

Holding Nothing Back

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[0 : 00] Title of the message is Holding Nothing Back.! Holding Nothing Back. If you've got your Bibles, we're going to start off in Genesis 22.!

I'm going to start reading. After these things, God tested Abraham and said to him, Abraham! He said, Here I am. He said, Take 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, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

On the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. Then Abraham said to his young men, Stay here with the donkey, and I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.

And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife, so they went both of them together.

[1 : 29] And Isaac said to his father, Abraham, my father. And he said, Here I am, my son. He said, Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

Abraham said, God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son. So they went both of them together. When they came to the place in which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar on top of the wood.

Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here I am.

He said, Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.

And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by his thorns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.

[2 : 39] So Abraham called the name of that place the Lord will provide. As it is said to this day, on the mount of the Lord it shall be provided. And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore.

And your offspring shall possess the gates of his enemies and your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed because you have obeyed my voice. Okay? So that's a story I think most of us who've been walking with Jesus for a long time are fairly familiar with.

I was meditating on this story, just thinking of what to speak on in light of Seth's sermon from last week. And the thing that really jumped out to me is in light of him having to offer up his son, which that's an unusual sacrifice.

I think we could all agree on that, right? It's not every day that God asks you to sacrifice your son. And he's offering up his son and not only is it his son, he's the son of the promise.

This is the son he was not able to have for a hundred years, right? He gets pregnant, has this kid. This is the son that the promise is going to come through.

[4 : 09] And then in this weird turn of events, he says, hey, the one that the promise is supposed to come through, I actually want you to sacrifice him to me. Okay? So very interesting thing.

You would say, no one would ever say, you know, Abraham was committed to the Lord, but you know, he kind of just gave God his leftovers. You know, it's like, no, it's a son, his only son.

Like no one would ever say, Abraham's not really given much. Anybody would say, Abraham, if there's a guy who's given, if there's a guy who's in, it would be Abraham.

Okay? But I think what we're going to see here, and this is what I want to focus on, is God didn't comment on what he gave. God comment on what he didn't withhold.

You might say, well, that's just semantics. And I want to suggest to you, it's not semantics. That wording is important. Okay? He says, in verse 12, when he says, don't lay your hand on the boy, he says, now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son for me.

[5 : 17] And what I want to look at in the scriptures here, and I believe is a theme that is all throughout the scriptures, is God pointing to what is withheld or what is not withheld.

And that's not the way we think. When we think, we think what someone's giving or not giving. God is thinking what is withheld or not withheld. And I'll explain that more in a second here.

But Proverbs 11, 24, it says, one gives freely, it grows all the richer. Another withholds what he should give, and only suffers once.

Okay? Proverbs 21, 26, says, the righteous gives and does not hold back. The Amplified says, the righteous gives and does not withhold. Okay?

And then, Matthew 10, 37 to 39, says, whoever loves father and mother more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

[6 : 17] Whoever finds his life will lose it. Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. You see, it's not what you give, it's what you hold back. That is the thing that is important here.

Because you can have a pretty good reputation, so to speak, of giving. On the outside, it can look like, hey, that person is a giver.

That person is, and this would include finances, but this isn't a message on finances. This is more, you know, pervasive, more all-inclusive, right? So, you could say, that's a giving person.

That's a generous person. That's a person who's an all-in type of guy or girl. That's a, that's a, that's a Christian who's really giving. But, God's not looking what's being given.

He's looking, is there anything that's withheld? He knew that Abraham feared the Lord because he did not withhold his son. The righteous gives and does not hold back.

[7 : 16] And what I'm asking the Lord to show us this morning, Lord, please help us. Is there anything we're holding back? Because, I mean, I think it'd be, I would have no problem saying, probably everyone in this room is giving to a certain degree to the Lord, in their time, their talents, their treasure, you know, good on the list, right?

We could all say that. We would all say that of ourselves, I would think, right? But, the question is not, are we giving? Because that's not what Jesus, or what God brings up.

He brings up, is there anything we're holding back? Is it, I'm going this far, but, ah, not that, not that. Okay, so, it's not what you give necessarily, but it's what you hold back.

Let's look at, this hypothesis, in the Bible, and see if we're not seeing this as a theme. Okay? Well, right away, also in Genesis, you see the first sacrifices brought to the Lord, with Cain and Abel, right?

