

I Am Your Great Reward

by Anton Bosch

The sermon explores the relationships in Abraham's life to illustrate the importance of faith and looking to God as our true reward.

Duration: 41:29

Scripture: Genesis 14:13

Topics: "Rewards"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of not stopping at the end of a chapter when reading the Bible, as it can cause us to miss out on powerful blessings and the continuation of the story. The sermon focuses on the story of Abram in Genesis chapter 14, where he fought a battle and rejected the offerings of Sodom. The speaker highlights the faith of Abraham and how he is considered the father of all those who believe. The sermon concludes with the reminder that God is our shield, protector, and exceedingly great reward.

Transcript

Let's turn to the word and we're in the book of Genesis chapter 14 today. I want to speak with you from the Old Testament, Genesis chapter 14. We have been speaking on Sunday evenings from the book of Romans and going through Romans verse by verse.

And this evening, for those who want to do a little bit of preparation, we'll be dealing with the first five or six verses of Romans chapter five. And in Romans chapter four, we saw the emphasis that is placed on the faith of Abraham and that Abraham really is the father of all those who are faithful, all of those who believe. And so he is the father of not just the Jews, but he is the father of the Christian.

And in Genesis, we read something about the history of Abraham. And there's been some reference made to this. I think the senior Sunday school class has been studying some aspects of this.

And so as I looked at it again, there was just some things that blessed me in this passage. And so I want to speak with you from Genesis chapter 15, particularly, but I want to read from Genesis 14. So let's read Genesis 14 and verse 13 through chapter 15, verse one.

Genesis 14, verse 13. Then one who had escaped came and told Abraham the Hebrew, for he dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, the Amorite brother of Eshkol and brother of Anna, and they were allies with

Abraham. Now, when Abraham heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his 318 trained servants who were born in his own house and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

He divided his forces against them by night. He and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hova, which is north of Damascus. And so he brought back all the goods and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the woman and the people.

And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shavla, which is the king's valley. And after he's returned from the defeat of Shaddai Leoma and the kings who were with him, sorry, after the defeat of Shaddai Leoma and the kings who were with him, then Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine. He was the priest of the God most high and blessed him and said, blessed be Abraham of God most high, possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be God most high who has delivered your enemies into your hand.

And he gave him a tithe of all. Now the king of Sodom said to Abraham, give me the persons and take the goods for yourself. But Abraham said to the king of Sodom, I have raised my hand to the Lord, God most high, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will take nothing from a thread to a sandal strap and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, I have made Abram rich, except only that the young men have eaten and the portion of the men who went with me, Anna, Eshkol, and Mamre, let them take their portion.

After these things, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision saying, do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward. Abraham, or Abram as he was at this time still before his name was changed.

Remember that he and his cousin really, it's referred to here as his brother, but it was really his cousin or his nephew Lot had journeyed together and the time came when they had to part because they just had too many cattle and there was disagreement between the herdsmen of Abraham and the herdsmen of Lot. And so they had to part ways. And you remember that Abram, even though he was the senior and he was the leader, he gave his cousin the opportunity to choose where he wanted.

And so Lot looked over the fertile plains of Mamre, sorry, of Sodom and of Gomorrah and of these other cities. And he chose that area. Abram remained where he had been at that time, more in the high desert area.

And so there was a separation. Abram continued serving God. Lot, the scripture says, moved closer and closer to Sodom until eventually he lived within that city.

And I don't want to digress by talking about the terrible sinfulness of the city. I think we all have an idea and a picture of these very, very wicked cities. And in fact, in the New Testament, they are highlighted as being the most wicked cities of all time, including Babylon and Rome and all of the other wicked cities that ever came.

Sodom and Gomorrah are some of the most terrible cities of all time. And so Sodom was attracted by the lights of the city. And so he moved closer and closer until he lived within the city of Sodom.

