

“Lord, Make Us Truly Grateful”
Sermon for First Christian Church of Decatur, Georgia
Thanksgiving Sunday, Season of Pentecost, November 22,
2015
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Holy Scriptures: Genesis 22: 1-14 and Philippians 4: 4-7, 10-14, 18-20

Genesis 22: 1-14

After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.

So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him.

On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.” He took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife.

So the two of them walked on together. Isaac said to his father Abraham, “Father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” He said, “The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” Abraham said, “God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt , my son.”

So the two of them walked on together. When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son.

But the angel of called to him from heaven, and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you d, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.”

And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place “The Lord shall provide; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”

Philippians 4: 4-7, 10-14, 18-20

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at last you

have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned for me, but had no opportunity to show it. Not that I am referring to being in need; for I have learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need.

I can do all things through him who strengthens me. In any case, it was kind of you to share my distress. I have been paid in full and have more than enough; I am fully satisfied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. And my God will fully satisfy every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Sermon Outline Notes

Abraham and the Lord – Trust in My Promise: I AM will provide a land and legacy

Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ² I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12: 1-3)

God said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” God said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.” (Gen. 22)

Abraham and Isaac – Trust the God in me Let’s walk together the path wherever God leads

So the two of them walked on together. Isaac said to his father Abraham, “Father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” He said, “The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” Abraham said, “God himself

will provide the lamb for a burnt , my son.”

Abraham and the Ram – Evidence that the Lord follows through, provides, meets needs

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And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.

Abraham and the Lord -- Trust in the Promise: I will provide for you and yours

So Abraham called that place “The Lord shall provide; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”

Abraham & Isaac trusted in the Promise of God to provide, and they were truly grateful.

When I was a very small child, our Calvert family of six lived in low income housing

One day my mother went to the cupboard and found it bare
“George, what are we going to do?”

“Buffy, the Lord will provide.”

Suddenly a knock at the door;

Opening the door revealed a neighbor

bearing an abundance of welfare food.

She offered us tins of peanut butter and powdered eggs and saltine crackers

God gives and provides with a glad and generous heart,

and always through the arms, legs and actions of the whole people of God.

Trust not in laziness or social isolation

or over expectations or being in a state of

denial of reality

Trust in God to provide, yet action and faithfulness go hand in hand

Our family had built relationships with our neighbors based on sharing of cares and concerns and celebrations.

Relationship with neighbors came through with food to a hungry family,

neighbors who knew our commitment to God and our need

We trusted in the Promise of God to provide, and to this day we are truly grateful.

So when Rev. Dr. Frank Thomas asked us last week at the GA Regional Assembly:

“What do you know that you know, that you know, that you know....”

[What do you know that you know that you know that you know...?]

I thought to myself, *“I know that I know that I know that the Lord provides.”*

On this trust I have built a faith foundation,
not on sand or silliness or sentimentality.

Thanks be to God my faith takes its place on solid rock,

on the rock called Trust in the Lord to Provide,
on the rock of God’s love,
on the rock that is Jesus Christ,

on the rock on which the
church stands tall
and finds its
purpose and promise.

The Apostle Paul knew what he knew what he knew what he
knew what he knew...

Paul found himself in a strange land,

attempting to start a new congregation for Christ.

He found himself alone and hungry and in unknown
territory.

He found himself content regardless whether he had plenty
or was in want.

Imagine his joy, his gratitude, his praises to the Lord –
Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice!

When an offering of fragrant and fabulous food
reached him,

sent with an overabundance of joyful

generosity

from the church in Philippi.

He said, *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens
me.*

In any case, it was kind of you to share my distress.

I have been paid in full and have more than enough;

I am fully satisfied,

*now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you
sent,*

a fragrant offering,

a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.”

Paul trusted in the Promise of God to provide,

and he was truly grateful.

In 1886, France gave to the USA a gift.

The gift was a statue the embodied the true spirit of America.
Originally erected in Paris,
it was dismantled, shipped and rebuilt on Liberty
Island in the harbor of NYC.

On October 28, 1886, the Statue of Liberty was dedicated.

Built on a foundation of solid rock and a foundation of joyful
generosity,
the Statue of Liberty was a gift of France intending to
symbolize
the Promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of
happiness.

Our neighbors across the sea trust in the Promise of God to
provide,
and they – and we – are truly grateful.

One day Emma Lazarus wrote a little poem, only 14 brief
lines long, about Lady Liberty.

Emma's poem and France's gift have touched our hearts and
minds for over a century.

Lady Liberty reminds us daily of who and whose we are:
a grateful people,
grateful to trust and live out God's
Promise of hope,
hospitality, and wholesome
providential care
of land and liberty and life
everlasting.

"The New Colossus" By: Emma Lazarus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,

*With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”*

All power be to the Creator, the Son, and the Holy
Spirit. Amen!