

Session 8: John 17

by Joseph Carroll

The most important thing in life is to do the work that God gives us to do, and we must prioritize our life to serve God by dying to our life in this world.

Duration: 41:35

Scripture: Genesis 24:1

Topics: "Christian Life", "God's Calling", "Sacrifice and Service"

Description

Joseph Carroll emphasizes the significance of fulfilling God's calling in our lives, drawing parallels between Abraham's servant's mission to find a wife for Isaac and the Holy Spirit's role in leading believers to Christ. He stresses that even the smallest tasks given by God hold eternal importance, contrasting them with worldly pursuits that may seem grand but lack lasting value. Carroll encourages listeners to die to their worldly ambitions and desires, highlighting that true fulfillment comes from serving God's purpose. He illustrates this with examples of missionaries who chose humble paths over worldly success, ultimately pointing to Jesus' sacrifice as the ultimate model of selflessness and obedience to God's will.

Transcript

We turn together to Genesis chapter 24. Genesis 24. And Abram was old and well stricken in age, and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things.

And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house that ruled over all that he had, Put I pray thee thy hand under my thigh, and I will make thee swear by the Lord the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell, but thou shalt go unto my country and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me into this land. Must thy needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest.

And Abraham said unto him, Beware that thou bring not my son thither again. The Lord God of heaven which took me from my father's house and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that swear unto me saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land. He shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.

And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this thy of my oath. Only bring not my son thither again. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abram his master, and

swear to him concerning that matter.

And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed. For all the goods of his master were in his hand. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.

And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water. And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water.

And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink, and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also. Let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac, and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master. And it came to pass before he had done speaking, that behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.

And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her. And she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.

And she said, Drink, my lord. And she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.

And she hastened, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the lord had made his journey prosperous or not. And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a gold and earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold, and said, Whose daughter art thou? Tell me, I pray thee, is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in? And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, which she bear unto Nahor.

She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough in room to lodge in. And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the lord. And he said, Blessed be the lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth.

I being in the way, the lord led me to the house of my master's brethren. And the damsel ran and told them of her mother's house these things. And Rebecca had a brother, and his name was Laban.

And Laban ran out unto the man unto the well. And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebecca, his sister saying, Thus spake the man unto me, that he came unto the man, and behold he stood by the camels at the well. And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the lord, wherefore standest thou without? For I have prepared the house and room for the camels.

And the man came into the house, and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him. And there was set meat before him to eat, but he said, I will not eat until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on.

And he said, I am Abraham's servant, and the lord hath blessed my master greatly, and he has become great. And he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and men's servants, and maid's servants, and camels, and asses. And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master whom when she was old, and unto him hath he given all that he hath.

And my master made me swear saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites in whose land I dwell, but thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son. And I said unto my master, Peradventure, the woman will not follow me. And he said unto me, The lord before whom I walk will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way.

And thou shalt take a wife for my son of thy kindred into my father's house. Then shalt thou be clear from this my earth, when thou comest to my kindred, and if thou shalt not, if they give not thee one, thou shalt be clear of my earth. And I came this day unto the well, and said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way, I go.

Behold I stand by the well of water, and it shall come to pass that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink. And she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels. Let the same be the woman whom the Lord hath appointed out for my master's son.

And before I done speaking in my heart, behold, Rebecca came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder, and she went down unto the well and drew water. And I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee. And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also.

So I drank, and she made the camels drink also. And I asked her, and she said, Whose daughter art thou? She said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom milker bear unto him. And I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands.

And I bowed down my head and worshipped the Lord, and blessed the Lord God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son. And now, if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me, and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left. Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceeded from the Lord, we cannot speak unto thee bad or good.

Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken. And it came to pass that when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth. And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah.

He gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things. And they did eat and drink, and he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night. And they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master.

And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten, after that she shall go. And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way, send me away, that I go to my master. And they said, We will call the damsel, and quiet her mouth.

And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go. It's a long reading, but we are coming to a point in our message, and I believe it's of the Lord to refresh ourselves of

that incident that took place back there in Genesis 24, and why the Holy Spirit has given so much attention to that incident. Shall we turn again to John 17.

