

John 8:51-59

Sunday 11/28/2021

Well, if you have your Bibles this morning, we are going to go back to John chapter 8. You remember last week, we talked about the seven things that you will lose when you lose your Bible. I must correct myself on that. I was just speaking off the cuff on that matter. But after last week, I won't use the term "lose your Bible" anymore because it's impossible to lose your Bible if you left it in my office or someplace. More importantly, it's rejecting the Word of God. That's the problem, and Bible truth.

We talked about the importance of the seven series in the Bible. God's systematic theology, so to speak, of breaking down the Bible in a very easy, understandable way. Seven in your Bible, based on Bible numerology, will be the number of perfection. If you notice, God has done everything and will do everything by a series and a pattern of sevens. So it's no great wonder that we look at the multiple of sevens in the Bible and almost everything that God does. It's very extensive. I told you last week, at some point on Sunday morning, I'd love to go through those and just really lay them out and talk about each one of them. I think it would be an incredible study for all of us and probably help you put your Bible together.

Those of you in Bible Institute, you'll remember that we started our institute by using the main ones that really tie the Bible together. We talked about the seven baptisms in the Bible, seven different baptisms. Most people don't even know that there are two, let alone seven. We talked about the seven mysteries. We talked about there are seven resurrections in the Bible. We talked about that there are seven judgments in the Bible. Then we talked about all the different aspects of how it goes together and how it all kind of crosses over each other and then forms a net, a Bible doctrine that really forms the basis for everything that we believe in the Bible and how that it will work through your life and really make the Bible come alive for you.

When I start people in the Bible that have a fairly good handle on the overall Bible, this is where I always start. All of this stuff is on the website, the webpage. It's the thing where I had enough sense years and years ago to do that first, realizing that down the line someplace that many, many people now that come to church and get involved in it would be able to use that material to grow, that we don't have to continually go through it all the time. As today, when you reject these things, the Word of God, then all you have is an empty shell, whether it's your Christian life, whether it's your church, your denomination. It's a Laodicean and worldly church for worldly Christians that are unseparated from the world. People who like to have one foot in the Bible but also have one foot in the world.

The reason why they get away with it, we saw this last week, is because one of the things that they have rejected through the Bible is preaching. Preaching is what keeps us all honest. I could teach you till the cows come home and it may puff you up and give you a lot of knowledge, but that's not what you need, a good balance in your life. You need to have somebody getting into your world and letting the Holy Spirit of God point out to you the things that need to be fixed.

We have seen in John chapter 8, the first coming of Christ, the great parallels. The fact that some things never change, to ascribe the Pharisees and the Sadducees, how they had a hatred for truth,

Christ who was the truth, and how that they had replaced it all with a phony religion that was as empty as a 55-gallon drum and it had nothing to do with God. Yet, they proclaimed that they loved God and that they were everything that God wanted them to be.

I. The Promise of Never Seeing Death

Today, we're going to finish out chapter 8, and it's been an incredible chapter to study. We have learned a lot of good things from this chapter. So let's begin to read today. Let's pick it up in John 8:51 and we'll come down to the end of the chapter in verse 59. It says this:

John 8:51

Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

John 8:52

Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.

John 8:53

Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

John 8:54

Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:

John 8:55

Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.

John 8:56

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

John 8:57

Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

John 8:58

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

John 8:59

Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

Let's pray. Father, we do thank you and praise you today for the Word of God. Thank you for the folks that are here today. We pray, Father, for the folks that are traveling back for the holidays, that you'll give them safe journey. We thank you, Father, for our time today in your Word. We thank you for those on the YouTube this morning, my family in Ohio and Las Vegas and Maryland and all the other scores of people out there that are tuning in this morning because they don't have a Bible-believing church, and this is their church. Help us, Father, to not only minister to those here, but to those across the country, across the world that tune in to get the truth of the Word of God in these last days. We'll thank you and praise you in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

Now, this is a great passage, and it's wrapped around another great story in the Old Testament, and it's built around the key patriarch of the nation of Israel. He now brings up in the conversation the father of the Jews, a man who starts out by being called Abram, and then winds up being called Abraham.

But before we get into this story and we look at this, allow me to draw your attention, if I could, to John 8:51 and John 8:52. It says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast the devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets, and thou sayest, if a man keep my sayings, he shall never taste of death."

Now when Jesus tells that if we keep His word, His sayings, it says in John 8:51 that we shall never see death. The scribes and the Pharisees interpret that for us to give us another dimension, and they say in John 8:52 that they'll never taste of death. I want to talk to you today about some things that I think that everybody better start to look at just a little closer.

II. Dying as a Child of God: A Final Promotion

As a child of God, I'm not going to speak for you. I was going to say "we." I'm not going to speak for you in this message. I'm just going to speak for me. That way, you can do whatever you want to do with it. But as a child of God, I should never fear dying. Because in truth, I will never see death, nor will I ever taste of death.

Dying for a child of God, and everything in life from a Christian standpoint, everything in the Bible, it all comes down to how we look at it through the scriptures. Of course, you know that. But dying for the child of God is my final promotion. I always loved the old Salvation Army days, and I know that they're way out there in left field now, but there was a time when they were very biblical, and they were very, very, very conscious of winning people to Christ, one of the best soul-winning organizations probably the world has ever seen back in the day. Not today, but back in the day. William Booth would come back and walk past the first Salvation Army church today, he'd have a heart attack before he got past the first ashtray.

But it's a thing where back in its day, it was really fundamentally right on the money. They used to put out a publication. Maybe they still do, I don't know. But they would give recognition to all the members who died and went home to be with the Lord. It was its own section. The name of that section I always thought was great was "Promoted to Glory." That has always been my goal.

The Bible says in Ephesians 4:15 that we ought to be more like Christ every day of our lives. I remember back when I was growing up under my father in the Lord, Malice Abaca, he'd always say this. He'd always say it about this time of year, but he'd always put it into his message. He'd always remind us, "Are we more like Jesus Christ today than we were yesterday?" We'd get up to the new year like we're coming. He would say in his messages, "Are you more like Jesus Christ this year than you were last year? And what is your goal to be more like Him next year?"

