

## Daily Devotional, July, 13, 2020 Roadblocks or Super-Highways?

***Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. <sup>2</sup> Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you." <sup>3</sup> Early the next morning Abraham got up loaded 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. Genesis 22:1-3 (NIV)***

I would like to take a look today at walls that appear on our faith journey. By walls I mean the roadblocks we encounter along the way that loom as detours in our life with God. As human beings these barriers are inevitable. So, how do we respond when we find ourselves up against one of these fortifications, at a time when we are convinced, there is no going forward?

In numerous ways, our experiences these past four months have made us feel that this trial is an impossible mountain to climb. In talking with family, friends, and church members, what I constantly hear is: "I'm so ready for this thing to be over with so we can get back to normal!" And while I am in complete agreement, I would like us all to give some serious consideration to one question: Are we, in seeking normality, avoiding God's invitation to deepen and grow in our Christian faith?

Trials often lie at the very center of our faith journey. If I might be so bold to say, our faith growth cannot occur if we do not face and endure some form of conflict and trials. In fact, James is very direct when he states: ***"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." James 1:2-4 (NIV)***

God wants us to be mature and whole and prepared, not lacking anything in our growth in Him. And so when we are up against barriers and conflicts, it could well be that what appears to be trials of woe and destruction trying to bring us down, could instead be God's mysterious way of bringing us along to a greater maturity.

Genesis 22 is a most difficult passage in our Bible. But this story reminds us of how true it is that God uses our struggles to grow our faith. God's testing of Abraham invites us to encounter God in the midst of anguish and uncertainty. But at the same time, it is an invitation for us to trust and have faith, that our good and gracious God, in His wisdom, allows us to walk these paths of uncertainty and anguish, so that we might be made more into a reflection of God's image.

***Prayer: Lord, we do not always have a clear image of what your desires are for us in this life. What we often see as punishment or unnecessary pain is meant to strengthen us. Help us to trust that you are working all things for our good, and that our current struggles develop perseverance and trust in your guidance, and in the end, make us more like Jesus. Amen.***

**Further Thought:** Instead of running away from your fears or caving in under the burden of your trials, how can you instead see these things as a challenge to transform and remake you?

---