

# The World's Greatest Ministry

by William Carrol

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*The world's greatest ministry is to be a friend to one another and to speak truth to one another on behalf of God, reminding each other of God's sovereignty and presence.*

**Duration:** 40:14

**Topics:** "Encouragement"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the story of Abraham in Genesis 14. Abraham hears that his brother Lot has been taken captive and immediately gathers his trained servants to pursue the captors. Despite being outnumbered, Abraham and his servants successfully defeat the enemy and rescue Lot and the other captives. After the battle, the king of Sodom approaches Abraham and offers him the spoils of war, but Abraham refuses, recognizing it as a temptation. Instead, Abraham encounters Melchizedek, the king of Salem and priest of the Most High God, who blesses him and receives a tithe from Abraham. The sermon emphasizes the importance of resisting worldly temptations and remaining faithful to God's calling.

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## Transcript

I want to talk to you this morning, now on Friday nights I've been doing a series of teachings on the book of Genesis and I've been kind of hovering around Abraham for a certain amount of time, probably will be there for another few weeks before we move into Isaac and then into Jacob. I thought that I would share with you a portion of scripture that I've shared with our group on Friday night. It is a little, obviously a little bit different this morning than on Friday nights because the Friday night meeting goes a little bit longer and we go into a bit more detail, but I would like for you to turn with me in your Bibles to the book of Genesis.

The book of Genesis and the 14th chapter, Genesis 14 and we will begin reading at verse 14, Genesis 14, 14. I would like to talk to you this morning on the topic, the world's greatest ministry, the world's greatest ministry, Genesis 14, 14. Now when Abram 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 and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. Verse 16, so he brought back all the goods and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods as well as the women and the people and the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shavah, that is the king's valley after his return from the defeat of Chedorloomer and the kings who were with him. Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine.

He was the priest of the Most High and he blessed him and said blessed be Abram God or rather 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 and he gave him a tithe of all. Now the king of Sodom said to Abram give me the persons and take the goods for yourself but Abram 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. In this story we see Abram in a valley if you will between two very mountainous temptations and tribulations.

On the one side he is just coming out of a very serious war. Basically the war is a war for the soul of his brother and he is fighting in a situation that he should not be in, that he should absolutely not be able to take a victory in and yet God gives him a victory but it is a very bitter battle. On the other side after this battle there is the king of Sodom who is going to come to Abram and begin to tempt him and begin to say to him what I have is yours or what you won in battle you can keep in a very natural way.

Abram realizes that this is a temptation and he has the strength of mind and of spirit to say no I won't accept anything from the king of Sodom.

Now what I want to suggest to you is that oftentimes in the midst of serious battle whether it is the kind of tribulation or the kind of difficulty that you see in Abraham's situation where he is at war fighting for his loved one hoping and believing God to give him the strength to take a battle that he could never ordinarily take or if it's on the other side the enemy coming with all kinds of temptations that can be alluring and that can on some level or another seem like the right reward of something that we've done in our own strength or whatever the case might be in this case you see two sides of the enemy one persecution over here the other temptation over here two sides of the enemy one is this threatening battle over here and on the other side there is this alluring uh as it were

bribery over there and in the middle of that you see a man named Melchizedek and this man named Melchizedek just seems to come out of nowhere it is at the most difficult time of Abram's life now you and I must be reminded that Abram was called from Ur of the Chaldees and asked to leave everything behind Abram did not have a church family the way we have he did not have the community that would have been helpful in keeping him along the right road the way we have he was all by himself in the midst of one of the most difficult cultures and in the midst of one of the most difficult trials of his life persecution over here threatenings and now bribery and temptation over here and in the middle of that someone comes in and simply befriends him now I want to suggest to you that if you were to

look at the pattern of your life and all of your ups and downs and all of the issues of the day and if you were to ask yourself who was the greatest minister in your life oftentimes at first because we live in a very celebrity oriented society we might think oh it's you know this guy over here or that you know but at a certain point when we really think about it it is always going to be that person who showed up seemingly out of nowhere in the midst of your most difficult trials when you felt like you were all alone who came to you with a word of encouragement who brought to you godly communion who was able to give you the strength to take that one more step sometimes they seem like they come out of nowhere and it seems like they leave just as quickly you have some friends in your life