It said, in Genesis 4, 3 to 5, in the course of time, Cain brought to the Lord, an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock, and of their fat portions.

[8 : 26] And the Lord had regard for Abel, and his offering, but for Cain and his offering, he had no regard, so Cain was very angry, and his face fell. Hebrews 11, 4 gives us a little more insight on that.

It says, by faith, Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain. Well, maybe some of you wondered, what's the deal with that? They both offered sacrifices. Again, it's not just that they, you might say, they both offered sacrifices.

God isn't looking to see, are you sacrificing? He's saying, what are you withholding? Abel gave of his firstfruits. Cain, it just says, he brought an offering.

It doesn't say it was his firstfruits. Okay? So, I would venture to say that Cain was withholding something. Cain was withholding something. But they both gave.

They both sacrificed. That's not what God's looking at. God was not pleased with Cain's sacrifice.

And what we find too, that, is those who are withholding, what is the response to a person who's withholding from God when someone calls them out on it?

[9 : 32] What do they do? They get angry. Right? And we know how that is. Even last week when Seth was talking and he wrapped up, you know, he's preaching a really good message.

You think, that's a great message. And then Seth has to do that Seth thing and just really go at it at the end there, right? Which I love about Seth. Appreciate that about Seth. That's part of the body we need, right?

And he brings up a list of bad ultimate reasons to go to a church. And what does that do in us? I mean, I'm listening to it and you can almost feel it coming up inside of you like, oh, he's hitting the stuff.

He's hitting the things that are difficult. And you either get mad or sad typically with those kind of things. It stirs things up in you. And that's what happened with Cain here.

It says, Cain was very angry. Cain was very angry. And so we got to watch ourselves and say, hey, is there anything I'm holding back? Cain held something back.

[10 : 33] Another one was Saul. Remember the story when Saul was told to go, was it the Amalekites? I can't remember who it was, but yeah, the Amalekites.

He was supposed to go there and destroy everything, kill everything, destroy everything. Like that was the command, right? And Sam, God calls Samuel to go to Saul.

Samuel comes to Saul. This is 1 Samuel 15, verse 13. Samuel comes to Saul. Saul says to him, blessed be the name of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord, brother. Good to see you, Samuel.

Everything's cool, man. I'm doing the thing. You're doing the thing. We're godly people, right? Aren't we? And Saul, I mean, Samuel is not, Samuel's not cool. He's not having it, right? He says, blessed be the Lord.

I have performed the commandment of the Lord. And then Samuel says, what then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen that I hear? Okay, why is he saying that?

[11 : 33] Because he's supposed to kill all those things. Why is he hearing animal sounds and telling him, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord. And Samuel's like, no, you didn't.

Then why do I hear these animal noises? Okay, and again, Saul's thinking he's tough stuff. He's all good because what did Saul do? He did some things for the Lord. He killed some things.

But he withheld certain things back. You see, Saul says, they have brought them from the Amokites for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen.

And then he spiritualizes it. And oh, do we love to spiritualize our withholding from God. And Saul does the same thing, right? He says, I have spared, we have spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to the Lord, of course, you know, because that's what we're doing here.

This is all for the Lord. And Samuel's not having it. Samuel's a prophet. He's not playing games here and he never really did as you look at Samuel's life.

[12 : 35] Samuel says to Saul, stop with a cap with an exclamation point at the end there. So I'm, he's saying this pretty firm, I'm sure. Like, stop! I will tell you what the Lord said to me this night.

And he said to him, speak. And Samuel said, though you are little in your own eyes, you're not ahead of the tribes of Israel. The Lord anointed you king over Israel and the Lord sent you on a mission and said, go devote to destruction the sinners, the Amalekites and fight against them until they are consumed.

Why then? Did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil in the sight of the Lord? And then Saul doubles down.

He still says, I obeyed the voice of the Lord. I've gone on the mission the Lord has sent me. I've brought Agag the king of Amalek and have devoted the Amalekites to destruction.

But the people, and then there he goes, right? But the people, the people took the spoil sheep and auction, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord your God at Gilgal.

[13 : 37] So, here you have this example where God is not, again, it's not that Saul didn't give to the Lord, it's not that Saul didn't do things for the Lord. And this is the thing we have to be careful of.