And then we see that there was an attack that came and it speaks about these kings. And there were five kings against four kings. And of course, they were not kings in the sense of the King of England, but they were kings in the sense that they were chieftains or chiefs over tribes.

And Abraham would be a king in that sense. And you see that Abraham was able to take on with his 318 servants, he was able to take on four of these kings and he was able to win against them. Now, a number of these kings had subjugated or brought under submission Sodom and Gomorrah for 12 years.

And Sodom and Gomorrah obviously had to pay taxes to Chadolioma, this other king. And then in the 13th year, they rebelled against him. And as a result of them rebelling against him, this other King Chadolioma took many of his allies and they came against Sodom and Gomorrah and attacked Sodom and Gomorrah.

And they carried away all of the possessions and everything that was in these cities, including the women and the children and many of the men were taken away as slaves. And in the process, Lot, because he was living in Sodom, was also taken into captivity. And so there goes Lot and his family and his possessions.

And of course, Abraham then heard about this and this is what we have just read. Abraham then responds and Abraham goes and he attacks these kings who had taken captive Lot and Sodom and Gomorrah and the people from those cities. And Abraham wins the battle and he releases Lot and releases the people of Sodom and Gomorrah and returns all of the possessions back to the cities.

And that's the story as far as we have read it. And I want us to look this morning very briefly at four relationships in this story. The relationship between Lot and Sodom, between Abram and Melchizedek, Abram and the king of Sodom and Abram and God.

So Lot and Sodom. And of course, we have already made reference to the fact that Lot was attracted by what was happening in Sodom. Now, we should never say, well, Lot involved himself with the sin of Sodom.

The scripture says in the New Testament that righteous Lot, in other words, he never involved himself with a sin and the scripture says that he vexed his soul daily. He constantly fretted and was constantly disturbed by the goings on of the city. And yet somehow he was attracted by it.

I don't know whether it was the opportunity to make money or the commerce or the comfort of living in a city or what it was that attracted him. So while he was not, his morals were not affected by the morals of that city, at the same time he liked the city and he wanted to be there instead of being separate like Abram was. And I think that that speaks to us of many Christians who while they don't involve themselves in the sins and the stuff that goes on in the world are attracted by the world and want to get out of their relationship with the world whatever they can get out of that relationship.

Now, I want you to see the difference between Lot and Abram. Abram says, no, I'm looking to God but Lot was looking to these kings and what they could do for him and what he could get out of the situation. And there are these two mindsets.

The one is an earthly focused mindset and even though Lot was righteous, he was looking to the world to supply his needs whether those were social needs or whether they were financial needs but he was looking to the world to meet his needs. Abram on the other side, you see that even when Sodom, the king of Sodom wants to give him all the stuff, he says, I don't want the stuff. I'm not interested in what you have to offer because I'm looking to God.

And so the question we need to ask is where are we looking for our support? Where are we looking for our strength and for our sustenance and for our needs to be met? Are we looking to the world and are we

making friends with the world in order to get out of the world whatever they can give us or are we looking to God? There is the difference. Now, when Sodom, sorry, when Lot looked to Sodom, you see that there are two things that I want to just highlight that happened here in Lot and Sodom. First of all, because Lot aligned himself with Sodom, he was taken captive when Sodom was taken captive.

Lot was not affected by this war that was going on between Sodom and these other kings, but Lot was because he had aligned himself with Sodom. And we often say, well, you know, I'm not in the world, you know, I'm in the world, but I'm not of the world, but I really want to be friends with the world. I want to find, I want to feel at home amongst the people in the world.

But you know what, when evil happens, when bad things happen in those situations, you will be taken together in that situation. That's applied in a very real sense today. You may have friends and there may be people, young people who have friends with gangbangers.

And you say, well, I'm not part of the gang. I'm not taking the drugs. I'm not doing the stuff that the gang is, but you know, I want to hang out with these guys.