that are with you all the time and then there are some who just seem to know when to show up they just kind of come as it were out of nowhere they don't even always know what you're going through but god

just sends them and when god sends them they simply walk in obedience this man Melchizedek we can talk about him we can talk about the mystery of Melchizedek and we can ask ourselves who is he and and is he this is he that is you know but we can simply say just for the sake of argument maybe just maybe what this particular passage of scripture is trying to get us to at least consider is the imperative and the importance of being a friend and not just the being a friend but of receiving friendship oftentimes in the times when we are the most vulnerable as surely as the greatest ministry

that i can think of is to honestly be a friend to be that person who is there when god is trying to get through and nobody else seems to be able to get through and god will send someone also i would suggest that the greatest ministry is to be in a position to receive friendship sometimes the best thing that you and i can do for one another is to trust one another to open ourselves up to receiving love it's not the easiest thing in the world to do under ordinary circumstances but how much more when you realize you are in the battle of your life that's where this man was he was in the battle of his life he was as it were crying out for the soul of his brother he was giving it everything that he had he poured himself out and as i said statistically speaking he should have been decimated he

should have been devastated there was no way he could have won that battle except for the power of god and right in front of him after having been worn down as it were in this battle after having just come out of it if you will by the skin of his teeth on the other side the enemy is right there saying to him let me provide for you and sometimes it gets that way in our generation we find more and more people going through difficult times hard times where it seems like it's an uphill battle and every day seems like a fight and on the other side the devil is coming and saying well let me take care of it obviously god is not moving quickly enough obviously god is not providing let me provide for you you've earned this or it's already yours is rightfully yours you want it but abraham

understood something this is not what god is doing god has his own way of providing for me and i want to suggest to you that if melchizedek had not shown up when he did there is a possibility that abraham might not have been able to overcome that temptation there are times when the hardships are so intense that if a friend doesn't show up seemingly out of nowhere as they were breaking the bread and pouring the wine and pronouncing the blessing of god upon our life i would suggest to you that if there are no such people then the next trial the next temptation the next hardship will be way too much for us the bible said about elijah when he thought that he was the only one when he thought that there was no one to call a friend when he thought that there was no hope that he would find

someone that he could do this thing with the bible says that he became very despondent very despairing looking to die and the lord came to him at a certain point and said elijah rise and eat because the journey is too much for you and then the first thing the says to elijah when he gets to the mountain is i have a friend for you a man named elijah who's going to walk with you who's going to help you who's going to speak to you who's going to serve you in any which way that he can well you see something very simple similar is happening here with melchizedek a man just shows up out of nowhere according to what we read in the holy scriptures it says that this man melchizedek blessed him and he said blessed be abraham of god most high it's very very simple this ministry that i'm talking to

you about he comes to a man who is about to face a temptation where the enemy is saying i'm going to bless you where the enemy is saying i know it's hard i know it's difficult i know you're fighting for your sons and you're fighting for your daughters and i know you're in this battle that seems to be going on sometimes the the fight is financial and sometimes the fight is social and sometimes the fight is spiritual and

sometimes the fight is medical and physical and and the enemy will come every now and again and say i have something for you i i can provide for you financially or i can provide for you medically i can give you what you need but you see what god will oftentimes do is intercept them sending somebody in who simply says you are blessed of the most high god somebody who comes

in and reminds you of who you are in god no matter what the circumstance seems to suggest no matter how difficult it seems to be every now and again my brother and my sister we need to simply intercept the attack of the devil we need to step in on behalf of god and say to one another you are blessed of the most high god it might not seem like it all the time the difficulties might seem to be overwhelming but i want to remind you my dearly beloved that the hand of god is upon you that the blessing of god is upon you that the strength of god is with you that the provision of god is with you that the protection of god is with you that the pronouncement of god's grace and of his peace is upon you and that there is nothing that the devil can do to satisfy you nothing he can do to provide for

