

When God Asks Too Much

by William Carrol

God always asks too much, and it's only when we let go of our own strength and trust in Him that we can accomplish His will.

Duration: 51:55

Scripture: Genesis 22:1

Topics: "Surrender To God", "Faith And Obedience"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the concept of surrendering everything to God, even the most cherished aspects of our lives, as God often asks for more than we think we can give. It explores the journey of Abraham being tested to sacrifice his son Isaac, highlighting the need to let go of our perceived rights, immunities, and spiritual identities to fully surrender to God's will and experience His transformative work in our lives.

Transcript

Amen, praise God. God bless you, my brothers and sisters. Would you pray with me, please? Father, thank you so much for your son.

Thank you that when we were lost and had no hope, had no ability to do any good thing in our own strength, you sent your son. We thank you, Jesus, for willingly laying your life down for us. We thank you for taking the nails, the lashes, the beatings, the insults, the pulling of your beard, the spit, the scourging, the blasphemy.

Thank you. Thank you for saving us. Holy Spirit, thank you for finding us where we were, following us day after day into some of the darkest places so that you could finally apply the saving grace of God to our lives.

Thank you for saving us. Thank you for never giving up on us. Thank you for loving us.

We ask you now, Lord, to speak to us. We know that God so loved us that he did all of these wonderful things for us. And so we come expecting that the God who so loved us is going to speak to us.

You're not going to do all those wonderful things for us to leave us to our own devices. We thank you. We love you.

We bless you. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.

Praise the Lord. I want to talk to you tonight on this topic, when God asks too much. When God asks too much.

Now, don't be too quick to come to God's defense and say, no, God never asks too much. Because I would suggest to you that God always asks too much, that it is never God's design or desire that we should ever be in a place where we think that what God is requiring is something that we can do in our own strength or by our own power. The Lord spoke, for instance, to Elijah at a certain point when Elijah was overwhelmed with the responsibility that God had placed upon his life.

And God said to him, Elijah, the journey is too much for you. Of course, we remember the Lord speaking to the apostle Paul, and Paul being utterly overwhelmed by the responsibility that God had given to him and began to ask God to take away some of the pressure, God take off some of the weight. And God said to him, my grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

We see, again, Jesus at Gethsemane, saying, in essence, especially when we read the rendition of the writer to the Hebrews, weeping and great struggles, saying, God, in essence, if there's any other way to do this, let's go that route. But then saying, nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. There comes a time in the life of the Christian person, not that God asks too much, where we are utterly brought to a place where we say, God, everything else you've been asking has been fine, but this is just too much.

But no, there comes a time in the Christian life when we finally recognize that everything that God asks is too much. Everything God has ever asked of you has been too much for you, too much for me. These are things that we could never do in our own strength.

But sometimes we forget that all of God's requests and all of his requirements are way too much for us. And so for a certain amount of time, we try to do them in our own strength. And then we become exasperated with that.

And then we look up to the heavens and say, God, you're asking too much for me. Now, I want you to take into consideration with me the 21st and 22nd chapters of the book of Genesis. We're just going to look for a moment or two at the life or a portion of the life of Abraham.

And what the Bible is going to do is it is going to invite us to walk with Abraham on a very particular journey. We're going to begin our reading in the 22nd chapter, but we'll make reference to the 21st. The Bible is asking us to join this man, Abraham, on a very serious journey in his life.

In the first verse of the 22nd chapter of the book of Genesis, we read, now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham and said to him, Abraham. And he said, here I am. Then he said, take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.

So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son. And he split the wood for the burnt offering and rose and went to the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day, Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off.

Now if we rewind a certain amount and we go back to the 12th chapter of the book of Genesis, we remind ourselves of how God began to call Abraham, first Abraham's father, out of Ur of the Chaldees and then later Abraham from his father's house out of Haran and began to bring him deeper into the land of Canaan. And we remind ourselves as we go on in the portion of scripture, particularly as we get around

the 15th chapter, that God begins to speak to Abraham about a son. Abraham believes in this son that God was going to give him.

But as time began to progress, he told him this when he was 75 years old, but Abraham got older. And a few years later, about a decade or more later, he began to move in a different direction. He and his wife decided that they were going to fulfill God's promise in a sense on their own.