You can do great things for God. You can do things for the Lord, look like you're giving and sacrificial. You can even spiritualize your own selfishness and say, oh, it's for the Lord.

And God would say, you withheld some of the obedience that I required of you. You withheld. You didn't give me all that I wanted. You took some of it for yourself.

Okay? We see the same thing in Malachi chapter 3. You have this fascinating conversation with the people of Israel and the Lord through the prophet Malachi.

and chapter 3, verse 8, he asks this kind of question that seems rather odd at the onset. It says, will man rob God? Will man rob God?

[14:34] And you're thinking, what do you mean will man rob God? How do you rob God? And he says, you are robbing me. And then he anticipates the question.

He says, but you say, how have we robbed you? And he says, in your tithes and contributions, you are cursed with a curse for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. He's rebuking the whole nation of Israel.

He says, bring the full tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house and thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.

So, here again, it's not that Israel wasn't giving. Israel was giving. It's not so much about what you're giving. It's about what you're withholding. You understand, this is a theme that we're seeing over and over again.

So, he says, you're robbing me. Well, robbing you, the only way you can rob someone is if you're taking what is theirs. And he's saying, that full tithe was mine.

[15:36] You withholding some of it is robbing me. You're taking what's mine and keeping it for yourself. And he would say, but we're giving. We're giving. He's saying, no, but you withheld the full tithe.

You withheld the full tithe. You see the same thing in Luke chapter 18. Now we're in the New Testament. Jesus is on the scene and you know, you guys know the story of the rich young ruler, right?

Rich young ruler comes to him. Luke 18 verse 18. Good teacher. What must I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus said to him, why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.

And he says, you know the commandments. Do not commit adultery. Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not give false tests. Witness on your father and mother. And then, of course, the guy says, all these I have kept since my youth.

Again, I'm good. I'm a command keeper. Right? You should, you and I, God, should be good because I'm a command keeper.

[16:43] I'm giving. I'm giving it myself. What does Jesus respond? When Jesus heard this, he said to him, one thing you still lack.

Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and come follow me. When he heard these things, he became very sad for he was extremely rich.

Jesus, seeing that he had become sad, said, how difficult is it for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God? That it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.

Those who heard it said, then, who can be saved? But he said, what is impossible with man is possible with God? And Peter said, see, we have left our homes and followed you.

And he said to them, truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God who will not receive many times more in this time and in the age to come.

[17:43] So again, you have another story of a guy coming to God who is doing the stuff. He's obeying commandments. He's giving God certain things.

And he says, one thing you lack. Another way you could have said it is, there's still one thing you're withholding from God. There's one thing that you love that you are not willing to give up.

And someone else on the outside mind looking like, this guy's, he's a good guy. Like he's obeying the commandments. But God in the person of Jesus here is discerning that there was an idolatrous love of money and it required him to repent of that and to believe that Jesus is his treasure.

And to prove that he calls him to give of his possessions. He knew that he loved his wealth. In Matthew it says Jesus looked at him and loved him when he gave that response.

He looked at him and loved him. He knew that this guy was finding his identity in his good works but he was still withholding from the Lord. And this is a good warning for us.

[18:56] You see the same thing in the book of Acts. Acts chapter 5. Story of Ananias and Sapphira. Sapphira. A man named Ananias with his wife Sapphira they sold a piece of property which was what people were doing back then.

If you look earlier than that a bunch of people were selling their property and giving the proceeds to the Lord at the time. And so Ananias does the same thing. He sells a property with his wife Sapphira but in verse 2 of Acts 5 it says with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it.

So he held back. He didn't give it all but he was given the impression that he was giving all. He was a little bit deceptive there. Peter said Ananias why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?

Well it remained unsold did it not remain your own? And after it was sold was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.

When Ananias heard these words he fell down and breathed his last and great fear came upon all who heard it. The young man rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him. Okay? Another story same but it's the same story.

[20 : 16] It's the same story from Genesis. It's just the same old thing. I think you can start to see that there is something in the heart of man that wants to appear good. that wants to appear sacrificial.

That wants to appear giving. And yet the Lord is not looking so much at what we're giving he's looking at what we're withholding.

And he looked at Ananias and said hey you've kept back. You're presenting an image of something and yet you've kept something back. You see the same thing in 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

The great love chapter right? The one you see on the wedding cards. And sometimes some of the stuff we put on these cute things are some of the most cutting things and it's kind of weird how we do that.