That was based on that sound piece of doctrine, based on Ephesians 4:15 that says that we, you and me, forget you, me, I am to grow up. Every new Bible slaughters this verse. Most Christians slaughter it. They always say "grow up unto Him." That's not what the verse says. The verse says that my job is to grow up into Him. Every day of my life I should be more like the Lord Jesus Christ. I wish I was. I tell you right now, I have a few malfunctions in my world. But that's what my goal is. Through His Word, as we've already seen, 2 Thessalonians 3:16, how He perfects us on a daily basis.

I've talked to you many, many times about Philippians 1:6, that the day you got saved, He began a good work in you, and He wants to perform that work unto the day of Jesus Christ. That's the rapture of the church. That is the day that if you don't die in this life, you're going to get your final promotion.

We talked last week out of Exodus 25:26 about how that tabernacle in the Old Testament was a picture of your body, and how that those seven pieces of furniture, each one of them lined up spiritually to something that you need to put in your spiritual temple to be more like Christ every day of your life. I actually believe, and this is a tragedy, I actually believe that many, many, many of God's people think that if you just go to church and you do what's right and you do what they tell you to do, that someday you're going to wake up and just really be spiritual. It doesn't work that way. You do have to have a process of growth in your life that every day you recognize what you need to do that day to put all things off and get closer to the Lord. When you do that on a daily basis for what, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 years, by the time you die, the next step is just your level of promotion. The problem with most of God's people, they're going to hit that promotion day with no greater time in the process, and that's going to be another disaster for them.

Paul told me in 1 Corinthians 15:55-57 that for me death has no sting. Somebody said one time, "Well, I'm not afraid of dying, I just don't like going through the process to get there." I understand that, but I am telling you right now, Paul said that death has no sting. Solomon told me in Psalms 116:15, or the writer there, that "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

All my Christian life from early on, once I began to get a handle on things, I never believed because you always hear this thing about the rapture, the rapture, the rapture, "Oh, I'm waiting for the rapture." Well, I am too. I think the rapture is going to be an incredible event and it's probably just around the corner. But I've never believed that the excitement and the glamor of the rapture of the church being called out in the presence of the Lord is such a great thing, but dying in a hospital bed at KU or some hospital and dying before you get to the rapture is a bummer. I

just don't believe that. I just do not believe that. I believe that the process by which we go through that Paul in the Bible promises me and Jesus said that I'll never see death and I'll never taste of death.

You see, I may as a child of God, Psalms 23:1-4, pass through the valley of the shadow of death, but I'll never see it nor will I ever taste it. In Luke 8:52 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, I'll just fall asleep in the arms of the Lord Jesus Christ. I can't think of a better way to do that. When you go back to Psalms 139 and you read the first 12 verses there, it makes it so clear that if you miss the rapture and you die before the rapture comes, it's a great thing. But we get so caught up. We let the things around us pull us off of the real important things that should drive us.

III. Abraham: A Type of God the Father

Now in our verse today, we now come up with the man Abram or Abraham. It says in John 8:56, and this is where I want to focus today, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad."

Now Abraham is an incredible study in your Bible. I mean, we know the Bible breaks down doctrinally, historically, and inspirationally. When you look at Abraham, you know in your Bible there are three men doctrinally who really will give you insight and represent what the Trinity really is.

- 1.) We know that Abraham is a type of God the Father. That's very clear in the Bible.
- 2.) We know that Joseph is the greatest type of Jesus Christ in the Bible. In over 152 particulars in his life, it matches up to the life of Christ. In fact, when he goes down into Egypt, the Bible says that he is elevated to the second position in the kingdom. You see, God the Father, God the Son.
- 3.) The third man in your Bible that is a great picture of the Holy Spirit of God will be Daniel. Daniel interprets things. Daniel has the ability to see things and interpret them that other people maybe cannot see and understand. He is the perfect type of the Holy Spirit of God. So when he is in Babylon, he is lifted up to the third position in the kingdom. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.

If you want to understand the Trinity and how it works, these are the men that you study. You're going to find in Abraham's case, from Genesis 11 to Genesis 25, 15 chapters on his life. It will form in an incredible way many different studies that you can take. Not only is he found in 15 chapters in the Old Testament, but various places through the New Testament he's inserted into it as he is here in John chapter 8.

Now historically, Abraham will be the beginning of the nation of Israel. You folks in Bible Institute, and I'm certainly I've talked about it on Thursday night, you know when you study the

nation of Israel in the Old Testament, you will find that there are five stages that Israel goes through. You really want to understand the nation of Israel in the Old Testament, then you just break it down into these five stages. Abraham is stage number one. He is the formulation of the nation of Israel. He gets called out in Genesis 12. He gets his salvation in Genesis 15, and from him comes Isaac, the Promised Seed. From Isaac then comes Jacob. From Jacob comes the 12 tribes, the 12 boys who become the 12 tribes, and you have the nation of Israel. Of course, he is looked at today, as you saw in where we just read, as the father of the Jews, Father Abraham, by the nation of Israel to this day.

Now this is a little side note, but the Muslims also count Abraham as their father. This is the problem that we fundamentally have with the Muslims hating the nation of Israel because we'll talk about this in a little bit, but bottom line is Abraham was their father just like he was Israel's father. So you can see where down the line, and I'll get to that in just a little bit, you see where the problem comes in. Through him God was going to reach the world. Also from Isaiah 9:6-7, it starts with Abraham in God's plan and then it goes all the way out into eternity. Of course, if you know your Bible, then there's a parenthesis there for the church age, but God's plan for the nation of Israel has never changed and it will pick up in the millennium where it ceased in 606 BC. So Jesus makes a reference to him.

The Bible says in Genesis 22:18 that in Abraham all the nations of the world will be blessed. Now how in the world was God, God's plan? And His plan to do that is very clear in the Bible. He also said in Genesis 12:3, and I think this is interesting, that all of the families of the earth were going to be blessed in him. That shows me that God's plan, and you see this back in the Old Testament, I don't have time to get into it this morning, but God's plan in the Old Testament and also the New Testament was to reach the world through families. Families building on generations of staying true to the Word of God and putting their children, their grandchildren in an endless chain back into the ministry as families serve together and then the original guy dies off, the next kid's taken over, they die off, the next kid's taken over and it goes on and on and on for the generations through the families to reach the world.