But you know what, when the cops come, what's going to happen? You're going to be taken with them. You're going to be regarded as being one with them. It's the same process.

And so this is exactly what happened to a lot. And so when we, maybe it's not the gangs, maybe it's just the world, whatever it is. But when we identify ourselves with the world and its system, when that goes down, we will go down with it.

But at the same time, there is something different that happens here also. And it's a contrast and it seems to be a contradiction, but it's not really. And that is that when, because Lot was in Sodom, Sodom was blessed because Lot was there, because Abraham rescued the whole of Sodom, not because he wanted Sodom, but because he wanted his nephew to be saved.

And so there was a blessing. And so sometimes when we associate with the world because we have to, and I don't believe we should choose to do so, there is a blessing that comes upon those around us if we are truly righteous people, like Lot was, a righteous man. But I want to really focus on Abraham this morning and just look at Abraham and, first of all, Melchizedek.

And I'm not going to get into this whole thing about who was Melchizedek. Was he Jesus or wasn't he Jesus? He was a type of Jesus. And you see that he was the king of Salem.

And it's interesting that the one was the king of Sodom and the other one was the king of Salem. Salem meaning peace. And so he was the king of peace.

The scripture calls him the king of righteousness. We don't know who he is. And the scripture says he has no genealogy.

We don't know where he comes from. We don't know who his father and his mother is. We don't know when he died and how he died.

So we don't know. There's just this mythical figure. And he appears suddenly there to Abraham.

And here's a picture of Jesus. And the book of Hebrews speaks a lot about him. And I want you to see what Melchizedek does.

He does this strange thing. It says in verse 18, Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine. He brought out bread and wine.

Where do we have bread and wine? At the Lord's table. And I'm not sure that this was a type, but it probably was a foreshadow of the Passover. Because remember the Passover had not yet been instituted.

The Passover would come later on and the Lord's table or the Lord's supper or communion would come much later on. 2,000 years later, Abraham lived 2,000 years before Christ. So exactly as long as we now live after Christ, Abraham lived before Christ.

So Abraham lived 4,000 years ago. And so Abraham here has this strange meeting with Melchizedek who gives him bread and wine. And of course, this is a picture of what Jesus would come to do eventually.

And then Abraham responds and he also does this strange thing, which was long before the law instituted tithing. Abraham gives to him a tithe of all, a tenth of everything, 10% of everything. Now, I don't know, there's a lot of debate as to whether he gave him 10% of the spoils, whether he gave him 10% of everything that Abraham had.

It seems to me that he actually gave everything, 10% of everything that he owned. Now, Abraham was a very, very rich man. And Melchizedek remember was a king.

So Melchizedek was not a poor man himself. So did he need what Abraham had to give him? No, he didn't need it. But it was Abraham's way of blessing him.

And sometimes we say, well, you know, somebody doesn't need something. And so we don't, why should I give them something? But we give because we bless someone by that. When it's someone's birthday or when it is a whatever occasion, we give people gifts and it's a way of blessing them as saying that I like you, that I want to be a blessing to you.

And Abraham is here blessing Melchizedek. And he is in a sense, worshiping him. And if we say that, well, you know, was he worshiping another man? No, I don't think he was worshiping another man because in fact, the scripture says in the book of Hebrews that Melchizedek was a representative of God.

So what Abraham was doing to Melchizedek, he was actually doing to God. And so who was he worshiping? He was worshiping God. And so when we give money to the Lord's work, do we give it to the church? No, we give it to God and we're blessing God.

We're worshiping God in the things that we bring and that we give. And so if Melchizedek then is a picture of Jesus, I want you to see what happens. Jesus gives us his body and his blood.

And I'm not speaking about the communion now, I'm speaking about his body that was broken on the cross and his blood that was shed that our sins might be washed away. What is our response? Well, thank you, Lord, you've given me your body and your blood. Now you need to make me rich.

