



Abraham and Isaac

Genesis 22:1-18

The warm sun reflected off the mast as the Caribbean Queen pitched to and fro over the rolling waves. On the upper deck stood a lone figure casting his fishing line into the choppy sea. It was Simeon, one of the cooks, a thin Jamaican man with long dread locks, a huge smile and a musical laugh. The hungry crew had been eating everything in sight; food supplies were running low. Simeon had been sent topside to see if he could catch some fish for that night's dinner. Suddenly the door to the cabin swung open and Captain Billy Ocean stepped onto the deck.

"Ahoy there, Simeon!" called the Captain, "Why aren't you down in the galley?"

"We're almost out of meat and the men are getting' mighty hungry so I thought I'd try and catch me a can of tuna." Simeon answered politely as he cast his line over the ship rail. The hook and bait made a small splash as it hit the top of a wave and disappeared into the water.

"Oh, good idea," Captain Billy said, "How many fish have you caught so far?"

"So far?" Simeon laughed out loud, "A grand total of zero!"

After thinking for moment, Captain Billy said, "I'll steer us towards the nearest seaport to pick up some new supplies, but it'll take us at least three days to get there...maybe we should pray that God would provide."

"That sounds like a good plan, Mon!" Simeon kneeled down next to the rail and prayed, "Dear Lord, You are the God of miracles and the God who provides for all of our needs. I ask that You find a way to feed our crew of swashbucklers. In Jesus' name, Amen!"

"Amen!" said the Captain. "That be an excellent prayer Simeon! God did promise to provide for us and God always keeps His promises."

"Well, I hope He keeps it soon, Mon. I and I am powerful hungry." Simeon let out a laugh as he rubbed his stomach.

"We all are," the Captain agreed. "But sometimes you gotta be patient and trust that God will provide in His time, just like He did with Abraham and Isaac."

Simeon looked confused. "I ain't familiar with that story, sir."

"What? You ain't heard about Abraham and Isaac? It's one of my favorite stories of faith! Let me get me Traysure map right now!" Captain Billy strode across the deck and pulled his worn leather Bible from the treasure chest he sometimes kept it in. He loved to share the miracle stories from the Word of God. "Here it be. Well, as you know God had promised to give Abram and Sarah a baby. God allowed Sarah to give birth to Isaac when she was over 90 years old and

Abraham was over 100 year old!"

Simeon let out a chuckle from deep in his belly. "Ha, that's a laugh! They were older than my great granny!"

"That's what Sarah thought." The Captain agreed. "She even named her baby Isaac, which means laughter because she said, 'God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.'"

A smile spread across Simeon's face. "Abraham must have been so happy to finally have the son that God had promised him."

Captain Billy nodded. "He was! But then God tested them. The Bible says: 'Then God told Abraham to go up the mountain and sacrifice his son Isaac.'"

"What? Sacrifice! God wanted Abraham to sacrifice Isaac?! Like give his life?!" Simeon let go of his fishing pole as he exclaimed and lunged forward to grab it just before it went over the side of the ship.

"That's what sacrifice means." The Captain replied. "Abraham always obeyed God. God tested Abraham to prove to himself that he would put God first – even sacrificing his own son! Abraham knew that God is in control and He always provides."

"Wow, that's what I call faith!" Simeon stated.

"Aye, Abraham could have faith because he knew that God would keep His promise!" Captain Billy agreed.

"That's right, Captain! God promised him more offspring than all the dust of the earth! But, how is God going to do that without Isaac? I'm confused!"

"Isaac was confused too." The Captain continued reading. "The Bible says: 'The fire and wood are here,' Isaac said, 'but where is the lamb for the offering?' Abraham answered, 'God Himself will provide the lamb. So, Abraham obeyed God and tied Isaac and laid him on top of the wood. But right when Abraham picked up the knife..."

"STOP!" Simeon yelled. "I don't wanna know what happens!"

The Captain ignored Simeon and continued, "The angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, 'Abraham! Abraham! Do not lay a hand on the boy,' the voice 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.'"

"Whew," Simeon breathed a sigh of relief. "Wow, God kept His promise!"

Captain Billy nodded. "Aye, He did. Abraham looked over and saw a ram caught in the bushes and he sacrificed the ram instead. God did provide the sacrifice to die in Isaac's place! In fact, Abraham named that place 'the LORD will provide.'"

"So Abraham was right. God kept His promise!" Simeon said again.

"He did, the Angel of the Lord said: 'I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.'"

"Wow, obeying God has great rewards!" Simeon exclaimed.

Captain Billy agreed. "Aye, but I'd serve Him if there was no reward at all."

"Ya, mon, me too Captain!" Simeon said as a big toothy grin spread across his face.

Just then, Captain Billy leapt to the rail and peered over board to the Water below. "Ahoy, Simeon, Do you see what I see? A whole school of mackerel approaching the starboard bow!"

Simeon jumped up and ran to the front of the ship, dragging his fishing line through the water as he ran. He let out a loud musical peal of laughter, "Captain! God provided dinner!"

Captain Billy laughed and yelled back. "He did indeed! Get below, call the men and get the big nets! We're havin' seafood tonight!" The captain smiled up into the afternoon sun, thankful that we have a God who still does miracles.