So Jesus is making reference to him as the proof that Abraham knew who He was and rejoiced to see His day, and then He's making the parallel that the scribes and the Pharisees and the religious leaders today don't, and they have rejected Him, clearly putting a distance between them and who they call their father, Father Abraham.

IV. Abraham's Journey: Lessons in Trust and Obedience

From a practical standpoint, Abraham will be for me, and I am not speaking for you today. I'm not even preaching to you today. I'm just preaching to me today, and if it gets on you, that's okay. Abraham will be without a doubt the single greatest example of our Christian life. I do not know of any other study in the Bible that will start and show us from the point that we trust Christ as our own personal savior up through our growth process, the struggles that we have, and if we stay true to the saying, stay true to the Word of God, the ultimate end which will be our promotion. Absolutely in my mind without equal, and if you want to see yourself and your

growth as a child of God, it's right here. But I'm not preaching to you this morning. I'm preaching to me.

Now note, his meeting with God in Genesis 15:5 is to me one of the greatest places in the Bible. It's in Genesis 15 that God takes him out and shows him the stars of heaven and He says to Abraham, "Someday your seed is going to be like the stars of heaven." Now that's a pretty tall order. I mean, he's up in years now. He's in his 70s when He tells him this, and He says, "Someday, Abraham, look at those stars up there, someday your seed out of your loins are not only going to populate this earth but it's going to populate where the stars are. You believe that, Abraham?" Abraham said, "Yeah, I believe it." God says, "You really believe that?" He says, "Yes sir, I believe it." He says, "Come on, you really believe what I just said?" And Abraham said, "Lord, if you said it, I believe it."

You know what the Bible says? The Bible says, "Okay, Abraham, because of that I'm just going to give you My righteousness." You know how you got saved? You got saved because somebody told you that a dead Jew hanging on a tree 2,000 years ago had enough power in His blood to wash away your sins. That isn't the craziest thing I've ever heard in my life. You can see how easy it is if somebody says you just get baptized and you'll be saved. Just come to church. Those are easy. But some man in a pulpit telling you 2,000 years ago a man named Jesus hung on a cross and He died, a Jew died, and in His blood was enough power to wash away your sins. You know what? I can't speak for you. I said, "I believe it." You know what God did? Like Abraham, He gave me His righteousness. If you're saved this morning, you got God's righteousness, that's the only way you're going to get it. If you're here this morning, you're not saved, that's the only way you're going to get it.

See, this thing is personal to me. I'm trying to hold the tears back right now because I just think it just overwhelms me when I get into this because this is where my world is. I wouldn't presume to speak for you. Maybe your world is Chiefs Stadium. I don't know. Maybe your world is Ohio State. Hey, that was a rough day, wasn't it, Jim? I came upstairs, she turned it off. She wasn't going to watch it. She's on the recliner with a blanket over her head watching the Hallmark Channel. I don't know where your world's at today. This is my end. This is my end.

After he gets God's righteousness, God starts him on a journey. You know that Bible says, He has begun a good work in you and will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. You know what happens? The second thing after you get saved, you know what happens? You start on a journey. God's got a job for you to do just like He had for him to do. Now he begins a journey to fulfill God's plan for his life. God in Genesis 12:1 had called him out of the Ur of Chaldees, that would be a picture of the world for us. He called him out of Ur and then sent him to a land only for him and his people that was going to be called the Promised Land because you had to keep the promises of God to stay in it. He is totally to separate himself from everything and everybody in his old life once he got God's righteousness and what God called him out.

But he, just like me, I'm not speaking to you. I'm sure you don't have this, but him just like me. Right after I got God's righteousness, I had a tough time trusting everything that God said. He did in all his life just like we do. You're going to find that God told him to get out of town and get

out of the Ur and forsake everybody. But what does he do? He takes Lot with him. He disobeyed God and took Lot his nephew with him.

Now, I'm not going to spend a lot of time dictating Lot's character. He winds up in Sodom and Gomorrah, that's not a good thing. The worst decision Abraham ever made was to take Lot with him. You know what that represents for me? That means that there were times in my life, and I can't speak for you, but there were times in my life when the biggest things that caused me my problems after I got saved was not separating myself from all of those things. Lot causes him problems and strife all of his life. Finally, he winds up in Sodom and Gomorrah.

The second thing, in Genesis chapter 12, there's a famine in the land. Now God had just told him that God was calling him out, had a place prepared, and was going to be with him every step of the way. A famine in the land. Now he can't trust God to go through that famine, so he runs back down into Egypt, a type of the world. There's been times, I'll just say this to all of us, there's times in all of our lives when we couldn't trust God with something major in our life. We ran back to mama. We ran back to the world. We actually thought that that was a safer place. Of course, it's never a safe place. When you look at that, once he gets back down into Egypt, look what happens. There he gets into more trouble. Sarai was a good looking woman. The Bible says she was very fair to look upon. When they get down into Egypt, all the Egyptians down there in Pharaoh, they look at this good looking chick and they say, "Man, I'd like to have her in my harem." But when they find out that she's married to Abraham, or Abram at this point in time, then what has to happen is, for that to happen, is they kill Abraham. And then they take her. Abraham knew that. So Abraham says, "Hey, look, honey, they're eyeballing you. And I'm just asking you right now, if they ask you if I'm your husband, you tell them that we're just brother and sister." You see, principle. Going into the world, back to the world, will always force you to lie about some things. You know why? Because there's no truth in the world. So you've got to become like the world, fabricate some things, or stay out of trouble with the world when you're too dumb to know that you're already in trouble.

The third thing, through the process of this, God tells him that He's going to give him a promised seed. That promised seed will be Isaac, of course. And that it would come from him. He gets impatient. It doesn't say, but I'm telling you, probably his wife was involved in pushing this decision. I get it. She's 77. Now we have a number of nurses here that work in hospitals, and from time to time you worked in maternity, probably never in the history of the world did a 77-year-old woman give birth. If she did, I don't want to know about it. She was way past childbearing. She herself thought that she could not have children when the promise that God gave them was He was going to bring the promised seed through them.

