

wanted to correct the perversion that existed in your love. Now you may have the boy, sound and well. Take him and go back to your tent. Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.”

—A.W. Tozer in *The Pursuit of God* (1948)

# Old Orchard Church

July 11, 2010—10:15 to 11:45 a.m.



The Angel Hinders Abraham from Sacrificing Isaac.

We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

**Cover Art:**

Woodcut engraving by Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472-1553). Germany

**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.**

~ John 3:16 ~

## Celebrating Jesus Christ Fulfiller of God's Covenant with Abraham: Isaac as Shadow of the Eternal Son

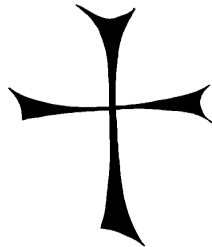
Thanks be to the Lord that Abraham,  
Schooled to be father of God's people,  
Passed the test and was willing to sacrifice  
The life of his beloved son.

What faith! What loyalty! What love!

What an infinitely rich drama  
— in shadow form —  
Of the Greater Sacrifice to come,  
When the Father of the universe would not rescue his Son,  
for the love of us!

**He who did not spare his own Son,  
but gave him up for us all—how will he not also,  
along with him, freely give us all things?**

What wondrous love is this?



### Scripture Readings

Old Testament Lesson: Genesis 22:1-14

New Testament Lesson: Hebrews 11:8-19

### Sermon

“Desolate Places”

Luke 5:16

*Mark Tucker, Associate Pastor, preaching*

## The Blessedness of Possessing Nothing

In the story of Abraham and Isaac we have a dramatic picture of the surrendered life as well as an excellent commentary on the first Beatitude.

Abraham was old when Isaac was born, old enough indeed to have been his grandfather, and the child became at once the delight and idol of his heart. From that moment when he first stooped to take the tiny form awkwardly in his arms he was an eager love slave of his son. God went out of His way to comment on the strength of this affection. And it is not hard to understand. The baby represented everything sacred to his father's heart: the promises of God, the covenants, the hopes of the years and the long messianic dream. As he watched him grow from babyhood to young manhood the heart of the old man was knit closer and closer with the life of his son, till at last the relationship bordered upon the perilous. It was then that God stepped in to save both father and son from the consequences of an uncleaned love.

“Take now thy son,” said God to Abraham, “thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” The sacred writer spares us a close-up of the agony that night on the slopes near Beersheba when the aged man had it out with his God, but respectful imagination may view in awe the bent form and convulsive wrestling alone under the stars. Possibly not again until a Greater than Abraham wrestled in the Garden of Gethsemane did such mortal pain visit a human soul. If only the man himself might have been allowed to die. That would have been easier a thousand times, for he was old now, and to die would have been no great ordeal for one who had walked so long with God. Besides, it would have been a last sweet pleasure to let his dimming vision rest upon the figure of his stalwart son who would live to carry on the Abrahamic line and fulfill in himself the promises of God made long before in Ur of the Chaldees.

How should he slay the lad! Even if he could get the consent of his wounded and protesting heart, how could he reconcile the act with the promise, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called”? This was Abraham's trial by fire, and he did not fail in the crucible. While the stars still shone like sharp white points above the tent where the sleeping Isaac lay, and long before the gray dawn had begun to lighten the east, the old saint had made up his mind. He would offer his son as God had directed him to do, and *then trust God to raise him from the dead*. This, says the writer to the Hebrews, was the solution his aching heart found sometime in the dark night, and he rose “early in the morning” to carry out the plan. It is beautiful to see that, while he erred as to God's method, he had correctly sensed the secret of His great heart. And the solution accords well with the New Testament Scripture, “Whosoever will lose for my sake shall find.”

God let the suffering old man go through with it up to the point where He knew there would be no retreat then forbade him to lay a hand upon the boy. To the wondering patriarch He now says in effect, “It's all right, Abraham. I never intended that you should actually slay the lad. I only wanted to remove him from the temple of your heart that I might reign unchallenged there. I