You need to bless me. No, Abraham's response is, you've given me bread and wine, I'm going to bless you. I'm going to give you what I have to give.

And he gives him 10% of everything that he has. And while we don't often preach about money, it's just part of the story and this is not the point of the story that I want to get to, but sometimes we say, well, you

know, God has given to us so much. He gave us his son.

Jesus died for us on the cross. His body was broken for me. His blood was shed.

Now what else can he give me? No, the response is, he has given me his body and his blood. Let me respond by giving to him what I have to give. Let me give him of my substance.

And that's part of the worship. Now, we have so many wrong teachings today that we give so that God can give back to us. We're sowing seed and all of this kind of stuff.

No, our giving is a response to God's giving to us. God gave us so much. And so we respond by giving to him whatever we are able to give him.

And so we bless him and we worship him by the things that we give to him. And we don't just give money. We also give our time.

We give the praise of our lips. We give him worship. We give him the right attitude, whatever else we're able to give.

We give in response to what he has given to us. We're not buying anything from God. We're not trading with God.

We're not paying God back. It's a response of worship. Lord, you have done so much for me.

Now, let me worship you by giving what I'm able to give to you. And so there's Abraham and Melchizedek. And in verse 21, we now see the picture change between Abram and the king of Sodom.

The king of Sodom's name was Bera. You'll see that in verse two of chapter 14. They made war with Bera, king of Sodom.

And so verse 18 through 20 is Abram and Melchizedek. Sorry, one point I missed in Melchizedek is also that Melchizedek not just gives him bread and wine, but he gives him blessing. He gives him a blessing.

And so you'll see the blessing recorded there in verse 19. Blessed be Abram of God, most high possessor of heaven and earth. And blessed be God, most high, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.

Blessed be Abram of God. I almost forgot to mention that. Notice it doesn't say Abram the victor, Abram the conqueror, Abram the great man, but Abram of God.

That's quite a last name to have. Abram of God, Abram the man of God, Abram who belongs to God, Abram whose relationship and faith is with God. That would be quite a name for us to have.

Whatever your name may be, of God. There was a woman called, I don't remember anything about her, Agnes of God. Do people know you as whoever your name is? Of God.

Of God. Is that what defines you? Is that what makes who you are? We like to say, well, you know, I am of this family. We all have our last name, whatever it may be.

And I'm of German descent, or I'm of Spanish, or I'm of Mexican, or I'm of this kind of descent. This is who I am. Or I am American.

No, Abram of God. That has to be the greatest and the most wonderful connection that you can have. If you want to drop any names, you want to drop the name of God.

One thing to say, well, you know, this man is a Rockefeller, or he is a Gates, or whatever rich family they may be today. But to say that he is a man of God, Abram of God. And so, Melchizedek blesses him.

Now, Abram then interchanges, or speaks with the king of Sodom. Verse 21, now the king of Sodom said to Abram, give me the persons and take the goods for yourself. Now, this king was so happy that Abram had saved his people, that he said, you can take all the things.

You can take all the wealth and everything else that was taken in loot. You can take that. Just give me my people.

All I want is the people to be saved. Now, that seems to be a wonderful gesture. And I'm not sure it was a very genuine gesture on the part of the king of Sodom.

The problem is we can never forget who the king of Sodom was. He was the king of this wicked place. And what does Abram say? He says, I don't want it.

I'm not interested in what you have to offer me. And notice why he says that. He says, because maybe someday somebody will say, you made me rich.

Now, that was very prideful of Abram to not want to be able to say somebody made him rich. No, it was not prideful of Abram. Abram wanted to give glory to God.

Abram knew that what he had and whatever he would be would be because of God. And he was not gonna share God's glory with anybody else. He wasn't going to give anybody an opportunity to say, it wasn't God who blessed Abram, it was the king of Sodom that blessed Abram.

Now, today, we look back over 4,000 years of history and we say God has powerfully blessed Abram. He made him the father of many nations. And out of Abram came Jesus, the Messiah, who through him, all of the nations of the earth have been blessed.