you god is your provision the bible reminds us that this man comes and he just breaks the bread and he pours the wine basically what he's doing is communing he's just saying you're not alone you're blessed of god and you are not alone the devil will try over and over again to suggest to you that you're the only one that's what he tried to suggest to elijah you're the only one there's nobody else nobody knows nobody can sense what you're going through nobody understands your troubles or your difficulties and we like to sing along with the old song nobody knows the trouble i seen nobody knows but jesus but the truth of the matter is everybody knows what you're going through because we're all going through it together and jesus whispers into our ears with regard to one another just go to

that person and take them by their hand and intercept the lie of the devil and say god is still with you god has not left you god has not forsaken you sometimes we just got to stand in the gap sometimes we've got to make a decision that the devil is not going to lie into the ear of my brother and into the ear of my sister he is not going to move without any kind of contention i am going to stand in the name of the most high god sometimes my brother and my sister we simply have got to stand on behalf of the lord sometimes we seem like we come out of nowhere saying things that we don't even understand the fullness of sometimes you walk up to someone and you say something and you don't even know why you said it and you don't even know the impact of it but you do it because god tells you to

do it sometimes we got to break bread with brothers and sisters and they can be going through difficult times and difficult trials and they might seem a little preoccupied a little busy because they've got concerns on their hearts and they they face the mountain over here and they're facing the mountain over there and they're in a valley over here and every now and again we just come by and we say you're not alone even we say god is with you the hand of god is upon you and everything that god said he will do in your life he will do everything he said notice what he says here 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 it might not always seem like that but when god says that your enemy has been

delivered into your hand i want to remind you that the god that we serve cannot lie the god that we serve cannot be deceived the god that we serve cannot be under any delusion or any illusion if he says you're victorious you are victorious it might not always look like that and we have got to remind each other that we are a victorious people we've got to remind each other that we are more than conquerors we've got to remind each other that we have been given the very overcoming power of jesus christ because he said i have overcome the world and therefore we ought not to fear anything blessed is he who overcomes we

have been made overcomers and sometimes we just got to whisper into each other's ear and sometimes we've got to shout it from the mountaintops we are the people of god we are a

victorious people the devil is under our feet we have overcome we have won this battle there is an already but not yet element of this reality no question on the not yet side we're some awesome things but we have been given the right to see some pretty awesome things on this side of eternity we have overcome and we need to remind each other of it we need to intercept the lie of the devil it's not all right with me that the devil should lie to my brother it's not all right with me that the devil should lie to my sister if i can stretch out my hand and take my brother my sister by the hand and simply look them in the eye and say jesus loves you god is with you then i consider that the greatest ministry possible and if i can allow my heart to be open to such a blessing to receive that from

my brother to receive that from my sister irrespective of the difficulty and the hardship and the battle in the war if i can hear a word of encouragement without as it were sloughing it off saying no you don't realize what i'm going through or no that's not true no brother and sister there is a difference between being humble and refusing to receive a blessing if somebody wants to come to me every now and again and say god bless you brother will thank you for hearing god's heart and serving him in such and such a manner i'm not going to say oh no no no i'm gonna receive it hallelujah because i need it because the devil don't stop lying and if i come to you and i tell you how much of a blessing you are don't think i'm reading it off some notes you know what i mean you know that's the

pastor's duty you know shake a couple people's hands tell people how much of a blessing no i don't have any script i do what i believe god says to do i say what i believe god says to say because i know that the devil does not stop his lying so i'm not going to stop telling the truth we got to tell each other the truth and we got to receive the truth we got to believe that we are who god said we are you see he talks about god most high possessor of heaven and earth and sometimes that's another thing we just got to come to each other and remind each other that god holds everything in his hand and it doesn't matter what the situation might seem like god has everything under control as pastor david reminds us god has everything under control and we got to tell each other that sometime i

always tell the story of whenever i would go to pastor dave's office to get a little bit of counseling and so on and so forth and i'd walk in feeling all sad and this and the other and thinking he's going to say something and on his desk he had this wooden thing that simply said god has everything under control you know what i mean so you get close to the desk and you read it and say okay i'll see you next time you know what else are you gonna say hallelujah we just gotta remind ourselves of it it's god's world it's god's world it's god's world it's god's world hallelujah hallelujah it doesn't matter what the devil says the earth is the lord and the fullness thereof the world and all they that dwell therein it is still god's world god is still sovereign god is still glorious and every now