You know what the biggest problem I had, I'm not speaking to you, you know the biggest problem I had after I got saved? Waiting on God. You see, I was so used to my life of having everything the way I wanted it when I wanted it. Now I'm not such a stupid fool that I'm going to wait eight hours for a Whopper burger. That one I can go across the street to McDonald's and have it in 30 seconds. Of course, my whole life, even after I got saved, I had to learn to wait on God. I will tell you this, I don't get it when it comes to the ministry, people, the Lord doing what I got to do, I don't get in a hurry about anything. Because at the end of the day, it's God's deal,

man. I have learned my lesson, there's other ones I really need to learn, but I have learned that particular one when it comes to God, don't get in a hurry.

But Abraham, he wasn't there yet. So now, Ishmael. Hagar. His wife said, you don't have the whole conversation, but knowing wives the way I do, it probably went something like this. "Look, I'm not getting any younger." He's getting older. "I'm not getting any younger." Maybe his answer was no, but you are getting older, and that was a bad thing to say too. But anyway, she said, "I'm not getting any younger. This promised seed stuff, I don't know. Maybe God forgot what He was going to do. Now, let's do this. If we got to have a child, and I'm past childbearing, here's my handmaid Hagar. Take her and bring forth the child or the promised seed, and we'll go ahead and we'll help God along with this thing."

Let me tell you something. I wouldn't have cared if she was 280 years old. If God wanted her to conceive and have a child, she'd have had one. In fact, in this case, the older the better, because the older the better, the bigger the miracle. God wanted, I mean, I can just imagine how it was. I can just imagine how it must have been, the pressure. So she gives him Hagar. He has Hagar, and then she gets conceived with a child, and she brings forth Ishmael. Now, who wouldn't know this? Sarah's great idea only lasted till she saw the handmaid walking through showing Abraham the baby that was his and hers. You know what the Bible says next? This is another great lesson. She despised her.

You see, principle, some of the worst decisions I ever made in life looked really good when I made them. But when you step outside those principles, when you cease to trust that God knew what He was talking about, I don't care what the circumstances. You're in trouble. Because of this, we have two factors here. I don't know if you know this or not, but you ought to look, the last time you see Abraham is in Genesis 16:16 when this all happens. The next time you find God speaking to him is in Genesis 17:1. Now, I know that's just a chapter over, but in your chronology, it's 13 years later. See, how do you know that? Because it says in Genesis 16:16, he's 86 years old when he has Ishmael with Hagar, and he's 99 when God finally brings the promised seed. Do the math. He's out of fellowship 13 years.

In your life and my life, I'm going to tell you something. Making bad choices in life for me, can't speak for you, for me will spend time out of fellowship with God. Not only that, this decision that he made not only caused him to be out of fellowship for 13 years, it plagued his people for the next 5,000 years. The Muslims come from Abraham through Ishmael. They claim him as their father, the Jew claims him as his father, their father. The Jews look at Isaac as the promised seed, the Muslims say, "He ain't the promised seed, Ishmael's the promised seed." This is why we have the problems we have today. Principle, there are some decisions that I could make in life that would change the course of my life forever. The quicker you learn that one, the better off you're going to be.

What, 13 years later, Genesis 17:1-2. God comes knocking on his door and He says, "Abraham, you need to get your stuff together here." He comes to him and in Genesis 17:1, he gets right with God and God gives him a great thing and God talks to him and now he's 99 years old and now he's going to bear the fruit. At that point in time, we see another great principle. God

changes his name now. Most people read these things and don't even pay any attention to the seven men and women in the Bible that God changed their name. Five of them are good, two of them are drastically terrible. But when God changes a person's name for the good in the Bible, it's always a picture of a great spiritual change dimension-wise in their relationship with God. From this point on, Abraham now begins to be everything that God wants him to be. I'm not saying he's perfect. I'm sure he made some mistakes still. But now at this point, for me, it was the point in my life when I decided I ain't ever going back to the world again.

I've watched that same thing in many of your lives. I've watched you come here, watched you get into the book, watched you grow, get saved, get into the Word of God if you're already saved. I watched you struggle through things, but then there comes a point in your life where God, spiritually speaking, changes who you are and you never look back again. Your life is never the same because you're not the same. But it's an incredible thing when God changes a man's name. In his life, Abram meant "high father." Abraham meant "father of many nations." God now has got him on the right course.

V. The Ultimate Sacrifice: Abraham and Isaac

This will all lead, and there's so much here I could put in here, but I want to get you out before 3 o'clock today. This will lead us to one of the great stories in the Bible that Jesus is making a reference to in John 8:56, that Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day and was glad. Now we see the growth of his life even with all of his struggles. Let me just say this. I learned this about myself. Can't speak for you. My struggles never went away. It wasn't a day that I got up and I didn't have any more issues or any more struggles. It just was a day that I didn't care anymore because I had some greater calling in my life than whatever the world had to offer. I don't know when God changed my name. I don't know if He ever did change my name. I just know this: I ain't ever going back to the world. And I've been that way for a long time.

It's a thing where that's where Abraham got and that's where I needed to get to. Now we see God brought him to the place where he's now ready to be used of God without questioning anything that God tells him to do no matter how outlandish, ridiculous, how utterly impossible, or how hard it may have been. He now has understanding to what I believe, and I can't speak for you, nor what I believe is the one key word for ministry that is missing today that Abraham coming through this point gives us a great illustration of. It's the key word that you never hear preached when you talk about the ministry. You never hear it preached in any way, shape, or form today because people want to stay so far away from it. It's one simple word that is the key to ministry: Sacrifice.

How much are we willing to sacrifice to do the work that God saved us to do? That's the only question I ever had to answer. I knew it wasn't about my ability because if I had to be in the ministry because of my ability, I'd be out before I got in. So I knew it wasn't about my ability, but rather my availability. I knew that it wasn't about me being able to do the ministry because I'm not able. I knew that all I had to be is willing because God is able. But then you've got to come to the place in your life where you realize, are you willing to be that sacrifice?

Now that'll bring us up to Genesis chapter 22. This passage and this story here, just so you know, this will be the day that he's referencing to in John 8:56. It says this:

Genesis 22:1

And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

Genesis 22:2

And he said, Take now thy son, 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.

Genesis 22:3

And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

Genesis 22:4

Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

Genesis 22:5

And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

Genesis 22:6

And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.

Genesis 22:7

And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

Genesis 22:8

And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

Genesis 22:9

And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

Genesis 22:10

And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

Genesis 22:11

And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.

