extreme pain right now. The thought of running from things you know God wants you to run from, or maybe the thought of not running but staying and facing things that everything within you cries for you to run from, the thought of giving up to God something that you know He has wrestled you for. You're saying, "Here it is, God, I give it up to you. You will not have to fight me for it."

Then watch Him step in and be Jehovah Jireh, the Lord who provides for you, the one who you now live for and, if need be, would die for, the one whom you have given your heart away to .

Preacher and intercessor Dwayne Roberts had a dream. In the vision he saw God's judgment seat. There were Christians from all the continents on earth. He saw Christians from China there and he said God asked, "In the midst of extreme pressure to give up on God, extreme pressure to avoid persecution from communist sources, did you still love me more than anything and anyone else in your life?"

Then he said there were Christians from Africa and God asked, "In the midst of severe starvation and extreme need, did you still love me more than anything and anyone else in your life?"

Then God turned to Christians from America and asked, "I placed you in the midst of a land of plenty, a land where anything you wanted you could get, even if it meant going into debt. I placed you amongst a people who have need of nothing compared to other parts of the earth. Did you still love me more than anything and anyone else in your life?"

Friends, are you willing to say, "I love Him and trust Him – Jehovah, my Provider?"

Let's pray right now.