and again we just got to remind each other of it we just got to tell each other about it we don't have to wait till sunday to praise the lord and to give god glory and to bless his name and to whisper into one another's ear the truth because we know that the enemy is trying to bombard with lies it's the greatest ministry period to be a friend to speak to one another on behalf of god and then to reach out into the community and tell them things that they need to hear every real revival is defined by a fully functioning church where every christian person is simply doing what christians do blessing the lord first and foremost and then blessing one another encouraging one another strengthening one another and then we begin to reach out but see we can't reach out until we've chosen to reach

as it were across the aisle to be there for one another to strengthen one another and to be reached sometimes that's the hard one because we hear a word that we know is true and then the enemy tries to close us off and say no it doesn't apply to you no it's not true for you no you you you got too much going on there's too many struggles too many difficulties that word about victory and and that word about god having everything under control and things like that it's true for everybody but me i want to remind you as a christian person every word in that holy book every word in that bible every promise in that bible every promises yay and amen in jesus christ every promise applies to you through him every truth applies to you through him see what melchizedek did was he simply reminded

abraham of something that abraham already knew to be true but we have an enemy who's trying to chip away at that truth all the time all the time so we need to reinforce that truth all the time all the time we need to do that with one another you get an opportunity today to shake somebody's hand you look them in their eye tell them what they mean to this body sometimes people will say in certain settings you know i mean right now i can't i can get a cd or i can go online and i can see a church service and this and the other it's more convenient why bother going in you know i mean i can get the same thing you know in my living room well it's really not what you get that makes the difference when you come to church it's what you bring to the table it's what you give hallelujah hallelujah

it's who you are that makes this church what it is we can't be what we are without you without every person here and there's not one person who's more important than anybody else everybody is invited to be the greatest minister ever because some life you're going to touch at a time of greatest difficulty and you're going to kind of come out of nowhere just like Melchizedek and you're going to bring the bread and the wine you're going to bring the communion of Christ and you're going to bring the love and the affection and you're going to bring the reinforcement of truth and for that person that you minister to when they look back on the pattern of their life and on everybody that's ever ministered to them on one level or another when they think about the greatest minister ever they're

going to think about what you did for them that day and they're going to say if that person hadn't come along I would have fallen to the next temptation that came they're going to say if that person hadn't come along I would have given myself over to the bribery of the king of Sodom they might say something to the effect of I lost my job or I lost a loved one or I got a very frightening diagnosis or and and somebody came and it wasn't like they came with a whole lot of cure or with you know a whole lot of problem solving they just came and stretched out their hand and they just said your God is still God and the promise of God on your life is still going to be fulfilled and God is still your provider as he comes with the bread and the wine and not just speaking of communion but speaking

of provision and saying you are well loved and well taken care of see once a person has that reinforced then when the next trial comes the temptation comes where the devil says well why don't you just go back to your old job you know of course it had a lot to do with things that were immoral or things that were illegal but at least there you were making money or why don't you send you know a few thousand dollars to this guy on tv and he'll send you his handkerchief and everything gonna be all right you know what i mean you can buy a lot of handkerchiefs with a few g's right this is probably a bunch of handkerchiefs selling four thousand bucks a piece no i'm joking there's always that temptation to do that but when we come to one another and intercept the lie of the enemy and just embrace

your brother embrace your sister tell him god bless you today remind him because you don't know what they're going through you don't know what your handshake can do you don't know what your blessing in

the name of the lord can do hallelujah hallelujah we just kind of stand with one another we stand in the gap and we believe for one another i want to pray with you this morning and here is my my thought i want to pray on two levels one if you want god to use you in the greatest ministry that i can think of that is to be there for someone when they really need it and you're just saying god i don't always know how to do i mean on some levels it's easy when you see people just god god bless you i love you thank you for coming here today that kind of a thing but sometimes god will lead you