Genesis 22:12

And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

Genesis 22:13

And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

Genesis 22:14

And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

Abraham saw his day and he was glad. What a great picture you have here of the sacrifice that God made of His Son for you and for me. God sending His Son to be my ransom. The way I look at things, and please don't take this wrong, you have to claim this for yourself. See, for me to have that personal relationship with God, I have to go one step beyond. I don't think He died for any of you. I think He died for me. You see the moment I think He died for you, then that lessens the impact on me. Now obviously I believe He died for all of you, but I can't claim that for you. If you can't claim that for yourself, if we can't get, now there should be no arguments or disagreements in the church, but that's one we should argue about. The fact that I say He didn't die for you, you say He did die for you, and I say He didn't die for you, He died for me. You say He didn't die for you, He died for me. That's the argument we ought to have. But I can't claim that for you. I would never try to claim that for you because a real sacrifice based on 2 Samuel is going to cost us something.

Abraham is now at the place in his life where he now understands through obedience and trust in God that he can make a real sacrifice. I watched this in his life. You know me, I never, I don't think since we've ever started our church, I have never preached a message on giving. I never have. Most churches you go to, they never preach anything out of the Bible. It is preached giving and then Sunday night is the son of giving and then the next one is the third chapter of giving and that's all they ever go. But you see, I learned that that's not how you get people to give for the Lord. Your giving to the Lord has nothing to do with me personally one way or the other. I don't care. This is God's church.

But I watched in Abraham's life a process that his giving to God was always in direct proportion to his relationship with God. When he just come out and he's still starting like a new Christian in Genesis 14:20, Bible says that he's tithing 10% when he gives it to whoever he gives it to. Then in Genesis 18 when the Lord and two angels show up, the Bible says that he prepares for them a great feast. There he's already tithing but now he gives over and above and the great thing of that

is the Bible says when he spread out this great feast, he called it a morsel of bread when it looked like whatever you had for Thanksgiving the other day. Then the Bible says that he stood back and he enjoyed them partaking but he didn't partake of it himself.

You see it started out with him giving the 10%. Then he realizes he built his relationship that God was so special to him that he had to give over and above that, that that wasn't enough. Now, we've seen it come full circle. Now in Genesis chapter 22, he, and you hear me say it, now when you join a New Testament church at that point in time you need to support it with your tithes, your offering and your sacrificial giving. That's where we're at in Genesis chapter 22. He's holding nothing back from God now. Believe me if he was willing to lay his son that he loved on that altar, he's not holding anything back from God. This is a lot like Ananias and Sapphira over there in Acts. He is completely transparent in his relationship and he wants everything from God and he recognizes what God has done for him. He just can't wait to do some things for God. Now he's willing to give to God his only son, whom the Bible makes it very clear to make a parallel between God the Father and His Son. It says his only son, notice he didn't put only begotten like John 3:16 because this wasn't a begotten but it was his only son. Then just so we don't miss it he says, "whom thou lovest." The promised seed that God gave him now God is asking for it back.

That in itself is a great principle, folks, for me, can't speak for you. God will always test me with the things that I love the most. To see if I love them more than I love Him. Now there's nothing wrong with loving things and I know I give you guys grief all the time about loving things that can't love you back. "I love this car," does it lay its arms around you and kiss you? No, you probably kiss it on the hood but it doesn't do anything for you. "I love this dress," and of course we love things that are inanimate and I understand that that's just part of life and I know I give you a tough time about it but I'm just really kidding. But it's a thing where, do we really love the real things that are worth loving in our lives? God will always tempt us, me, with what I love the most.

Allow me to show you if I could for just a moment what my sacrifice should be based on Christ's sacrifice for me through the picture of Abraham and him coming to the place through a process of growth that he's willing now to give the very thing that he loved the most. If that's what God wanted.

Now to clear up a few issues here, if you look at Genesis 22:1 it says that after these things God did tempt Abraham. A lot of people have a tough time with that. That's one of my questions in Bible study because over there in James 1:13 it says God doesn't tempt any man with evil and of course the short answer to that is that there's two temptations in the Bible and God is not tempting him with evil. Bible says in Hebrews 11:17 he defines it where he talked about it was a trying of Abraham's faith. So there's two kinds of temptation in the Bible. God does not tempt anybody with evil but he will try our faith as he does Abraham's. Here again, James 1:13, what else can I say, the trying of our faith worketh what? Patience. Patience.

Now we begin to see clearly Abraham a type of God the Father and Isaac a type of Christ. Genesis 22:2 again says "thine only son whom thou lovest." Then the next thing I want to draw your attention to is he says there in Genesis 22:2 that they are to go to the land of Moriah on one

of the mountains that's there. Now there are seven mountains in the Bible in the New Testament and this one right here that he's told to go to is Mount Moriah. Now I don't know what you know about the Bible but I'm telling you right now Mount Moriah is exactly where Jesus Christ was crucified in the New Testament. I would tend to say that this sacrifice takes place on the exact same spot where 3,000, 4,000 years later Christ's cross was. He's crucified on Mount Moriah and so he tells him in his perfect picture and a perfect type of a perfect sacrifice to go to the exact same spot that these sacrifices going to be made centuries later.

Now look at Genesis 22:3-5. Their journey to Mount Moriah, Mount Calvary, Genesis 22:4 says it's a three day journey. That's three days to get there and three nights. Now if you would allow me to show you how if you don't think the devil was all over this you don't know much about the devil. Now obviously Abraham and Isaac had a great relationship probably much like you have with your children. Abraham obviously did not tell anybody what he was going to do and where he was going. He kept it all inside. And yet he knows that three days from now he's going to have to kill that boy on the altar and give him back to God.

Do you ever have a big decision in my life, Bob, where you had to make it and you had to really it was a major decision and after you made it and you said I'm going to do it the old devil got you to second guess yourself all over the place. I always think of poor Noah. For 120 years he tried to tell people that it was going to rain in a world that it had never rained before. And there's this kook building the SS Titanic out there in his backyard when there wasn't any water or any oceans around for thousands of miles. And they'd say to him what are you doing and he'd say the Lord's going to wipe out the earth with water and they laughed him but he kept building the boat. I bet there were many nights when he went home from working that day that he said, "Boy, Lord, I hope You're right." But there was a group down here today with big signs and they were saying, "You know, I'm a Noah's nuts," and "Well, this thing," and "Lord, I just, I'm becoming a fool out of this thing," and "Lord, I just, are You sure that I get this right?" "Yeah, you got it right."

