

Matthew 1
Son of Abraham

December 11, 2019
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Pastor Hartwig

Mid-week Advent 2

Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

[Introduction]

More attention has been given to Jesus;
more devotion;
more adoration;
more opposition has been given to Jesus than any other person—ever.

Every recorded word that Jesus has said
has been sifted, analyzed, scrutinized, debated—every word.

More than all of the kings and queens, philosophers and scientists put together.

After 2,000 years, there is never one minute on earth
that millions are not studying what Jesus said.

Just who is this person? Who is Jesus?
That's the question we're asking during this Advent Season. Who is Jesus?

[The Test]

Matthew is our guide.

“A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham”
(Mt 1:1).

Question. Who is the famous son of Abraham?

Answer. That would be Isaac—the son of sacrifice.

That would also be Jesus—Jesus—the Son of sacrifice.

You know Isaac's story—it's one of the most dramatic stories in the Bible. Abraham and Sarah had been trying to have children all their adult lives. Then at the ripe old age of one-hundred for Abraham and ninety for Sarah, the son is born, the miracle son.

After Isaac had grown up God speaks these haunting words to Abraham,

“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” (Gn 22:2).

We know something of what Abraham felt.
We’ve had our heart leap into our throat.
We’ve been filled with panic.
We’ve buried our head in tears and anguish.

A child is born with spina bifida. A grandmother just died. A career isn’t in gear.
A father has dementia—he doesn’t know anyone anymore.
A constant state of depression refuses to lessen its grip.
A miscarriage still hurts— after all these years.

At such points in life, it’s easy to get lost in despair.
We lose ourselves in our jobs, or in the internet or TV or alcohol.
We express our pain in anger and hatred and revenge.
Jesus comes. Jesus helps. Jesus provides.

And why is that?
Jesus is the Son of Abraham. Jesus is the Son of sacrifice.

“After these things God tested Abraham” (Gn 22:1).
Well, what things?

Abraham had seen the LORD faithfully guide him
from Ur of the Chaldeans to Haran and then to Canaan.
Abraham had heard the LORD say,
“I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the heavens” (Gn 15:5).
Abraham had witnessed the miraculous birth of Isaac.

What’s it all mean? It means that God prepared Abraham for his test.
God has prepared us, too!

Holy Baptism, the Holy Gospel, and the Holy Supper
deliver the Holy Spirit
and with him we have forgiveness, life, and salvation!

Through the means of grace,
God pours out upon us courage and confidence, insight and intelligence.

The test we're going through isn't random, it's not an accident.

Every test is Father-filtered. Whatever it is, God has prepared us for the test!

God sends tests to bring us to greater heights of
conviction and courage and Christian character.

Our tests refine us, define us.

They mature us. They season us. They humble us.

God tests us to strengthen us. Satan tests us to destroy us.

Satan attacks at the weakest points of our life, to bring us down, to bring us defeat.

God's tests aren't intended to destroy us. God's tests are intended to develop us.

[The provision]

God tests, but he also provides. ***“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”*** (Gn 22:13-14).

This is our God!

Our God sees the need of Noah and provides an ark.

He sees Israel in Egyptian bondage and provides a way through the Red Sea.

He sees David out-muscled by Goliath and provides a rock
to hit that Philistine right between the eyes.

He sees Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in a fiery furnace
and provides a fourth Man.

With every test, God provides a way out.

“And God is faithful; he will not let you be tested beyond what you can bear. But when you are tested, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it” (1 Cor 10:13).

The God of Abraham and Isaac

is also the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Jesus, we have the ultimate provision.

“He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (Rom 8:32).

God spared Isaac. He finally didn't spare Jesus.

Jesus willingly took the wood and marched up the mount—not Moriah—but Calvary.

There would be no substitute ram this time.

Arrested abruptly. Tried unjustly.

Sentenced callously. Mocked repeatedly.

Abandoned ruthlessly. Beaten brutally.

Crucified *BUT* he is risen!

God reversed the curse.

Christ is alive, never to die again.

Death has no more dominion over him!

[Conclusion]

Notice the joy of Abraham.

He doesn't call his mountain Mt. Sacrifice, or Mt. Blood, Sweat, and Tears.

Abraham calls the Mountain "The LORD Provides!"

Where God guides, God provides!

How do we know? We know Jesus.

Jesus is the son of Abraham, the Son of sacrifice! Amen.

As followers of Christ, "Keep loving one another earnestly
And show hospitality to one another without grumbling." AMEN! (1 Pt 4:8-9)