supernaturally to someone give your word and season to that person who's weary i prayed that a lot god help me to just be there for someone today i don't know who i don't know why i'm not going to try to fix anything but if there's someone who needs somebody to bless them in the name of the lord and just say how valuable they are to god and to me and to this community i just want to let them know god help me lead me to someone if you want to pray that prayer then i tell you what i would love for you to join me in the front of this auditorium we're going to pray together and believe god together because this church is going to do some awesome things and it begins with us then the second thing is the issue of trust sometimes it's hard to trust people especially when you're in the middle of

a battle and somebody seems to come out of nowhere you know what i mean i mean in new york i mean somebody brings you bread and wine it's like you know what i'm talking about thanks but no thanks you know give me a gift card i'll be all right you know but but for us we have got to trust people it's not easy but we can't minister each other if we don't trust each other i i can't receive a blessing from you if i don't trust you and vice versa so we need a supernatural thing to happen god help us to trust when jesus was on that cross he was totally vulnerable it's not safe but it's right and we just have to pray god help me to trust help me to be a friend help me to make a friend help me to receive a friend because man if we do that we will change the world the baton is in our hand now

thousands and thousands of years of men and women passing the baton from generation to generation the baton is in our hand now as a church this is our time to change the world i tell my friday night group and i'll say this in close i always say that too but i'll tell you i'll do this there is this thought in me always i think when i get to heaven you know and i see peter and i see james and john and people like that you know i don't want every time i see them treading along the streets of gold you know what i mean i don't want to be ducking into doorways you know what i'm saying and trying to hide from them because it's like oh no here comes peter again and he's going to talk about what he did in his generation and i ain't got nothing to say i'm talking about man i want something to say

you know i'm talking about i mean that's it hallelujah praise god that's like an eternal campfire you know what i'm talking about i mean you can't get away from it eventually your time to testify is gonna come you know what i mean you know we do the testimonies on sunday night you know and i mean we got so many people you know you're probably sitting there thinking oh yeah my people like 25 years before i finally get to do my testimony but in those days 25 years is nothing you know and i don't want to be standing around thinking uh there probably be another two or three millennia before they get to me no no no no i want a story i want to say something i want to say i made a difference in somebody's life and it doesn't have to be huge i'm not a marquee guy i couldn't care less about seeing

my name on any paper i want somebody to be able to say when i was down he was there when i needed somebody he was there i want them to be able to say i don't even think he knows what he did that day but when i needed him he was there and i want you to be able to say that same thing people gonna say about you i don't even think they realize the impact that they had but when i needed them they were there now if

you want to pray with me this morning i would be proud to stand side by side with you and say god help us to help somebody help us to make a difference let's stand together in the house of the lord hallelujah hallelujah it's hard for me to get through that i'm not a morning person i do my preaching at midnight but um god is in the midst god is speaking to you you mean everything to

this community everything to this community god wants to use you you can begin to come to the front of this auditorium both in the main sanctuary and in the annex you can stand between the screens balcony you can down we're gonna wait for you god bless you so very much in jesus name from what i've seen over the years is that at the same time that we're in his hand we're also in each other's hand that basically means that he chose to make us a people who need each other the lord said with regard to adam in the early days he said it's not good that the human person should be alone i tried to do this on my own for a while believe me i made a mess of it it did not work and then i realized i had family and man i mean i love this family i love this family and i am happy to be a part of this

community proud to be a part of this family and i've been doing well since i've been here you know what i mean because i i'm not alone and you're not alone we're in each other's hand but it's a chance you take right that's what love is about father in jesus name we choose to trust and we choose to be trustworthy choose to be trusted choose to be willing to take on the responsibility of being a friend and we ask you will jesus lead us lead us to someone that we can help someone that we can be there for and also make us open to being helped to being strengthened to being encouraged lord intercept the lie of the devil and let your truth have the preeminence let your truth come like the rains lord one after the other after the other after the other reinforce truth over and over again help us

make us that kind of a community that is equipped to receive the lost to receive the dying to receive those who will flow through these doors help us to help someone we thank you for this oh jesus we bless you for it in jesus holy name we bless you right amen amen praise god praise the lord

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