John chapter 17. Verse 4, I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

God gave his son something to do. God gives you, God gives me something to do. We'd better do it.

The smallest thing in the eyes of men that God gives you to do is of far greater importance than the greatest thing in the eyes of men that man could give you to do. Now you underline that. The smallest thing that God could give you to do is of far greater importance in the eyes of God than the greatest thing that man could give you to do.

I was speaking with a young man here today with his wife, and he told me when he was at a certain seminary, a very conservative seminary, they motivated the students there by saying, now if you don't learn to expound the scriptures, you'll finish up in a little country church. That's one seminary not to send your son to. Tell me that.

Well what if it's the will of God for him to finish up in the little country church? If that's the will of God, the little country church, that's the place and the only place where he will find true fulfillment and the blessing of God upon him in the fullest manner. It's the only place. You be careful that man does not give you the work that you are doing, and that you haven't chosen to do this work, of course, for the Lord.

Like many young people who say, Lord help me to run my life for your glory. Lord doesn't do that. Help me to run my life for your glory.

Help me to fulfill this great plan I have for my life, for your glory. That's a lot of nonsense. God gives you a work to do, and that is the only work you are to do.

No other work. No other work. In the eyes of men it may not be very significant.

It doesn't matter. You view your work here from eternity's viewpoint, not from the viewpoint of time. What will your work that you do here mean in eternity? That's the important point.

What God gives you to do will last for eternity. What man gives you to do will finish with man. That's a very important truth.

I'm sometimes asked, what plans do you have for your children? None. None? No. The Lord has a plan for them, and we must find out what that is.

Is that your attitude? What plans do you have for your children? You'd better scrap them, and get the Lord's plan. Oh well, he must do this, and he must do that. Who said he must do this, and he must do that? Did the Lord say that? The Word of God tells me that all things were created by Jesus Christ, all things were created by him, and for him.

For him. You were created for Jesus Christ. I was created for Jesus Christ.

I was not created for my wife, for my children, for a career, for the enjoyment of my life here on earth. I was created for Jesus Christ, and he has given me a work to do, and by the grace of God, I will do it. You must find out what God wants you to do, and you must do it, but you will never find it out unless you are

willing to do the will of God, irrespective of what the will of God is.

I spoke to that same young man today, and the Lord may be leading him to the work here, and I spoke about the arrangements we have, and he said, Brother Carroll, if the Lord led me to a work like this, the money's nothing, the housing's nothing, the only thing that matters is the will of God. He's a good man. That's the only thing that matters, the will of God.

I trust the Lord will send him. Maybe he won't. Perhaps we're not worthy of a man of that caliber, but maybe he will.

You pray for the man. He'll come to a decision about the end of August. I want to say again, the smallest thing in the eyes of men that God gives you to do is of far greater importance than the greatest thing that man could give you to do.

I've used the illustration before of the Scottish medical student in Edinburgh, who graduated with honors, a genius, and they all prophesied this fantastic medical career for him, until one evening at a celebrated gathering, to the horror of the intellectual elite of the university, he revealed that he was going to the mission field as a missionary doctor, and he was going to be buried in an unknown place, doing very mundane medical tasks. They were horrified. And you will recall what one said to him, this is no way to get on in the world, and the young man smilingly said, which world? Which world? Listen my friends, if you do not die to this world, you can never serve Jesus Christ.

You can underline it. And when I speak about dying to this world, I'm not speaking about anything that is sinful. I'm speaking about an attitude to your life in this world.

I'm speaking about marriage. I'm speaking about choices. I'm speaking about children.

I'm speaking about homes. I'm speaking about careers. Service begins only when death takes place to your life in this world, not before.

Except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it.

He that hateth his life in this world, for my sake shall keep it unto life eternal. Now you underline that, he that hateth his life in this world, his life in this world. The Lord's not speaking about sin.

There's nothing wrong with the corn of wheat. It has a tremendous potential, but the potential can never be realized until it dies. And the potential from your life and the potential from my life can never be realized until the death takes place.

And out of death, out of that death springs forth life for others. That is service. Life for others springing forth out of your death to your life in this world.

You cannot serve Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit until you die to your life in this world. And then what God gives you to do, you will do it as unto the Lord. And it will be a passion until you've done it.