I'm sure that old Abraham when he built that campfire at night and the other two guys are off doing their thing and it's kind of chilly and Isaac snuggles up to his dad and puts his arm around him and puts his head on his shoulder and he says, "Father, I sure do love you." And Abraham has to look away, tears welling up in his eyes that that son he loves just three days from now he's going to have to put a knife in his heart and give him back to God. The second night, they built that campfire every day closer to Moriah. They built that campfire down there and he's sitting there all by himself and Isaac brings him over a cup of coffee and says, "Here, Dad, I know you like your coffee before you go to bed. I just wanted to talk to you and tell you how much I love you. You're the best dad in the world." Boy, he took that cup of coffee and looked into that fire. Those tears began to spread down his face and Isaac said, "Daddy, Daddy, are you okay? What are you crying for?" He says, "Oh, it's okay, I just got a cinder from the fire in my eyes. You go ahead and go to bed." Don't you know for a second the devil didn't work him over. That devil will try to get me to do everything to go against what God's told me to do. He will play and pull the heartstrings if we give them to him. He'll manipulate our emotions, our feelings if they're not grounded into the principles of the Word of God.

Look at Genesis 22:5. They finally get to the third day. "And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." Wow. I don't know all the insides of his relationship with God. I just get what the Bible tells me, but I'm telling you right now, he knew that he was going to come back with that boy. He knew that no matter what God said there was going to be a resurrection involved and he was going to bring that boy back. I know it because it says the third day and on the third day guess who came out of that tomb. You see, you got Isaac and the other two men just like they had Christ and the two thieves. Notice how he separates Isaac from the other two. I mean, you got one cross here, one cross here, one cross up here. He's committed with the criminals but he's higher than they are. He's deity. So he separates them out. Abraham believed somehow, some way, he had come to the place in his relationship with God that through the toughest time in his life he was willing to give the ultimate sacrifice of his son's life if that's what God required. Knowing and believing that God was going to do and keep His Word. Boy, I'll tell you what, this find Abraham over here in Romans 4:17. Boy, what a great principle to add to this thing where it says Abraham had the ability to see those things which are not as though they were. That's really the goal of my life. I can't speak for you. I wouldn't presume to speak for you, but that's really the goal of my life. I'm certainly not there, but I want to get to that place where I can see things that are not and see them as though they were. That's God. That's God showing you, me, what He doesn't show somebody else.

Now look at Genesis 22:6. "And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together." Now look at that. He puts the wood of the sacrifice on Isaac's back for him to carry just like in Mark 15:21. They put the cross on the back of the Lord Jesus Christ and He carried the wood to Calvary's cross, Mount Moriah. Note the fire and the knife. The fire was the judgment of God on His Son. The knife was the Word of God that separated Him from His Son for you and for me. On that cross in Matthew 27:46 Christ called out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" You know why? For me. The fire of God came down and the wrath of God fell on Him and the knife of God separated Him from God's fellowship for me. Christ let the Word of God separate Him from His Father for me but I won't let it separate me from the world for Him. There's my problem. Can't speak for you.

Now look at Genesis 22:7-8. Unbelievable. "And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together." Oh, what an answer. Oh, probably the greatest single answer in the Bible for me. What an answer. You know what he said? He said, "Don't worry, son. God will supply Himself a lamb." And He did. Abraham saw that day. Don't know how much of it he saw. Don't know how much of it he understood. Genesis 22:14 says "In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen." But he knew enough to know that God Himself would provide a lamb. Maybe he's shocked because of what he's seen in the pattern of God that how that when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden and tried to hide their nakedness with fig leaves, God Himself came down and killed something innocent that covered their nakedness. Maybe he remembered the story of Abel when Abel wanted to give a sacrifice that he had to give

something innocent to cover that. And maybe he saw how Cain didn't do it and then he saw how God offered for Cain to make the right sacrifice. Whatever the case, John 8:56 says that Abraham rejoiced and was glad and saw His day.

Now look at Genesis 22:9-10. "And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son." What an incredible picture this is of Christ's total obedience to the Father in His sacrifice. Now I don't have to give anybody an explanation here. You know that Abraham is 99 years old. You know that Isaac is a young strapping young man. He could have fought his father off. He could have said, "No way am I doing that. I don't know what your deal is, Dad. You lost your mind. I am not getting on that altar." There was no fight for Isaac. He trusted his father and willingly climbed up on that altar to offer himself for a sacrifice. He was willing to become the sacrifice to get the job done if that's what it took. He could have said, "I'm not." He let him bind him. He let him put him on that wood and he's standing there looking at his father asking him, "Where is the lamb?" And Abraham can't give him a good answer other than God's going to provide it. But all the time Isaac never complained. He never questioned the father. He was a picture of total obedience to his father. And for me, that's a picture of what my obedience should be to Him.

VI. The Call to Personal Sacrifice

This is where it becomes very real for me. I am sorry. I even questioned preaching this and just jumping over it and getting into the next chapter because you're all too stupid. You would know I missed this. Yeah, right. But I would never, this whole sermon, I'm not preaching to you. I'm preaching to me. I'm going to tell you something right now. God was a sacrifice for us that we could be the sacrifice for Him. You know why? I won't preach this message to you today because I'm not going to put you on that altar. If you're ever going to become the sacrifice for God, you've got to crawl on that altar by yourself. You can't do it because somebody manipulated through hard preaching or emotional preaching or pulled some of your heartstrings. You can't do it that way. You have to decide that you are going to trust the Father that you can crawl up on that altar. A total sacrifice of my life to Him, whatever it takes.

I am not in control of this world. I'm not in control of the circumstances of this world. But I will tell you what I am in control of. I am in control of when, where, how I will be that sacrifice. This is what in church history, so far from Christianity, this is what drove the Moravian missionaries. These are the men over there with Count Zinzendorf and August Spangenberg back in the 1600s that they got a little parcel of ground and built a mission station and trained men and women to reach the world. When they fulfilled their training, they gave him a one-way ticket wherever God had called them.