And so they had a son different than the one that God had promised them. And after a certain amount of time, the Bible says that God did fulfill the promise that he gave to them. And they had a second son.

This son was named Isaac. The first son was named Ishmael. And after a certain amount of time, as the first son got to his teens and the youngest son was about three, maybe four years old, five maybe, there was apparently a conflict between the two.

And Isaac's mother saw that the eldest son was beginning to mock the younger son. And so she spoke to Abraham saying that the son of this bondwoman will not be a sharer of the inheritance with my son. And so after a certain amount of time, Abraham was asked to send his son away.

And the Lord made it clear that that was the Lord's desire that he should send this one son away. The Lord said that he would take care of him. He would make him into a great nation and so on.

But everything that God was doing up until that point was the impossible. We might as well remind ourselves of that. Abraham was way too old to have any children.

Sarah was way too old to have any children. And even before she was too old, she was barren. And so we see ultimately that God is asking for the impossible.

All throughout the stages of Abraham's life, sometimes these things seemed impossible. And other times, I think Abraham came to a conclusion where he said, you know, maybe they're not so impossible after all. Maybe they're not too much after all.

In fact, maybe I can help God along with it. Oftentimes, when we look at our own lives, remind yourself of when God first began to speak to you and first began to tell you the things that he was going to do in your life. When he spoke to you the way he might've spoken to Abraham and Abraham thinking to himself, I can't do this, it's way beyond my capacity.

And Sarah saying the same thing. But after a certain amount of time, when they thought about it for a little bit of time and they feel, maybe I can help God along. The thing that seemed utterly impossible, the thing that seemed utterly too much, now was something that not only could it happen, but I could actually do it instead of God.

And this is what happened with them. This is what happens sometimes with us as Christian people. At first, God begins to speak words of promise into our heart.

He begins to speak these great words into our life. And we look at ourselves and we say, I could never do this. We look at our lives, we look at our abilities, we look at our capacities and we say, this is something that I could never ever do.

If God is going to do this thing in me, he is going to have to work the impossible. He is going to have to do something that only God could do. And we believe that.

Remember when God first began to say the things to Abraham that he was saying to him, the Bible says that Abraham fell on his face and laughed. It was something hard for him to grasp, but he chose to believe God and God accounted to him as righteousness. And then in the 18th chapter, remember he goes to Sarah and he tells Sarah the same thing.

And the Bible says that as he's speaking this to Abraham, Sarah is in the tent and she's listening in and she begins to laugh. And she begins to say, in essence, this is impossible. This is not something that can happen in my life.

After all my years of suffering, reproach because I was not able to produce, now is this thing going to happen? And that kind of a thing. And God asks her, you know, first of all, he asked Adam, you know, Abraham, why did Sarah laugh? And Sarah says, I didn't laugh. And the Lord confronts her saying, you did laugh.

And then he says a very simple thing. He said, is there anything too hard for the Lord? He said, in essence, with men, these things are impossible, but with God, everything is possible. And this is where they were.

They were at a place where they were thinking, God, unless you move, I mean, it's a little bit hard for me to grasp, they were saying. It's a little bit hard for me to take it all in, but I believe you, unless you move, nothing that you've promised me can come to pass. But a few years later, the promise was when Abraham was about 75.

And at about 87, some people say he began, he and his wife began to say, you know, maybe God is not moving fast enough. I believe the promise, they were saying. I still hold to these truths, but maybe I need to take it in my own hand.

And maybe I need to make it happen my own way. Now, that's a strange contrast. They go from believing that this thing could never happen unless God moved.

They looked at their own life. They looked at their own qualifications early on in their life, early on in their Christianity, we might say, or early on in their ministry, we might say. They thought there is no way any good thing can ever happen in my life unless God moves.

But 12 years later, they are in a position now where not only don't they have to wait for God anymore, but they can make all of these promises happen in their own strength. And so Sarah says to her husband, well, I have my handmaid Hagar here. Why don't you just lay with her and we'll have a child, and you know, through her, a surrogate child, and she'll be, as it were, the fulfillment of the promise of God.

And so many times we see that happening in our life. God promises us something, and in our humility, in our early stages of life, we say there is no way this thing can happen unless God moves supernaturally. What we're saying, in essence, is God is asking too much from me.