And we can say that it was definitely and it was only God who did this. It was not the king of Sodom. It wasn't anybody else, but it was God who did this.

And you know, sometimes we are tempted to take things from the world, to take systems, programs, ideas, methodologies, money, material, whatever it is that the world has to offer individually and as a church. And we say, well, you know, I can do with what the world can give me. Yeah, maybe you can do with what the world can give you.

But at the end of the day, who's going to receive the glory? Are we going to be able to say it was God who has blessed us and whatever we have, physically, spiritually, in any way, it was God who gave it to us? Or did we take from the world? Now, I'm not saying that the world, that God does not use the world to bless us sometimes. He definitely does that. You remember Elijah the prophet? You remember who fed him? It was the crows, the ravens.

These were unclean birds who scavenge and who pick up prey, kill, road kill and other things that were dead. And yet God used this filthy, unclean animal to feed the prophet. And there are many times that God will use the world and the things of the world to bless us.

But the point is not what God uses. The point is, who are we looking to? Who are we expecting to help us? Are we expecting God to provide for us? Or are we expecting the world to provide for us? Are we looking to God for all of our needs? And I don't just mean money. I mean, all of the things that we need.

Our social relationships, our emotional needs, our psychological needs, our physical needs, our relations, whatever else. Are we looking to the world or are we looking to God? Are we saying, God, you're the one who's able to reward me. You're the one who's able to help me.

You're the one who's able to bless me. Or are we looking to the world? And you know, when the king of Sodom came to Abraham, Abraham says, you can keep it. I'm not interested in what you have to give.

I'm not interested in what you have to offer because I am looking to God to meet my needs. And so he accepted nothing. Verse 23, I will take nothing from a thread to a sandal strap or a shoelace.

I will take nothing from you that I will not have anything that is yours lest you should say, I have made Abraham rich. Now, verse 24, he says, accept only what the young men have eaten. So he says, the guys who fought with me, they were entitled to cover their expenses.

That's really what he's saying. I'll give you the receipts. This is what it cost them to go to war on your account.

You pay them. You give them what they need to cover their expenses. That's all I'm asking.

I'm not asking for any gift from you. And folk, I think it's sad that many, many times we as Christians are looking to unsaved people. We're looking to the world and its systems to meet our needs.

And we're saying, you need to help me. You need to give me. When we get into trouble, when we have needs, whatever those needs may be, who do we go to? Who do we look to? Do we look to the world to meet those needs, the systems of the world, the things of the world, or are we looking to God? And now I want you to see the next part of the story, and that is Abraham and God.

So we looked at Lot and Sodom, Abram and Melchizedek, Abram and the king of Sodom, and finally I want to look at Abram and God. And this is in chapter 15, verse one. Now, before I get to that verse, I want you to see a very important thing here, and that is the fact that we have this problem with the chapter divisions because we read one chapter at a time.

Most people will read one chapter, maybe two or three chapters, but we read from the beginning of a chapter to the end of the chapter. And in the process, we lose sometimes some powerful blessings in the word because we stopped at the end of the chapter. And this story does not stop at the end of chapter 14.

It continues into chapter 15. And notice chapter 15 begins, and it says, after these things, after these things. Here's the conclusion.

Here's the real part of the story. So what had happened? Abram had fought the battle and he had got the victory. Abram had rejected the things that Sodom had to offer him.

And after he had done that, after he had done that, what happens? After these things, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision saying. Why does it say that? Why does it say after these things, God spoke to Abram? Because I believe that if Abram had not done what he had done, God would not have spoken to him. God speaking, and this is what the writer Moses is writing.

What Moses is writing here is he's saying, because Abram refused to receive what Sodom had to give him, God spoke to Abram. And so sometimes we grab what we're able to get here and now, something, some temporal blessing, some temporal thing, and in the process, we lose out on something far greater that God has for us. Sometimes we're so short-sighted.