I read the stories of men and women like that. I read the stories of the Moravian missionaries that had a burden for the black man. They had such a burden, they cared nothing about their life. They sold themselves into the black slave market even if they were white. They sold themselves never having their freedom again, never being a free man, almost to a certain death at some point

in time. They didn't care because they had a greater mandate. I want to tell you right now, if that was modern day God's people, they'd stand down at the slave trader docks while they're getting off and throwing tracts. They'd have somebody with a billboard and said, "John 3:16" on it like they do in the end zone of the football games.

Now, they understood sacrifice. They realized that if that's what it took them going and selling their freedom for the rest of their lives to be in chains, to be a slave, to win other black men to Christ. Now here it comes. Don't you give me this crap. That's the real Black Lives Matter. You idiot. That's a man having a burden to reach as far as he can in the life that he spent that he has as a slave, which wasn't long. But he says, "God, I don't know how long I got, but this is the burden and I'm going to take the rest of my life that You give me and I'm going to reach as many people in that slave trade as I can."

I don't know what to do with that. My nice house, my cars. I definitely got more shoes in my closet than I got feet. I can't speak for you. I asked myself, how am I going to stand at the judgment seat of Christ with my stupidity, my things, and face a man that did what He did? I think of Mary Reed who became a missionary to the lepers. She didn't go down and just have a little compound outside the gate and pass tracts. 50 years she lived among them. She said in the work that I read years ago, "If I die with leprosy, if I die by the disease with these people that they have, that's okay because I know this is what God's called me to do and my mandate is to reach as many of these lepers in the time that I have." She told the story. Many of them. She had to dress them in the mornings, feed them their three meals. Why? Leprosy had eaten off their hands. She had to bathe them. She had to carry them to wherever they went because leprosy had eaten their feet. 50 years. I think of Bernice Lee, 30 years in India, working with lepers. They understood sacrifice. They understood that their life didn't matter. All that mattered was the sacrifice that God made for them. Now they're going to make one for Him and praise God if they died of leprosy, the worst thing that could happen, promotion to glory.

I don't know what to do with that, man. I'm going out this afternoon looking for a leper. I don't know what to do. But I understand that in Leviticus 11 that leprosy is a type of sin. And leprosy gets in three forms. It'll get in your flesh. It'll get in your clothes. It'll get in your house. So just like Mary Reed and Bernice, I'll take my ministry to the lepers of this world who are caught in the leprosy of sin.

You don't want to miss in Genesis 22:11-14 how I pictured this. Abraham standing there looking at that boy and that altar, raises that knife, puts that up and boy, I'll tell you what. Don't ever doubt for a second if God's hand hadn't stopped him, he'd have put that knife right in his heart. Then in Genesis 22:13, maybe this don't mean nothing to you, but to me it means everything. He's right there in the middle of that sacrifice obeying God. And then what did God give him the ability to do? "And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked." In every bad situation I have to face in life, I can't speak for you. But every bad situation I've ever had to face in life or I will always go face in life, no matter how bad I get, I'm going to look up with my eyes and I'm going to look because God's hand will be there for me. When he looked up his eyes, that ram was caught in the thicket. Boy, from that, I learned a real lesson. Sometimes, boy, I've learned this, and I can't speak for you, sometimes God would hang me out there in a terrible situation just to see if I was

willing to be that sacrifice. But I want you to notice he stopped Abraham's hand for his son, but he never stopped His hand on His Son for me.

VII. Conclusion: Ready for Either

I'll be honest with you, my greatest fear for myself in these end times, and it can get very confusing. In these end times is that I will not be that living sacrifice to get the job done. That I won't come to the place that I'll be willing no matter where I go or what I have to do, that I'll look at my life as a mandate like the Moravians that I will do as long as God gives me the strength to do it, to carry out the work that He started in my heart and ask God every day of my life, allow me to be that sacrifice. I cannot even in my wildest dreams think of going home to be in heaven without me willingly laying myself in that altar. No matter what that means, no matter what it takes. I don't care what. I don't care anything about this world. I don't care anything about what anybody says or what anybody does. This world is going to hell in a handbag so fast. I got one mandate. That is to take what I have, what God has given me, and the best way I know how, working my way through this thing, whatever that means, reaching as many people as I can before my time comes to an end. And if I die in the process, so what? I'll do it for Him by the grace of God what He did for me.

Colossians 3:3 says I'm already dead and my life is hid with Christ. When I was in the Army, the Vietnam War was raging and combat troops that you might know what got sent to Vietnam, they were obviously afraid. They saw death, destruction, dying. Saw their buddies being killed. Saw their friends and after a while they learned you don't make friends. They don't want to know your name. They don't want to know where you're from because it's too hard when you get killed. I remember, Sergeant said one time, he says, "Boys," he says, "when you get over there and you get in the middle of all that," he says, "here's the easiest way to deal with it. The moment you stop off at C-130 to drop you off wherever you're at, consider yourself already dead. Quit thinking about going home. Quit thinking about your wife, your girlfriend, or your boyfriend, or whatever. Quit thinking about anything, your job, the car you're going to buy. Just consider yourself already dead." He says if you can do that, it'll be a lot easier when you get into the mix of it all because you won't be worrying about the things you shouldn't worry about. Now I don't know where he got that piece of advice other than it came out of the Bible because that's exactly what every one of us should be. You're already dead and your life is hid with Christ. So it isn't about how I die in this world because I've already been told I'll never see it nor will I taste it. So I don't have to worry about that. The concept for me is in the time that I have left, lay it all on the table for Him to get that job done.

I care nothing about what follows me. I don't care if I get COVID-19, 21, 31, 45, or 65 and die. To me it's shot or no shot. I don't care. I don't care if I die of cancer. I don't care if I die in bed. For over 50 years of my life by the grace of God, I wished I could say that I was perfect in it but I wasn't. But I can tell you this, I tried to hold the line. 50 years after I started my ministry, you can look at the guys out there that are all over the place, have dumped the book, dumped the teaching, they're all over the wall. I preach the exact thing today. I preached 50 years ago and you older people, you know exactly that's true. You know why? Because I'm not changing. You

say you're trying to change the world. I'm not trying to change the world. I'm just not going to let the world change me. Because one way or the other, it doesn't matter to me. I will stay in this fight. I'll try to reach as many people as I can no matter how I can because at the end of the day, I'm just around the corner from my promotion to glory. And it doesn't matter to me. I can't speak for you.