I cannot do this. This is too much for the natural person. This is too much for my natural capacities and abilities.

God has to move, or none of these things will come to pass. But as time progresses, and maybe we read a certain amount of books, and maybe we go to a certain amount of schools, or maybe we play enough sermon tapes, or whatever the case might be, and as time begins to progress, we decide that we can do

this thing on our own. Maybe God's watch is broken.

I don't know. Maybe He's forgotten me. Maybe He's forgotten His promise, and so I have to begin to make this thing happen.

So in a very real sense, I'm still holding on to the promise, but now somehow I have forgotten that what God is asking of me is too much for me. What God is asking of my life, what God is saying is going to come forth from my life, somewhere along the line I've forgotten it's too much for the natural man. It's too much for me to make it happen.

All the preaching, and all the praying, and all the reading, and all the studying in the world is not enough. If God doesn't move, and if God doesn't choose to fulfill His promise, nothing is going to happen. Somewhere along the line they've forgotten that.

Now what happened is as a result of that, when God did begin to fulfill the promise, when Isaac was born, God visited Abraham and Sarah, and said at this time next year, I'm going to fulfill the promise that I made to your life. And when that thing began to happen, and after the child was weaned, the Bible says that this child whose name was Laughter, whose name was Isaac, was being celebrated. And as he was being celebrated, Ishmael, who was, the Bible says, a type of the natural man, a type of the flesh, a type of people trying to do things in their own strength and by their own power, he began to mock this child of promise.

He began to mock this child of the Spirit. He began to mock him. The Bible doesn't say exactly what he said or what he did, but we know as Christian people, that when God begins to make a promise to us, and if we don't have the patience to wait for Him, and we begin to try to fulfill these promises in our own strength, what happens is the flesh begins to glory, and the flesh begins to lift itself up.

And then whenever the spiritual promise begins to manifest himself, and the thing that God said He would do is about to be accomplished, and we're beginning to see these things happen, and we're beginning to see it in its child stages, and when it's at its young place, but we know that it's growing, what happens is the flesh, as it were, begins to mock it. And the flesh begins to say, no, in essence, God is taking too long, and I'm doing this thing now. No, I'm going to be the child of inheritance.

I'm going to be the child of promise. And so for instance, for the person who God has spoken to your life and may have said, well, you're going to do this kind of ministry or that kind of ministry, you're going to glorify God in this way or that way, and you believed it at first, but you realized that it was too much for you, and somewhere along the line, you decided that you can do it in your own strength. All you have to do is read enough books and listen to enough tapes and so on and so forth.

Now, whenever God is beginning to cause that thing to rise up, that glorious thing that He promised, everything that's of the flesh begins to say, I really don't need you anymore. I really don't need the touch of God anymore. You see, because I've read enough commentaries.

I really don't need the hand of God on my life anymore because I've been to enough conferences. I don't need to pray or any more to touch God because you see, I have enough preaching tapes and things of that nature. So as God is beginning to cause you to believe for the great thing that He had promised you in the early stages, revival and things of that nature, things that are marvelous, things that are supernatural, things that are wonderful, things that caused you to awe, to walk in godly fear, to be in awe of His word

and in awe of His promise.

When He begins to cause those things to rise up in you, sometimes we tend to legitimize and sometimes we tend to rationalize and sometimes we tend to qualify and we begin to say, no, no, no, those were the dreams of children. Those were the dreams of young people. But I know now how to make this thing happen.

And I have my program and I have my plan and I have all of my ducks in a row. I have all of my I's dotted and my T's crossed. I know how to do this thing.

And so the flesh mocks the spirit as the spirit is trying to manifest His glory. And so God says to Abraham, take Ishmael and cast him out, cast him off, send him away. And it's a hard thing for this man to do.

Again, God is asking him for too much. He could have said very clearly, Lord, at one point you asked me to leave my culture and my customs and my people and my name. You asked me to leave all of that back in Ur of the Chaldeans when my father took us out.

And I said, yes, Lord, the same way we could say at a certain point, God asked us to turn our back on our past life and on our past ways and on our past philosophies and all of the things that we held dear. And we could say, yes, Lord, when you asked me to do that, I did that. And when you asked me to come out from my father's house, I did that as well.

