

Moravians Women's Association

Devotional Paper

Dec/Jan 2015/16

Messages from the Mountains

Genesis Ch22 v 1 - 19

The land of Moriah was a generally mountainous area that included the hills on which Solomon later built his temple in Jerusalem. It was on one of these mountains that Abraham was asked by God to sacrifice his son Isaac. It is hard to imagine how Abraham felt at this request. It was through Isaac, his son, his only son that God had promised Abraham that he would be blessed. God had promised this on several occasions, how could he now ask Abraham to make a human sacrifice of Isaac who he loved, who he and Sarah had waited for for so long, who was his future and on whom lay every hope he had? God had never demanded a human sacrifice before yet he was faced with this challenge.

We know how precious our children are to us especially if they have been long awaited or conceived through IVF or other wonders of modern medical science. How would we react if God asked a similar challenge of us?

As we know, Abraham did as God asked following God's request right up to the "eleventh hour" so to speak. God first sent an angel who stopped him harming the boy and then provided a ram for the sacrifice. Abraham showed complete obedience and through his obedience he showed his faith and utter trust in God.

The definition of faith given in Hebrews Ch 11 v 1 is "being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." Oh for a faith like that!

Abraham's faith must have been strengthened by this episode. Faith is a little like a muscle – when it is tested, exercised and strengthened it will grow in the process. Maybe that is one of the messages for us from this mountain top story. Abraham's faith hadn't come out of nowhere. It had grown over the years. If we are faithful in small things, when big things come along we will be strong and God will trust us with important things. I doubt God will ever ask us to sacrifice our children in the same way he asked Abraham but there may be modern equivalents. Abraham didn't have a Bible but we have the enormous advantage of having a complete record of God's word to us. Abraham knew God and we claim the same to some extent but does our faith mirror that of Abraham?

God does not ask anything of Abraham that he wasn't prepared to do himself. However, do you think that Abraham had any inkling that many years later God would be prepared to sacrifice "his only son whom he loved" in order to save his people – you and me? God was fulfilling his promise to bless all nations through Abraham's offspring.

For Discussion

1. What modern day sacrifices are we prepared to make in our lives?
2. Do we feel that God has ever tested us by things that have happened in our lives?
3. As we prepare to welcome Jesus into the world once more and put children at the centre of our Christmas celebrations let us ask what sacrifices do we need to make for the next generation?

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