TITLE: Jehovah-jireh

TEXT: Gn. 22:1-14; Ps. 34:15 & 111:1-5; Heb. 11:1-2;

Jn. 3:16-17; Mt. 6:25-33; James 5:16; Is. 58:9-11

INTRODUCTION: One of the Old Testament names of God is Jehovah-jireh.

Jehovah-jireh means the Lord will provide, the Lord will see, the Lord will be seen.

 I think we may see one of the greatest examples of Gods provision in the account of Abraham and Isaac.

 **Genesis 22:1-14(NIV)**  **1Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied.**  **2Then God said, “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.”**  **3Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.**  **4On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.**  **5He 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.”**  **6Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together,**  **7Isaac 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?”**  **8Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together.**  **9When 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.**

**10Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.**  **11But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied.**  **12“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.”**  **13Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ramcaught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son.**  **14So Abraham called that place** (Jehovah-jireh) **The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.”**

 What strikes you the most about the story of Abraham being called to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice?

 That a loving God would put Abraham through such a overwhelming task?

 That Abraham actually trusted God enough to do the unthinkable?

 That Isaac himself trusted his father enough to let his father tie him on that alter, fearfully anticipating that he was about to die?

 Anyway you look at this it is an extraordinary story.

 It’s a story of Gods mighty provision.

 I have always been amazed by Abraham’s willingness to offer his son Isaac in sacrifice to God.

 The fact is Abraham did offer up Isaac that day! The decision was made! The knife was lifted and about to be thrust into the boy’s chest!

 If God had not intervened at that last second Abraham would have sacrificed his son.

 The sacrifice was already made in Abraham’s heart & mind and that is what God looks at--the heart.

Still, how could Abraham come to that place of trust and obedience to God?

 The Psalmist gives us some insight to this kind of trust in God:

**Psalms 34:15 The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry;**

 Even though we have no records of Abraham actually crying out to God for a substitute, we can imagine that his heart was doing just that….

 God, I don’t understand what you are doing here.

 I know that you have made a promise to me that I will become a Father of many nations through my son Isaac. I don’t know how that can happen if I sacrifice the boy, but I do know that you have to be true to your word so I simply trust in your promise.

 I know that **The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry;**

**Psalms 111:1-5(NIV)
1Praise the LORD. I will extol the LORD with all my heart in the council of the upright and in the assembly.
2Great are the works of the LORD; they are pondered by all who delight in them.
3Glorious and majestic are his deeds, and his righteousness endures forever.
4He has caused his wonders to be remembered;      the LORD is gracious and compassionate.
5He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever.**

 God had made a covenant with Abraham and Abraham knew that God would never break that covenant!

 So Abraham displayed a Hebrews chapter 11 faith in God.

**Hebrews 11:1-2(NIV)
1Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.
2This is what the ancients were commended for.**

What we find in this account of Abrahams life is a fore-type or foreshadowing of another Father and Son relationship.

But in this relationship the Father did in fact sacrifice His Son; He did allow the knife to fall. There was no substitute provided because there was no one else who could make the sacrifice.

**John 3:16-17(NIV)**  **16“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**  **17For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.**

 When we race ahead from the sacrifice made on Mount Moriah to the Sacrifice made at Golgotha we will see the Son of God being crucified on a Roman cross and we can begin to make connections that Abraham could never had guessed.

 For there we find the Father willing to offer up His only Son.

 We find the obedient Son praying; Not my will, but your will be done.

 And, most amazing of all, we see this Lamb being scarified for the sins of the world.

 The point of both accounts of Scripture, Abraham and Isaac and God the Father and God the Son, is that God does and will provide! He is truly Jehovah-jireh, the God of our provision.

**Matthew 6:25-33(NIV)**  **25“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?**  **26Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?**  **27Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life£?**  **28“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin.**  **29Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.**  **30If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?**  **31So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’**  **32For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.**  **33But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.**

 The message in all this is clear, whatever the need, large or small, God provides to those who will cry out to Him.

 Yet there may be times when this promise of Gods provision might seem to ring hollow to those whom God has seemed not to provide: the hungry, the oppressed, the abused, the homeless, the ignored, the fearful, and the dying.