That is to say, when you asked me to make my own decisions for you and my own commitment to you and to lock myself into a personal relationship with you, not simply based upon being a part of a culture or a part of a family, but being a one-on-one interactor with God to know his name, to understand his voice. And when you asked me to get closer to you, to draw more intimately involved with you, I did that same thing, Lord. And when you made this great promise and asked me to believe it, I held to it, Lord.

I trusted you, I believed you. But now you're asking me to take something that I consider dear to me, something that is mine, my own son, you're asking me. And we might say, Lord, that element of who we are, that element of our flesh that we've become so identified with, and we even thought that God was going to be able to use it to glorify his name, that thing you're asking me to let go of now.

It's a difficult time when we take flesh and we begin to say that somehow or another, God is going to use this. God is going to glorify his name through it. And that's what he said with regard to Ishmael.

Remember when God is coming to him a second time and saying, I am going to give you a son. He says to him, Lord, let it be so that Ishmael might live before you. And so sometimes God begins to come to us a second time and say to us, now, you remember what I promised you a long time ago, that I was gonna do a great thing in your life, and that the nations of the earth would be blessed through you, and many lives would be touched.

And we have so gotten to a place where we have formalized our religion and things of that nature, and we've made our spirituality now more academic and everything so pragmatic and everything so programmatic and so on and so forth, that by the time God is beginning to try to quicken that thing in us again, we're saying, oh God, let Ishmael live before you. Let our fleshly religion live before you. Let our religious platitudes and our fancy words live before you and things of that nature.

God, can't you be glorified in that? Can't you be glorified in that? And God said, no, I can't use that. And so he's asking us to part from that. And again, we could say, God, you're asking too much.

You see, because somewhere along the line for the last decade or whatever the case might be, somewhere along the line, I have convinced myself that this is what God was gonna use. And this is how God was gonna glorify his name. And now you're asking me to let it go.

And sometimes God will ask us to let go of things of the flesh. He'll ask us to let go of those things, but not just the ordinary things that we ordinarily identify with the flesh. We're not talking about a whole lot of most blatant sins and things of that nature here.

Those are the things that we leave behind as we leave behind Ur of the Chaldees. And those are the things that we leave behind as we turn our back on the way of the Babylonian and so on and so forth. But now he's saying those things that you tried to stamp as holy, but were of the flesh because you ran out of patience with God.

He said, I want you to let go of those things. And sometimes when God begins to ask to let go of those things, it's like he's trying to tear our beloved son from our bosom. And sometimes it seems like it's too much.

And I wanna suggest to you, my brother and my sister, it is too much for us in our own strength. But that's what God is wanting us to understand. And that's why he's trying to tear it from our bosom.

But when he finally was able to let that go, now you read the scripture and you will find that the Bible says that when Abraham heard it, in the original language, it said it sounded like evil to him. In your translations, it probably says something to the effect of it greatly distressed him. It broke his heart.

It caused his heart to tremble in the presence of God. And in essence to say, what more can I do? What more can I give? You asked me to come out from this community and I came out. You asked me to draw closer to you and I drew closer to you.

You told me that you were gonna do a certain thing in my life and I tried to rally all of my strength and all of my goodwill and good intentions to make it happen. And now you're telling me that you can't use it. Now you're telling me that this will not partake in the inheritance.

What more can I give? It's a picture of somebody who's a Christian person, turned their back on their sins, turned their back on evil, dedicated to the Lord, intimate with Him in prayer, believing for a great thing from God, but still applying their own strength and energy to it because God is not moving fast enough. And now God begins to say, you know that one thing that you thought was your claim to fame, that one thing that you thought made you acceptable in my eyes, that one thing that you thought made it so that God was under obligation to move according to your pattern and according to your timing, that one thing, I need you to let that go. And so He lets go.

In faith and in obedience, He lets go and He sends His Son away. Now you would think that that would be all that God is going to ask. He asks Him to come out of Ur of the Chaldees.

Then He asks Him to come out of Haran. Then He asks Him to give up His oldest son, the one in whom He thought all the promises of God would ultimately manifest. You would think that that would be enough.