You know? Like let's just put this cute little love verse on there. It's like you read it you're thinking this is actually pretty life or death kind of thing here. This is kind of heavy. But in 1 Corinthians 13 3 he says if I give away all I have and if I deliver up my body to be burned now you would say let's just stop there.

[21 : 28] What if someone gave up all they had and delivered up their body to be burned and say okay I mean I haven't given up my body to be burned and that might be a hard one.

That would be a difficult one. I'd say on the list of things that you gave up and done that would be pretty high. I'd say if I'm going to make a list of like people who are doing a good job I'd say yeah I'd probably put them high on the list you know doing the giving away all you have and then giving yourself up to be burned that seems pretty good.

Seems pretty admirable and yet it's not enough. Why? But have not love I gain nothing. Wow. Wow. If I have not love I gain nothing. You can give all that but if you withhold your love you don't gain anything. This is incredible.

This is incredible. That's giving a lot and yet if we withhold God's still focusing on the withholding thing and this is not the way we think is it?

[22 : 39] We're just we would celebrate someone like that like oh my goodness I mean could it even be that there's biographies of people who've done stuff like that and they've gained nothing because everything we see looks good.

Man this person was sacrificial but God knows that they were withholding their love so they gained nothing. It's incredible. Okay one more. I think I made my point but we'll do one more.

Matthew chapter 25 the parable of the talents Jesus tells. 25 verse 24 says you know I'm not going to go through the whole parable but he gives them different talents and then he expects them to steward the talents that are given.

There's different amounts given. Verse 24 he says he also who had received the one talent came forward saying master I knew you to be a hard man reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed.

So I was afraid and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours. But his master answered him you wicked and slothful servant.

[23 : 51] Okay. God gives the talents the other guys multiply the talents this guy just gives it back. So there's no loss to the one who gave the money. Why would you say you wicked and slothful servant?

He says you knew what I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scatter no seed then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to him who has ten talents. For everyone who has will be given and more will be given and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not even what he has will be taken away and cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And sometimes we think well God's just too hard. I'm just going to withhold the risk of giving it all. And I'll just give him what's easy.

God was not happy with this person. Do you see that? You wicked and slothful servant. He gives it away to those who have and then he casts the worthless servant into the outer darkness.

[25 : 01] God has given us talents. He has given us resources, time, talent, treasure. He's given them to us. And he's saying I want you to go all in on this. I want you to take risks with what I'm giving you.

It is not okay for you to sit on them, bury them. It's not okay for you to have some semblance of being a spiritual person, to spiritually sanctify your selfishness, and to withhold from God.

God wants it all. He wants it all. He wants it all. And oftentimes you know when we're withholding, it's not, it's the good things.

It's the good things that are the things. Right? It's almost always the good things. Like, even thinking of Luke 14, you know the parable of the great banquet?

It says he threw a great banquet, and then he sent his servants to say to those who have been invited, come for everything is now ready. But they will like began to make excuses. The first one said I bought a field. The second one said I bought five yoke of oxen.

[26 : 05] And the third one said I married a wife. Three things you think, wait a second, those are all good things. A field, yoke of oxen, and a wife.

Basically, a home, a job, and a wife. A home, a job, and a family. What's wrong with a home?

Nothing wrong with a home. What's wrong with a job? You should work a job.

What about a family? Yeah, that's good too. You receive faith from the Lord, says Proverbs 18. So, wait a second. And the servant came and reported these things to the master.

And the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, the lame. And the servant said, sir, what you commanded has been done and still there's room.

And then the master said to the servant, go out to the highways and the hedges and compel people to come that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who are invited shall taste my banquet.

[27 : 02] And it's the good things that often keep us, the things that keep us, that we withhold from the Lord. We say, well, that's my excuse.

And God's saying, no, you have to give it all. You have to give it all. What are you withholding?

What are you withholding? Are you withholding your time? Are you giving a bunch of time, but there's some time it's like, this is me time.

This is my time. You can have all this time, but you can't have that. And you have this semblance of I'm giving all my time. And God says, but what are you withholding? Maybe it's your money.

It's like, I give this money, but then this, I give money to the church I've been giving all the time. I've been giving my whole life. Like, this is what I do. But what are you doing with the money you keep? Is that the Lord's too?