We say, well, here's the king of Sodom. He's offering me this blessing. Let me just take what he has to give me.

But in the process, we lose out on what God can give us. And Abram says, no, I'm not gonna accept what you have to give me. Now, God had not said to him, I'm gonna give you any blessings yet.

All of the promises that God gives to Abram now comes in the next chapter, and it comes as a result of Abram rejecting what Sodom had to offer him. And folks, this is my message this morning, and I trust that we can get and just understand that simple principle. Sometimes we say, well, why does God not bless me like he blesses Abram? Why does God not speak to me like he spoke to Abram? Why does God not use me like he used Abram? Sometimes it is because we short-changed God or the process, and we accepted what Sodom had to give.

Now, this is not just an experience that Abram has. Remember the same thing happened to Jesus. Remember when Jesus was baptized, he goes into the wilderness? He's tempted by the devil.

What does the devil say? Well, you know, turn stones into bread, jump down from the temple, fall down and worship me. If Jesus accepted any of those things, what would have happened to his ministry? He would never have received the ministry. Everything in his life would have failed.

But because Jesus said no to the devil, immediately after that, God begins to use him, and he begins to perform the miracles, and he begins to do his ministry, and God uses him in the powerful way that he used him. And so here's the principle. Don't allow the devil to offer you a substitute for the real thing.

And sometimes we want to grab hold of some temporary thing, some, and yeah, it may seem to be great and wonderful, but it's not what God really has in mind for us. And so Abram said no to what Sodom had to give, and after that, after that, God came to him. Now, sometimes we say, well, you know, we gotta have these two choices.

Why doesn't God show me, this is what Sodom gives, and this is what I'll give you. Now, you choose between the two. Sometimes it happens that way, but many times we only get the one, and God says, I'm not gonna show you what I have, but you choose.

You want me, or you want Sodom? And only when Abram says, I don't want Sodom, then God says, here's what I have for you. And so sometimes we say, well, that's not fair. No, the choice, the issue is, are you satisfied with what God is able to be? Are you satisfied with God? Are you satisfied with Jesus? Or are you looking for something else? And so, this is what happens.

So God speaks to him in a vision, and he says, do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward. Three things he says to him.

Don't be afraid. Now, what was Abram afraid of? Well, remember, he just fought this battle against these kings, and those kings could easily go and find some other kings to ally with them and bring five more kings against Abram, and kill all these people and take him into captivity. Abram had reason to be afraid.

He, remember what happened to the prophet who just brought down fire from heaven and killed all the prophets of Baal? Jezebel went after him. And whenever we win a victory for God, there's gonna be an opposition, there's gonna be a reaction, but don't be afraid. And sometimes we're afraid of winning because we're afraid of the reaction to the victory.

Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid. And it's not a shame to be afraid.

And I was just blessed this week as I read about Paul in the book of Corinthians. And he says, inwardly, he says, outwardly, we had all of these issues, but inwardly, we had to deal with fears. Even Paul, the great apostle, knew what it was to be afraid.

But God says to Abram, and I believe he says to Paul, and he says to each one of us, don't be afraid. Don't be afraid. Why? Because I'm your shield.

What is a shield? It's the protector. It's the shield that stops the attacks and it stops the arrows and the spear and the sword and whatever it is that can come against us. He says, I'm your shield.

I'm standing before you. I'm standing between you and the attack. David knew about this, and David often spoke about the Lord as his shield and his buckler.

The Lord is his protector. And so Abram, maybe he looked at these 318 men and he says, well, this is all I've got. You know, if they come against me with 500, I don't have a chance.

But God says, don't be afraid. I'm your shield. I'm the one who's gonna protect you.

And so let's not be afraid by what man can do to us. Let's not be afraid by what people, let's not be afraid of what the devil can do to us. Our trust and confidence is in God.