Sometimes as Christian people, we are finally willing to make the kind of sacrifice that God is asking for. We give up the things of the past. We lock ourselves in with God.

We allow Him to begin to work at certain things in our life, even things that we thought were good things. And at that point, we begin to think that now we're finally immune to the move of God in our life. But now the Bible begins in the second, rather in the 22nd chapter, and it came to pass after these things, or these are the things that we're talking about.

It came to pass after God had asked over and over and over for far too much as it pertains to the human capacity to give. After all of this, after He might have thought, I don't say that He thought that, but I know if I was in His place, I certainly would have thought, finally, everything is dealt with. Finally, God doesn't have to do anything more in my life.

Finally, I can finally relax and just give a sigh of relief and say, now it's time for me to preach to other people so that God can do stuff in their life because there's nothing left in mine. But the Bible says in this particular case that God tested Abraham. Now what that means is God put this man into the refiner's fire.

You ever pray sometimes, oh, God, baptize me in fire. Ha ha ha ha. Well, whether you pray that or not, He's gonna do it.

Because that's the way of the Lord. He takes this man now and He immerses him in a fire that He never, this man Abraham never thought he would ever have to endure. God says to him, take your son, your precious one, your beloved son.

And He adds a certain word there that might not appear in your English text, but He said, please. God doesn't usually say please. You know what I mean? As you search your scripture, you'll find God doesn't usually say please.

He's a very good God, but He doesn't say please a lot. In this particular case, ha ha ha ha ha, He said, please, take your son, your only son. That emphasizes the fact that He's already asked for Ishmael.

Your special son, your precious son, your one and only, for God so loved the world that He gave His one and only. That one that means everything to you. That one that is the promise of God.

That one that God has promised He would glorify Himself in and through. Take that son, and I want you to offer him to me on Mount Moriah. It's a picture of God saying to the Christian person, we've dealt with the flesh.

That's not my concern right now. He's saying there's something else that I want. I want complete ownership, complete lordship of all of those things that appertain to the spirit.

You see, sometimes we are willing, even though we're sometimes reluctant, we are willing to give God those things that are of the flesh. And we even expect Him to ask us for those things that are of the flesh. Whether they be blatant sins on this side or whether we be trying to do righteous things in our own strength on the other side.

But when it comes down to our righteousness, when it comes down to our one and only, remember Paul at one point says, this one thing I do. When it comes down to that one thing that we do, when we feel like we've been dealt with on so many different levels and there is this one thing that we still kind of hold to as

our claim to fame. We say, I'm a virtuous man.

We say, I'm a woman of integrity. We say, I'm a dedicated person. We say, I'm a humble person.

We say, I'm a person given to this. And God says, I want that too. You see, Abraham did everything else that he did to protect the promise of God on his life.

And when you read Abraham's life, you'll find he did some good things and you'll find he did some bad things. In all to protect the promise. And sometimes we as Christians feel a need to protect the promise that God has made on our life.

We feel like it's our obligation, our responsibility, because we say in essence, God said he's going to glorify himself in my life. And he said, many people are gonna be touched by my life. Many lives are gonna be saved through my life.

His name is going to be spread abroad through my life. Many lives are going to know him because of me and so on and so on. So I do everything that I can to protect that.

And so whenever God is trying to change us, whenever he's trying to mold us, whenever he's trying to shape us, whenever he's trying to refine us in the refiner's fire, everything in us that we haven't given up or whatever we're still holding up to begins to come as a shield around what we believe to be that means through which God is going to glorify his life. So God tries to use authority in our life to break us in one area or another area. And all of a sudden, this shield of integrity begins to rise up.

And we say, Mr. Authority or Mrs. Authority, you don't have the right to speak this thing into my life because I'm a man of integrity. You don't have the right to speak this into my life because you don't know what I've given up. You don't know where I've been.

And none of us are immune to that. Paul was doing that type of thing when the Corinthians were saying to him, you're no real apostle. You're no real cause you're going to jail and you're suffering and you're going through this.

And Paul said at a certain point, you know, I feel like I'm a fool saying this. I can't believe that these words are coming out of my mouth, but he's saying, I have more right to this thing than anybody else. Because he was being, as it were, immersed into a refiner's fire and he didn't like it.