Alexander Duff was one of the great missionaries of all time, Presbyterian missionary to India. And when he was a very old man, he had returned from India to stand before the assembly of Scotland, Presbyterian assembly of Scotland. And he made an impassioned appeal to that assembly for young men to go out to India.

And as he was preaching, he collapsed on the platform. And they had to carry him to the entrance of the building and out into the open air. They were to put him in a horse carriage and take him to a hospital.

And when he reached the outside of the building, he returned to consciousness. And he said, where am I? They said, we are taking you to the hospital. He said, what has happened? They said, you collapsed whilst you were preaching.

He said, take me back. They said, we can't. He said, take me back.

They said, if we take you back, you will die. He said, if you don't take me back, I'll die. That's passion, isn't it? How can you have utter self-forgetfulness until you die to yourself? Have a little plan for yourself tonight? Forget it.

God has a bigger one. There's a little book on that table, the biography of Geoffrey, a great missionary with the Christian and Missionary Alliance, one of the first missionaries to Vietnam or to Indochina as it was then. Geoffrey was a brilliant man.

He was a very sick man. He was a diabetic. And he did a lot of his work in bed.

He was so ill. Out there in that awful climate of Indochina, most of the time in bed. He's just too weak.

But what he accomplished. And an oil company, a certain big American oil company, in the Orient, offered him the position of authority over all that they had out there in the Orient at a fabulous salary. They could see the great gifts the man had.

He had tremendous executive ability. And so they offered him this great position. And you know what he said? He said, I would rather be a little man with a big job than a big man with a little job.

And he remained a missionary. I would rather be a little man with a big job than be a big man with a little job. In the eyes of the world, he was a little man, he was just a missionary.

He could have been the top executive of this oil company and a fabulous salary, a big man. But he said, I'd be a big man with a little job. I'd rather be a little man with a big job.

Thank God. God gave his son something to do. And he did it.

In order that he might do what his father gave him to do, he had to give up everything. Have you ever meditated upon what the Lord Jesus gave up? He finally gave up life itself and was a corpse. That's the finish of everything.

The first thing he gave up was his throne. He had to step down from his throne. And we can say so easily, well, the Lord Jesus Christ stepped down to his throne and he came down to earth.

You think of what it cost him to step down from his throne. Worshipped by the countless angels of heaven. In an atmosphere that we don't even begin to understand, we just see us through a glass, darkly, even now, the great truths that we have in the Word of God.

We just see us through a glass, just darkly, just dimly. The Lord of glory. So he steps down from his throne.

And not only does he step down from his throne, but he becomes a man. He becomes part of a creation lower than the angels. He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.

And not only was he made a little lower than the angels, but in identifying himself with this race, he identified himself with all the stench and the putrefaction of sin. And that dedication to self, which is the chief characteristic of the human race. It has been well said that sin crucified his spirit long before it crucified his body.

Can you imagine what it cost the sinless son of God to walk upon this sinful earth amongst sinful men? To be despised and rejected of men and ultimately to be spat upon and crucified a criminal's death. In order that he might do the work that his father gave him to do, he stepped down from his throne. I know as I was preparing this message this afternoon, some people might think, well Edward stepped down from the throne of England.

Yes, he stepped down from the throne of England to his million and a half estate in France with an adulterous woman. It's a step down I'll admit, not much really. It's a very interesting story of a boy and a girl who were at Wheaton.

They met in a navigator's camp during a summer and they became attracted to each other. And the girl didn't tell the boy a great deal about herself, he was quite a poor boy. And he had an old jalopy that he used to take this girl out in and it only had half a windshield and the wiper on the half that was intact didn't work so he had to work it by hand.

And they used to rug up with their heaviest clothing to go out on a winter night in his famous jalopy. And finally he proposed and she accepted. But she never did tell him very much about herself except her name was Miss Cole, he knew that much.

But then she said when he proposed and she accepted him she said well of course we'll have to get father's approval. Father was president of General Motors and a friend of mine who was a friend of the boys went to the wedding and he had to stay the night in the home of the girl. He said I got lost in it, he said I actually got lost.