I'm done with all this. I don't trust anything anybody tells me out there outside of what the Word of God lays out. I'm like the Moravians. Their crest was a big shield with a plow and an altar with a motto that said, "Ready for either." And their motto was they were ready to plow the fields with the gospel of Jesus Christ till Christ came back or they were willing to lay themselves on the altar and be the sacrifice if that's what God wanted them to do. And brother, they did. I say that as by the grace of God, oh dear Lord, give me the same courage to do the same thing. Ready for either.

All I want at the end of the day is like I said about Abraham back there in Isaiah and over there in James that he was the friend of God. Friends in this life will come and go. And you have some that stay with you forever and they're dear friends and you love them. But I won't tell you even in that things change. But He's the best friend I'll ever have. This is why Jesus in John 8:56, He brought up Abraham and He said he saw His day and he rejoiced. This is why this story is so important to me. This is why I couldn't come here in a clear conscience and preach to you. But I could come as your pastor with a clear conscience and preach to me.

I'm not afraid of dying for the Lord because He took the sting out of it. I will never see death nor taste of it because He saw it and tasted it for me. He became my sacrifice, my ram. So I now can be in return a sacrifice for Him. He paid the price for me. By the grace of God, I want to be willing to pay it for Him. In these last days I will do whatever I have to do to reach as many as I can to carry the gospel as far as I can. I will work around the limitations. I will sidestep everything I can and I will do everything in my power till the day my spirit goes back to God and my soul goes home to be with the Lord and my promotion day comes.

Years and years and years ago I had the privilege of seeing a, I was either a first or second lieutenant I can't remember now, but he got awarded our nation's highest award, the Congressional Medal of Honor. A lot of people get confused under terminology about the Medal of Honor and they say, "Well, he won the Medal of Honor." Don't ever say that in the presence of a real soldier. You don't win the Medal of Honor. You get awarded the Medal of Honor. I'll never forget that day. They had, oh, I don't know, the whole fort lined up in parade because after he gets the medal they all parade and review and he reviews the troops. It must have been five, six, seven thousand guys all lined up by companies. Every general four star and down was there and the guy that was given the award was a four star general. I was lucky enough at that time because I was, you know, found out I played the trumpet so I was doing all the funerals all through New England and I got to play the colors when the flag came in. Standing there.

But I never forgot that day and it has made an impact on me as a Christian so much. I watched those six thousand guys lined up and I watched his company out in front and when that commander in general called off his name he walked out of that crowd just as crisp and smart as

you ever saw in your life and he walked right up to that little platform. Then some adjutant got up and he read the citation of what he had done to be awarded the Medal of Honor. Incredible. Then that commanding general took out that Medal of Honor and put it around his neck. Traditionally, once you receive the Medal of Honor you never salute an officer again no matter if he's the general, the president, everybody salutes you. That comes with a medal. You never salute an officer again. Everybody salutes you, including the President of the United States. But that last salute is a salute that when he puts that medal on that you salute him and I'll never forget it. He put that net around him, the general stepped back, that guy saluted that general. That general never returned his salute. You know what he did? He reached out his hand and he took that soldier's hand and he clasped it on his hand and he says, "Son, well done. You did a good job." Then he backed up and went on into his thing and I looked at that and I thought to myself years, years, years later today, that's all I want. When I get home to heaven I don't want medals. I don't want crowns. I don't even care if we're getting an inheritance. When I step out of that assembled universe of the judgment seat of Christ and I step up there before Him, all I want is for Him to take my hand and say to me, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." And when He does that, you're going to see the Pentecostal in me and I'm going to jump higher than the clouds because at the end of the day, brother, that's all I want. All I want is Him to be my friend. He's my general, He's my captain, He's my commander in chief, but I want Him to be my friend. And the way I know He can be my friend is understanding the sacrifice that He made for me and then be willing to make the sacrifice for Him. It's just that simple.

This world is upside down. You're the only light left. I am telling you right now, you better look deep on your sacrificial chart and see where you fit into it. Don't go out of this fight with your tail between your legs. Don't go out of this fight not standing tall. Whatever your stand at, whatever your decision at, don't go out with your tail between your legs. You go out standing. You go out reaching everybody you can because it'll become a time when we're all going home to be promoted to glory. Now I think it will be the greatest thing in the world for us to all get raptured right now. We all get to go up together. We've done everything else together. Why not do this together? I mean, did you ever try to see this place say goodbye at night? It takes three hours. I wonder Larry was upset. But it would be great to end it that way, wouldn't it? Okay. That's probably not going to happen. They're going to get us one at a time. Stand your ground. Preach the word. In season, out of season. Give it everything you got. Hold that line. Reach as many people as you can. Let your light shine. Sell yourself into the slavery of the Lord Jesus Christ to reach the lepers and the slaves of this world. Give it everything you got in these last days. But the only way we'll ever do that, you, the only thing I'm saying to you, you and me, we'll have to decide to crawl up on that altar by yourself. You have to decide if you're going to be that sacrifice. I can't decide it for you. Nobody else can decide it for you. That is something that comes out of your personal walk and relationship with God. He paid the price for you. Now let's see if I'm willing to pay it for Him.

Every head bowed, every eye closed. Father, we do thank you and praise you today for the Lord Jesus. What a great story. Lord, I don't know if anybody else enjoyed this, but I did. I needed it. I needed to remind myself. I needed to remind myself to put my head down, put my shoulders down and blow through that line one more time. Give it everything I got. I just get it done, Lord.

Whatever I got to do, however it's got to go, make sure that in these last days, nobody is left out of the circle of a message that you have for me to give them. Let me, Father, be faithful in these last days. Lord, again, I can't speak for anybody in this room nor would I ever try to because it comes down to their own personal gut level relationship between you and them. I have no part of that and no business in that. My business is me and you. Thank you, Father, for this church, for the men and women in it. Thank you, Father, for what you've done in my life and the lives of my family. And I pray, Father, that we will continue to do what you've called us to do. And we just love you now and praise all this. In Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

All right. Don't forget, sign up up here for the caroling deal. Sign up over on this side for the nursing home. Don't leave home without it today. Do it. And let's have a good time. We'll get the gifts ready and everything will be ready to rock and roll. We'll have fun. God bless. Amen. Amen.