And he was saying, God, I've been asking you for the last three times, please take this thing away from me. But then he reminds himself, so that I would not be overcome with pride based upon this great thing, this one thing. Based upon this, in his case, it was his great capacity for revelation.

Based upon this one thing, he said it so that I would not be overcome with pride. God allowed a thorn in my flesh. God tested me.

God put me in this refiner's fire. And when he was in that refiner's fire, because he was in that refiner's fire, because he was going through what he was going through, some people were saying again, he can't be an apostle because he's always going through struggles. He's always suffering.

He's always in some pain. He's always in some anguish. There's always something wrong with his body or whatever the case might be.

Obviously, he can't be a man of God. He's always in jail. He's always going through this kind of struggle or that kind of struggle for his ministry, whatever.

And I think at a certain stage, he felt like, I need to defend myself. You see it in your Bible. And even as he's doing it, he's saying, I'm speaking like a fool.

He's saying, I know I shouldn't be saying this, but I am fed up to here. In essence, he was saying, God, you're asking too much, too much. Because ultimately, it's not the person or the situation that we have to deal with because we don't fight against flesh and blood.

But our situation is that God will oftentimes allow certain things into our life. But ultimately speaking, even if it's this principality or that power, ultimately God has jurisdiction over everything. And if He allows it, it's for our sake and so that He might glorify His name in us without us being crushed under the weight of His glory or under the weight, if you will, of our own pride.

So He allows a certain thing and at a certain time, Paul begins to speak out as though God is asking too much. And he said, I prayed three times that God should take this thing away from me, but God said, no, I'm not gonna take that away from you. He said, then very simply, stop asking me that.

He said, my grace is sufficient for you for my strength is made perfect in weakness. What was being tried in Paul's life? He wasn't walking in blatant impenitence. He was able to say, I can look at my conscience and I know that I'm living for Jesus.

And Paul was not a man of the law or of the flesh. Far from it. He wasn't trying to work these things out in his own strength anymore.

Now, only thing that this man was dealing with was the fact that he was a man. And we hold these wonderful gifts of God in earthen vessels. And as a result, God must constantly care that these glorious gifts that God has placed in us and ultimately speaking, his own presence, the presence of the Holy Spirit does not, as it were, crush these vessels because we are not able to receive him in humility.

We look at the gifts that we have, we look at the calling that we have, we look at the impact that we have and we can always be overwhelmed by it. Look in our mirror and as it were, fix our tie and say, the whole world needs me. And so every now and again, God will tell us that promise that I made to you, the fact that I said I would be glorified in your life, the fact that I said that I'm gonna do impossible things through you, I need that back.

I need you to give that to me again. And Abraham could have said, God, what more do you want? I have given you everything. The only thing that I have left as far as my identity is the fact that I happen to be a preacher.

What more do you want? The only thing that I have left is the fact that I happen to be a singer. What more can I give you? The only thing that I have left is the fact that I'm able to hand out tracks on my job while people on the job ask me about Jesus. What more do you want? And he simply says, I want that.

I want you to be reminded that it's mine. More, I want you to be reminded that it's me. See, God doesn't take grace out of his pocket and give it to us.

God is grace. Hallelujah. And the grace of God is his indwelling presence.

We can't have love without God. We can't have peace without God. We can't have joy without God.

That's the way of the world. The world believes that they can have all of these things without God. But God is love.

In other words, every good and perfect gift comes from God. Every good and perfect gift is God. In other words, when we receive the Holy Spirit, then all of the promises that God has made manifest themselves as being yay and amen in Christ Jesus.

The Lord doesn't just say, here, here's some grace. You know, you can do with it whatever you want. He says, I am going to come and indwell you.

And we're gonna work these things out together. And whenever we forget that, whenever we think that we have the strength to fulfill these promises in our own strength or even to protect the promise in our own strength as Abraham did time after time. You'll see it at times whenever he was, you know, speaking to his wife and say, say you're my sister so that when we go into this land, they won't kill me.

You know, because I don't think it was just because he was a selfish man or a man who was afraid to die because he made too many sacrifices up until that point. I think he was afraid to see that that promise was not gonna be fulfilled. Same thing with Sarah, you know, where she suggested, well, I can't have children, but let's just, you know, have children through, you know, Hagar.