I couldn't find my own there aren't any rooms in the places I got lost. Now if you said to the president of General Motors I want you to leave that fabulous home you have, I want you to resign from the presidency and become the lowliest janitor in the lowliest place in General Motors and go over and live on the other side of the tracks amongst the negroes. That would be quite a step down wouldn't it? But that is nothing, there is nothing you can compare the surrender of Jesus Christ to, you can't compare anything to it.

Listen my dear friend, especially my young friend, if you are going to serve Jesus Christ you're going to have to step down. You're going to have to forget about all the honors and all the comforts of this earth, you're going to have to forget about all the plaudits of men. So that if God gives you honor it won't mean a thing to you, if God gives you wealth it won't mean a thing to you, if God gives you comfort it won't mean a thing to you.

Jesus Christ will be your satisfaction. And listen, Jesus Christ alone can be your satisfaction, whether you believe it or not or understand it or not. God gave his son a work to do and in order that he might do it he had to step down.

And because he stepped down, because he was willing to become even a curse, God hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name. But everything he had he gave up, everything, until finally death. But listen, Peter said God raised him from the dead and gave him glory.

I tell you that if you're willing to die to your life in this world, God will raise you from the dead and he'll give you glory. He'll give you glory. That's God's method.

He gives you a work to do, if you're going to do that work you're going to have to step down, you're going to have to die to your life in this world. But the deeper the dying, the greater the manifestation of glory in your life in this world. People see something as well as hear something.

If any man serve me, let him follow me. And where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my father honour.

My father will honour him. God raised him from the dead and he gave him glory. At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow.

And that is why we saw last week that ultimately I believe there is only one message, the love of God in Christ. I gave much thought to that tonight preparing this message. What is the ultimate message? The ultimate message is the love of God in Christ.

How is that message conveyed to the world through you? When the love of God brings you to the point of absolute submission to him for Jesus' sake. The ultimate message, the love of God in Christ. In eternity we shall worship the Lamb of God throughout all eternity.

The Lamb, what does the Lamb speak of? The gift of God. Behold, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. He is the gift of God.

But he is a slain Lamb. What does the slain Lamb speak of? The death of Christ. The love of God for the world in the giving of his Son.

The love of Christ for the sinner in the acceptance of the death of the cross. That is the message. And as you study the Bible you will see it right from cover to cover.

When the Holy Spirit gives you eyes to see, I think at times when these truths begin to grip me I need a fire extinguisher. You feel as if you are going to burn out. That thrills me.

Any sort of a preacher should have a fire extinguisher on his desk to put himself out. It's too hot. A person once asked Moody how to have a revival.

He said, get on fire for God and people come to see you burn. Come to see you burn. I tell you, you get a man that's on fire for God and you don't worry very much about his homiletics, whether it's one, two, three, four, and the headings and subheadings and all the rest.

And this is the application, good night, and everybody sleeps. I tell you, the fire of God alone burns up sin. The Holy Spirit is a dove, but listen, one of the emblems of the Holy Spirit is fire.

He burns. And I mean he burns. We saw in Genesis, what is Genesis? What's that first chapter of Genesis? God doesn't have to report to any scientific society so that the scientific society knows how God did it, if they want to accept it.

Scientific societies come and go. God is eternal. Why did he put that creation chapter there? It's a picture of your salvation.

2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 6, what's it say? God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our heart to give the light of the knowledge of glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. That's a reference to Genesis. Darkness, chaos.

God said, let there be light, and there was light. What is there in the heart of an unregenerate man? Darkness, chaos. And what does God say? Let there be light, and there's light.

And unless God says it, there is no light. You can make a hundred decisions, unless God says let there be light, there's not going to be any light. No light.

God must say, let there be light. We sung that hymn of a man who was Arminian, more Calvinistic than many Arminians today, John Charles Westbrook. Thine eye diffused a quickening ray, I worked the dungeon flame with light.

Thine eye diffused the quickening ray. God must say, let there be light. When he says, let there be light, there's light.

Not till then. Not till then. Darkness, chaos, let there be light, and there is light.

Hallelujah. You remember the day when the light shone in your heart? Do you? You had better know when it shone there. You'd better know.

And what follows the shining of the light? The separation of the light from the darkness, and the ordering. Day, night. That's what God does with the light.