 Why has not God provided for them in any meaningful way?

 Are we simply to spiritualize away the physical and emotional needs of others and say; well Gods promise of provision really has not all that much to do with problems in this life but is more centered on the spiritual realm.

 If people cry out to Him and He doesn’t answer then what can you or I do about it?

 If this becomes our thought then we have missed a major point of the story of Abraham, and the purpose of our own salvation.

**13Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ramcaught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son.**

Folks, in the times of great need with others, we are often the ‘ram” that God will provide!

Charles **Spurgeon once shared this story.**

Occasionally a benevolent action done in faith brings with it an instantaneous recompense in kind. Therein Providence is seen as smiling upon the deed.

 While walking in Cheapside, the late John Andrew Jones, a poor Baptist minister, was appealed to for help by someone he knew. He had but a shilling in the world, and poised it in his mind, to give or not to give? The greater distress of his acquaintance prevailed, and he gave his all, walking away with a sweet remembrance of the promise:
**Proverbs 19:17(NKJV)
17    He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord,      And He will pay back what he has given.** He had not gone a hundred yards further before he met a gentleman who said, “Ah, Mr. Jones, I am glad to see you. I have had this sovereign (coin worth 20-shillings) in my pocket this past week for some needy minister, and you may as well have it.” Mr. Jones often added, when telling the story, “If I had not stopped to give relief I would have missed the gentleman and the sovereign too.”

Mr. Jones was the “ram” caught in the thicket that God provided to help this man in great need!

God will always provide the ram. The question is will we recognize those times when we are the ram that God has chosen to provide?

 God has promised to provide all of our needs as a Child of God.

 Jesus said: **31So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’
32For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.
33But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.**

Josiah G. Holland once insightfully said:

God gives every bird its food, but He does not throw it into the nest.

 God provided a ram for Abraham but that ram was not just dropped into Abrahams lap!

 Abraham had to first exhibit a Hebrews 11 faith, **a faith that is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.**

Years ago the Brooklyn Tabernacle in New York rented space in the YWCA for two overcrowded years. The founder said: We purchased a lot across the street in hopes of building one day. But then a 1,400-seat theater on Flatbush Avenue became available for only $150,000. We sold the lot at a profit. But to buy the theater, we had to sell the run-down Atlantic Avenue building too. Attempts to sell were fruitless; we risked losing our option along with the down payment on the theater.

At a Tuesday night prayer meeting we laid the problem before God, pleading for a last-minute rescue. On Wednesday afternoon the doorbell rang.

There stood a well-dressed stranger, a Kuwaiti businessman it turned out. He walked in and looked around as I held my breath lest he look closely at the crooked walls and questionable plumbing.

“What are you asking?” he said at last.

He said; I cleared my throat and said weakly, “95 thousand.”

The man paused, then said, “That’s fair. We have a deal.”

“How long will it take you to make arrangements at the bank?” He said; I was still worried that our option would expire before we could close this deal.

“No bank,” he answered abruptly. “Cash deal.”

God didn’t just throw this Kuwaiti businessman in their lap as the “ram” to meet their needs, but first required the faith of prayer.

**James 5:16(NIV)
16Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.**

**The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.**

 The act of Prayer for someone else can be the ram that God provides for that someone in their time of need.

Isaiah talks about Jehovah Jireh, the God of our provision in:

**Isaiah 58:9-11(NIV)
9Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;      you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.      “If you do away with the yoke of oppression,      with the pointing finger and malicious talk,
10and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,      then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.
11The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.**

 Here we see a wonderful promise of Gods provision for us and how that we are often called to be the ram that God has provided for others in their need.

**Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;      you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.**

1. **and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,      then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.**

**The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.**

 **You will be like -- a spring whose waters never fail!**

 A spring just doesn’t provide for our personal needs but a spring provides for the needs of all who come across its waters…

 Are we allowing God to use us as His rams to help meet the needs of those He brings across our path?

 In our world are we being like a spring whose waters never fail?

Jehovah Jireh—the God who sees! The God who is seen! The God who provides!

 Is He not only our provision but are we allowing Him to use us as the ram He provides for others in need?

**Luke 6;38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good** **measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."**