I think it was the same thing. Both of them together were doing everything that they could to preserve what God said to them. And sometimes we're gonna find ourselves holding on to some sense of spiritual identity that is distinct from Christ.

And ultimately our spiritual identity is found only in Christ. But sometimes we'll try to hold on to a sense of spiritual identity. And God says, no, I want that.

You can't preserve my promises. See, God is asking too much. Too much for me, too much for you.

He's asking for things that you and I could never, ever supply. And when he begins to tell us the things that he's gonna do in our life, how he's gonna glorify himself in our life, when he begins to cause his name to be lifted up in our heart and we begin to say, oh, there is something in me that knows that God is going to proclaim his name in me and through me. When he begins to do these things and to make us to understand these things, sometimes our first instinct is, since we've let go of everything else, this is the thing that we have to protect and preserve and make our own.

So sometimes we say, you know what, I'm not singing for the world anymore, so now I'm singing for God and I have to protect that. Or I'm not earning millions and millions of dollars in the world anymore, and now I'm in a position where I can take what God gives me and I can give it to the poor and give it to the needy, but I have to control that. Or I'm not speaking words like I used to speak and saying the kind of things I used to say, now I'm speaking words of praise and of rejoicing, but I need to be in control of when those words are spoken and where they're spoken and how they're spoken, and when God tries to come in and say, no, no, no, I don't want you to say anything right now.

I know this seems like a perfect opportunity, but I would rather you not say anything. Maybe at times God will say, I don't want you to speak, I just want you to pray, or maybe it's the other way around, or whatever the case might be, and we tend to think it's ours and I can do with it what I want. Even with our prayer life,

there are times when God will try to direct our prayer and we'll say, but God, you don't understand.

This is what I need to be praying like now, or this is what I need to be praying about now, and we unroll this shopping list of prayer requests, and God is saying, look, I'm really not interested in that right now. What I want is for you to simply embrace your father and tell him how much you love him. And there are other times when we want to simply embrace our father and tell him how much we love him, and he said, no, I want you to pray for brother so-and-so right now.

You see what I'm saying? But God has got to be able to take the lead. Whatever it is, you see, that's when prayer becomes prayer. One time God spoke to me one day, and basically I was asking him, God, how do I know the difference between when I'm praying in the flesh and praying in the spirit? And God said, when you come into the prayer closet, if you're willing to be changed there, if you're willing for me to tell you yes or no, don't go this way, go that way, and so on and so forth, then you know that you're praying.

If you're willing, but if your goal is to try to change me there, you know what I mean? And to try to tell me, do this and do this and do this, you made the promise, and let me tell you how to fulfill it. It's at that time when I'm saying, I need you to give that back to me. Just so that you can be reminded of who it belongs to.

You see, sometimes God will just simply say, you know, he might say to you, he might say to me, give me back my Bible. Because you've been interpreting it according to your own experience. According to your own desire, according to your own design.

Give me back my Bible. And when we give it back to him, then he teaches us how to read it again. Or sometimes he might say to us, give me back my prayer closet.

Because you've been trying to manipulate, and you've been trying to position yourself, and you've been trying to make things happen, give me back my prayer closet. Sometimes he'll say to some preacher or another, give me back my pulpit. Because you've been trying to do this thing with it, and you've been trying to do that thing with it, and you've been trying to do the other thing with it, give me back my pulpit.

Sometimes he'll say to some mother or to some father, Give me back my son. Give me back my daughter. Sometimes you'll say to our society to our situation to the church society to the church situation. Give me back my cross. Because you've been trying to make it out to be this thing and you've been trying to make it out to be that thing. Oh, you've been trying to make it out to be nothing.

Give me back my cross. Sometimes they'll say to us. Give me back my church. Give me back my church because in it you've been doing this and you've had the programs and you've had the schedules and you've had The this and you've had the that give me back my church every now and again. God simply wants to remind us that everything belongs to him. All of the promises are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Hallelujah Hallelujah Praise God praise the Lord. Because there's one more thing God will say to you he will look at you and Speaking about you He will say give me back my son Give me back my daughter Give me back my beloved no matter how much you love Isaac Abraham.

