



GIVING GOD'S WAY

GENESIS 22:1-2

Giving God's Way

Scripture Reading

Genesis 17:1-5 (NKJV)

(Ex. 12:43—13:2)

1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. 2 And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." 3 Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: 4 "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. 5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.

Genesis 22:1-8 (NKJV)

(Heb. 11:17-19)

1 Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."

2 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."

3 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 arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. 5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you." 6 So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. 7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" 8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

Introduction

Last week we looked at God's own example of how to give relationally, intentionally and sacrificially. Giving is easy when you don't have much to lose. But giving is hard when you're not sure if you'll be replenished after you've given. That's often recognized as sacrificial giving. Giving til it hurts; until there's a hole in your emotions, your wants, your own desires. But giving til it hurts is only one side of what really needs to be studied. Giving God's way is not just sacrificial giving but it is' giving because you know you have a promise. Let's continue to look at how the Lord gives so we can learn how to give.

When You Didn't Ask for It

Abraham and Sarah had met and fell in love. They went for many years without children. I'm sure they desired to have children but God had not permitted them to. And then all of a sudden, at a time in Abraham's life when he was content, God calls him out of his father's house, his father's religion, his people's region and calls him to a new undefined place. Abraham believes God and follows Him. And God continues to drop seemingly impossible revelations into Abraham's spirit and tells him that he will have a son at a time when both of them would have passed for Sarah to conceive.

Abraham didn't ask God for any of it. God came to him and gave it to his spirit to believe it. Once Abraham received it in his spirit, he didn't doubt it. He didn't let go of it; he hung onto it until God manifested it. And when God manifested Canaan before Abraham's eyes, he had enough confirmation to believe what God would tell him next.

So when the Lord appears to Abraham in Chapter 18 with two angels, and tells him he's going to have a son, and tells him that Sarah will be the one to conceive the child of promise, Abraham laughed and was surprised but still received what God told him. And when the Lord heard Sarah laugh about it in the tent, she tried to deny it, but the Lord said, "you did laugh!" Abraham and Sarah knew the Lord was serious about His promise that they didn't ask for.

There is an amazing story in 2Kings 4 about the prophet Elisha and his visit to Shunem. He meets a notable woman. She was wealthy and she and her husband wanted to show kindness to Elisha and his

servant and prepared a room for him to stay while he was there. As a reward, the prophet asked her what she wanted from the Lord in return for her kindness. She basically said, I have all I need. I'm okay; I don't need anything. The prophet's servant said "she doesn't have any kids." And Elisha prophesies to her that she will have a son. Her response was basically, "prophet don't play with me and my emotions now!" "Don't deceive me." She didn't know what to do with that. But it sure happened! She had a son that grew up.

But one day the child was heading out to the field and then cried out "my head my head!" And fell to the ground and died. The mother ran and to him and commanded her servant to lay him on Elisha's bed in the room she had reserved for him in her home. And then she sent for her donkey and went personally to find Elisha.

Elisha saw her riding towards him from a distance and sent a messenger to her asking if all was well. She didn't answer the messenger and kept riding. Elisha's servant tried to block her access to Elisha because she would not say why she had ridden out to see him. But Elisha sensed something was wrong and let her pass.

Her words were "Did I ask for a son of my lord?" "Didn't I say, don't deceive me." Then Elisha immediately understood and tried to send his servant with Elisha's staff to go and lay it on the child. But she wouldn't leave unless Elisha came personally. The staff did not raise the child, so Elisha had to go in repeatedly and lay himself on the child until the child's skin became warm and finally he came back to life and sneezed 7 times. The un-expectant mother was able to receive her child—alive and well.

Giving Gods way sometimes giving when a person doesn't ask for it but wholeheartedly receives it.

When God Asks You to Give it Up

Let's now revisit Abraham a little further into his faith journey with God in Genesis Chapter 22. By now, Abraham's walk with God had ventured into uncharted territory, defied 'time and seasons' themselves, intruded into their retirement and started them on a whole new venture without a cap on their faith. Here are these two well seasoned seniors changing the diapers of a brand new promise and nurturing the gift God gave them. Waking up early, chasing a little infant, teaching him how to walk and talk and feeding him until he can feed himself. A grandparent's nostalgic dream became their reality. And their legacy was wrapped up in this young child Isaac—the son they needed but didn't ask for and in whom everything was riding. And here comes God.

Genesis 22:1-2 (NKJV)

Abraham's Faith Confirmed

1 Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."

2 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."

An unexplainable command to happen at an undefined place and seemingly in contradiction to everything that God had already promised him. To be the father of many nations, you need a son who would have more sons. So how can God be asking me to kill my son? My only investment into the future He said I'd have?

Hebrews 11:17-19 (NKJV)

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

God had led Abraham to a level of faith by his obedience that gave Abraham a view of God's promises to be irrefutable even at the point of death. If he could receive Isaac from the death of non-existence (not expecting him, didn't ask for him, didn't even know he would ever have him) then God must be able to raise Isaac from the dead if God asked Abraham to sacrifice him. That's a level of faith that connects with a God is God of the living and the dead. A faith that crosses realms!

Abraham by his obedience now enacted a willingness to sacrifice his only son knowing that God must raise him up in order to fulfill His promise. It's through this example that we see a perfect example of what God Himself did and followed through with Jesus.

Giving God's way means even being willing to give up His Promise for Him while knowing that God will fulfill what He says no matter what.

Remembering to 'Show Your Thank You.'

'Showing your thank you' has everything to do with showing your thanks tangibly. In Genesis 14, we see the first recorded instance of a tithe mentioned in the Bible. And it wasn't in a temple or a form of worship. It wasn't money but it was literally a tithe of everything Abraham owned. It was his decision to 'show his thank you' tangibly.

Abraham finds himself in the middle of a war between kings while trying to rescue his nephew Lot from the kingdom of Sodom and Gomorrah. And God gives Abraham and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah the victory over the 5 kings seeking to overthrow them and the other neighboring kings. After the conflict ended and the battle was won, another King arrived on the battlefield. Melchizedek the King and priest of Salem arrives on the scene proclaiming:

Genesis 14:19-20 (NKJV)

19 And he blessed him and said:

"Blessed be Abram of God Most High,
Possessor of heaven and earth;

20 And blessed be God Most High,
Who has delivered your enemies into your hand."
And he gave him a tithe of all.

Abraham received this pronounced blessing from this king and priest and felt prompted to give Melchizedek a tithe of all he possessed in thanks! There was no law, no Levites (they weren't born yet) and there was no mandate for Abraham to do so. It was his thanks to God.

There were many spoils from the war and also displaced people who could now become the servants of the victors. The king of Sodom wanted Abraham to accept more spoils in exchange for the people. Abraham refused both and forfeited all the spoils being offered to him saying:

Genesis 14:22-23 (NKJV) "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, 23 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'—

Abraham wanted all glory to go to God for blessing him and not any riches from the king of Sodom.

Giving God's way ensures that we are thankful tangibly and that we ensure that He gets all the glory out of it and not ourselves nor anyone else. We give freely under no compulsion other than the prompting of thanksgiving and we give generously to a God who gives us the victory.

Conclusion.

So giving God's way means:

1. giving even when a person doesn't ask for it
2. giving sacrificially with the confidence that God will fulfill His promise
3. 'showing your thank you' tangibly, giving all glory to God and to no one else.

As you can see from what we've learned today, giving God's way means so much more than how we normally approach giving. There are needs all around us and many times we are unaware. May God open our eyes to be able to give His way. As a ministry we often encounter needs and it becomes meaningful when we are able to tangibly respond to those needs because we ALL learn to give God's way.