And he says, don't be afraid. I am your shield. I will protect you.

I will catch the enemies, blows and attacks. And I will give you the place of shelter and the place of safety. And then finally, and here's the climax of this whole story.

I am your exceedingly great reward. Your exceedingly great reward, not just your great reward, but your exceedingly great reward, super abundantly great reward. But here's the catch.

What is his reward? A million dollars, 10 cities, great blessings. What is Abraham's reward? God says, I am your reward. And so I believe that Abraham had it right.

Because sometimes we're looking for the rewards, the things that God can give us, the things that he can bless us with. And we don't understand that he is our reward. He is our reward.

He is our blessing. We're looking for the things instead of for the person. We come to Christmas time and we're looking for gifts instead of looking for the people.

We want the things that people give us instead of the heart of the people. And so Abraham discovers and he says, or God speaks to Abraham and he says, don't look for the things, look for me. And sometimes, and I think modern Christianity is so much about the things, the blessings that God can give us.

And yes, he does bless us and he does give us things. And he does give us salvation and he does give us health and he does give us many, many blessings. But folks, sometimes we're so involved in the

wrappings that we missed the gift.

And the real gift is the Lord Jesus. And he says, I am your exceedingly great reward. Folks, that's quite something.

Abraham had just turned down a lot of stuff. And maybe if he was like me, he would say, well, God, I just turned down all this stuff. You better give me more stuff.

I just turned down \$2 million here. You better make sure I get \$20 million. And God says, I am your reward.

I am your reward. And folks, that's not a cheap way out from God. What more can he give? God's not saying, I'm gonna give you things.

He says, I'm giving you myself. And when Jesus came, he didn't give us things. Israel was looking for a kingdom.

Israel was looking to be delivered of the Romans. Jesus came and he gave himself. What greater gift, what greater blessing that the eternal God gives himself to us.

And he says, I am your reward. I'm giving myself to you. What response? Remember that Abraham, when he met with Melchizedek, Melchizedek gave him bread and wine.

And Abraham said, well, you gave me bread and wine. Here's a 10th of everything. But here comes God and God doesn't give him bread and wine.

God says, I'm giving you myself. I am your reward. What would the right response be? Well, 10% is not good enough.

I gave 10% when he gave me bread and wine. I better give you everything. That can be the only right response.

Now that's not there. That goes on and deals with God's further communication with Abraham. But folk, I believe that that has to be the response.

He gave me himself. Let me respond and say, God, you gave me yourself. Here am I. So what are we looking for? Are you looking for what Sodom is able to give you? Are you looking for what the world is able to give you? Are you looking for the gifts that God is able to give you? Or have you discovered that he is our exceedingly great reward? Father, we pray that you would help us to be more like Abraham and less like Lot.

Lord, Lot seemed to be looking for the things that Sodom had to offer. And yet Lot, Abraham, looked for what you had to offer. And Father, we pray that this morning we would come to a point where we would realize that everything that this world has to offer and everything that you have to offer is nothing in comparison to yourself.

And Lord, together with the old songwriter, we want to sing that song, you take the whole world, but give me Jesus. Lord, forgive us for not being satisfied with Jesus. Forgive us, Lord, for wanting him plus everything else.

Lord, help us to understand that he is everything we need, that he is the greatest gift that you could ever give to us. And Lord, help us to respond by giving ourselves back to you. Make these things real to us, Lord.

Help us to not just say, well, those are nice ideas and nice thoughts. But Lord, we pray that this may become the attitude of every one of our lives, that you've given yourself for us, that we find you to be our great reward. And Lord, we want to just respond by worshiping you and blessing you.

And so Lord, as we go home, we pray that you go with us, protect us, keep us, not just physically, but keep our hearts and our minds, Lord, bring us together again safely this evening or when we come together again. And Lord, we pray that your spirit would teach these things to us and make them real and write them upon our hearts. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

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