I love him more. No matter how much you love Isaac Abraham. I loved him first. No matter how much you love Isaac Abraham. I can love him better. No matter how much you love Isaac Abraham before you were able to believe him when you were on your face laughing and your wife laughing behind the door I Knew him.

I loved him. I made a promise about him and I will fulfill my promise through him There is something that God has laid on your heart Promise that he's given you And when you have in your early struggles believe in it God caused you to believe And even as time began to progress and you thought well Maybe I can do this my own way to my own strength. Maybe I'll add a little this and I add a little that And God calls you to let that go and now after having let all that go there's something in you that says God don't ask me for anything more.

Don't ask me to be stripped of this one last thing my claim To dot dot dot whatever it is my claim to my integrity My claim to my devotion my claim to my faithfulness Don't ask me to give that up to you don't ask me to give that to you to God is speaking to you tonight. God is speaking to someone in this house in particular Because somebody God has used some person some person in authority or whatever the case To get it that thing Even after you've given up so much even after you've worked so hard Even after you've put everything on the altar that one thing that you didn't put on the altar Your right to immunity based upon everything else that you put on the altar God is asking you now To give up your right to immunity immunity to God's protection immunity to God's correction Immunity to the hand of authority in your life Give up that as well You see when we give up a lot of things to God. We sometimes think we're immune to having to give up anything more Give that immunity up Today we're going to ask you to come to this altar and to lay your right to immunity on the altar of sacrifice You see because God was able to say to Abraham after that Now I can begin to bless you.

He said now. I know that you fear God Doesn't mean that there was something going on in Abraham's life that God was unaware of and now he saw it. You know It means that because Abraham was willing to come to where God told him to come Something that wasn't there Was now there So Abraham thought that he was in awe of the promise way back then But now he was in awe of the promise Because he understood God is asking too much for me.

I can't do it If God doesn't move it's not going to happen as pastor Carter reminds us When God moves in this time, we're all gonna have to say only God could do this Because there's nothing we can do in our own strength, would you stand with me, please in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ God is speaking to you this evening He wants to immerse you he wants to baptize you in Pentecostal fire He wants to take that one thing And he wants to refine it He wants to bring it to a place of maturity He wants to be able to look in you and say now I see the all of God Now I see it and now I can begin to bring revival for your life If God is speaking to you tonight Begin to come to the front of this auditorium Pastor Carter's gonna come and he's gonna pray with you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ God be with you Bless God you know That's the kind of a message tonight that you're gonna have to listen to again. I Thank you pastor William. I for your faithfulness I all I can say is I've been ministered to on so many levels tonight I feel like I've gone through a spiritual car wash.

I can't quite explain it It's just something I have to hear again a few times to be able to understand the depths of it Thanks be to God Thanks be to God. Praise God Bless the name of Jesus. Oh, thank you.

God. Thank you Lord Thank you father Lord it just feels so clean tonight so fresh so real God we thank you with everything in us Lord Praise you God for what you're doing in this church and how you're unwilling to let us go individually and collectively as a body You've established a testimony in here Lord. That is yours.

It's all belongs to you Lord. It's all about you Lord it all is yours. It all has always been yours Lord.

We are simply invited to come along on the journey Lord, thank you for this God. Thank you Lord Help us to understand this tonight and to lay it to heart and to let it go deep Lord let us not Treat this word lightly And father, I thank you for this tonight. God.

I praise you Jesus Lord, you've done something deeper than words and no Little prayer is going to make it perfect at this altar. This is deeper than that God, thank you Thank you Lord. We do give it back everything Lord The good things that you've done in us.

We give those back to you Lord They belong to you. And if you need to refine them refine them and whatever you need to do with them Do it with them Lord and Lord. We know that when you return these things, they will come back in their pure form They will come back the way they were designed to be God we thank you for it Lord Thank you that we don't have to hold to anything because we have a complete righteousness in you Lord.

It's it's a given righteousness Lord, we don't have to procure it produce it or make it happen. Thank you Lord God for this Bless the people tonight Lord bless this church tonight father in the way that you already have Let the blessing of God rest on us Let there be change as we leave this evening Lord. Let there be truly be changed and father We thank you with all our hearts in Jesus name

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/16/SID16708.mp3>

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