He separates the light from the darkness, and he brings order into the light, whereas before there was chaos. That's a picture of salvation. A beautiful picture of salvation.

And it all begins with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit moved across the face of the waters. The Holy Spirit moves upon a sinner.

God says, let there be light, and then he puts his life in order. It's a picture of salvation. It's got nothing to do with the scientific community at all.

God did not put that in the book to satisfy your curiosity. He put it in the book to show you how you say it. God ultimately has only one message in this book, and it's Jesus Christ his son.

That's the message of this book. Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ the Lord.

Jesus Christ the Son of God. Jesus Christ the Redeemer. That's the one message.

We read that long passage tonight in Genesis 24. It's a beautiful passage. Why does God give that whole chapter to tell you how Isaac got a bride? Now, he doesn't tell you how Abraham got his bride.

And yet if we said, well, who is the more important of the two, Abraham or Isaac, we would say Abraham. Well, why doesn't God tell you how Abraham got his bride? Not at all. But he goes to great pains and great detail to tell you Isaac gets his bride.

To satisfy your curiosity? No. To reveal a great truth to you, what it is, how Jesus Christ gets his church. What is Abraham? Abraham is the only picture of the father who gave up a son in the Bible.

Abraham is a type of God. And Isaac is a type of the son. You recall that great challenge to Abraham, take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, and offer him up.

The great test. Abraham, a type of God. Isaac, a type of the son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

And what did Abraham do? He sent out his chief servant. And his chief servant is not named. What happens when the bride or the sinner is being saved and becoming a part of the bride of Christ? The Holy Spirit is sent by the father.

And the Holy Spirit never speaks of himself or from himself. But what he says originates with the father. So that the servant is not a perfect type of the Holy Spirit, but certainly he is a type of the Holy Spirit.

And when he arrives at the appointed destination, he does not speak about himself. He tells of the glory of Abraham, of the riches of Abraham, and he tells of the desire of his master for his son. He talks all about the riches and the glory of Abraham, and all about the magnificence of his son.

Now those are the two things the preacher is supposed to do. The magnificence of God and the glory of Jesus Christ. I wonder if I ask you tonight, what are the attributes of God? How many people could tell me? What do you really know about God? When Dr. Packer came to a conference here last summer, they asked him, what are you going to preach on? He said, I think the people need to know a little about God.

I think they do too. That's the first thing. People need to know who God is, what he is like, what is his nature.

People do not know God. And then the glory of Jesus Christ. And then he asked Rebecca to be married to a man whom she'd never seen.

It's quite a thing to ask. The Word of God says, whom having not seen, ye love. And we saw last week, I trust, that I believe scripture reveals, quite obviously, that the only person God's going to give to his son is one who will love him.

Whom having not seen, ye love. The believer loves Jesus Christ. And then the great question, wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.

I will go. Do you remember when the Holy Spirit asked you that question? Do you remember that? I tell you, I wept tonight when I read that passage in my study. I wept.

That night when the Holy Spirit said to me, will you go with this man? I said, I will go. I will go. When did you say that? To go with the Holy Spirit means you to be married to that man.

To become bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh. And never again to play the harlot with the world. You love him and you love him only.

Will thou go with this man? I will go. When did you say that? Shall we pray? Dear Father, we have been thinking tonight on the wonders of thy grace, the majesty of thy person, the magnificence of thy plan of salvation. How great thou art.

And we've been endeavoring, dear Father, to get a glimpse of thy plan for our lives and of thy way to bring it to pass. We thank thee for the faithfulness of the Holy Spirit who sought us for Jesus Christ and for Jesus Christ alone. And we thank thee for that great day, that decisive day, when we heard him say, will you go? And we said, I will.

And we left the world and we came to Christ. Oh Lord, we thank thee for the ministry of thy spirit. We thank thee for the gift of thy son.

And above all, Lord Jesus, we confess sadly to thee that we have no words to thank thee sufficiently for thy willingness to give thyself a sacrifice for sin, to submit thyself even to death, to become a corpse with nothing, when thou didst have everything for our sake. Oh Lord, if there are those who have never yet said, I will. I will go to Jesus Christ.

Give them grace to say it tonight. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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