Or are you withholding that from him? Maybe you're withholding what you're supposed to give to him. But are you withholding what you are keeping in the sense that you're just using it for your own self and it's not seen as his?

[28 : 04] Maybe it's our career and our job. Maybe the career and the job is something we've been fighting for and wrestling for for a whole life and I finally got it. This is what I wanted. And yet it's standing in the way of what God wants.

Are we willing to let it go? Are we willing to let it go? Are we withholding? It's like, yeah, you can have all the things. I'll sacrifice time and money, but no, not that career, not that job. That's mine. I worked hard for that. And I'm not saying everybody has to give up their career or job, but there's going to be some people who do. Some people are going to have to leave some money on the table to follow Jesus.

Some people are going to have to leave certain things that they want to do and not withhold them from the Lord. Sometimes it's family and friends. Sometimes it's our kids.

Kids can become a very easy way to spiritualize our selfishness. Okay? Some people are going to have to give up their kids' bedtime. As if God can have everything but my kids' bedtime.

[29 : 00] Everything is nothing sacred except the time my kids go to bed. Why? Because it inconveniences me to put them to bed at different times in order to have fellowship with the saints. Well, that sacred cow's got to go too.

You can't withhold that. You can't withhold anything from the Lord. What is he calling you to give up? What is he calling you to give? Some of us, it's our very freedom.

It's like, I love my freedom, my time, and my choices. I don't ever want to limit my options. Okay? Do you know what the word decide means to cut off?

The root word of decide in the Latin means to cut off. A decision by nature means you're cutting off other options. We live in a generation, especially with young people, where all we want to do is keep as many options open as possible.

And it keeps us uncommitted. It makes us flaky. What ends up happening is we're withholding this sense of freedom to the Lord. We're not bond slaves to Jesus. We're saying, God, you can have everything except my options.

[30 : 01] I got to keep my options open. My commitments will only go this far. And if it goes to a point where I have to limit my options, you can't have that Lord. No, he needs that too.

We have to limit our options for Jesus. We have to give up comfort. We have to give up our secrets. The things like, well, I'll tell people this, but that's the one thing I'm never going to tell anyone.

I'll go to my grave not telling someone that thing. Is God calling us to give up some of our privacy? What is it that we're withholding from God?

What secret? What level of privacy? What level of freedom? We're saying, God, I don't want to withhold anything to you.

God, I don't And then you hear a sermon like Seth brought last weekend, and he brings up bad ultimate reasons to join a church. Like, what are we willing to do?

[30 : 58] Will we only be in a small church? It's like what he said last week. Well, what happens if we do what we're supposed to do and preach the gospel to people and they get saved and the church is no longer small? Well, is my commitment to the Lord with a little clause on the side that says, I'm committed to your church as long as your church stays a certain size where I'm comfortable and I don't have to interact with people that I don't like or I don't know as well.

As long as it's not a size that is too difficult for me. As long as I get to put my friends and family first. As long as I have the leadership opportunities that I want and as long as it's close and has a proximity to me that I like.

Some of us, you know, with the church moving, thinking, oh, that sucks. That's further away. Some of you are like, yeah, that's great. This is closer. But that's the thing. It can always change.

And the posture of a disciple of Jesus should say, God, nothing is withheld from you. I won't withhold anything from you. No matter what you ask of me, I'll give it to you.

All right, offer your son as a sacrifice. I'll give you my son. Whatever it may take. Offer your career. Offer your time. Offer your options. Offer your freedom.

[32 : 15] Offer your money. Offer your talents. Yes, I'm not withholding anything from you, Jesus. I don't want to be some guy who's renowned for being a giving spiritual person, yet when it gets to the end, the Lord says, you withheld from me.

You withheld from me. You had a reputation for being alive. You gave so much, and yet what I wanted you to give, you withheld, and you took it all to the end with the praises of man keeping you, but you did not have my praise because I was not pleased.

And what ends up happening is we get mad or sad. We think God asked too much. We think God is too hard or that God won't mind. And that's the one we don't talk about a lot.

People will talk about, yeah, I feel like it's just too much or it's too hard. God won't mind. That guy in the parable said, I thought you were too hard, God, so I buried the talent. But what about God won't mind?

God won't mind is a lack of the fear of the Lord. God won't mind is Ananias and Sapphira saying, you know, he's not going to mind. He knows we're giving. If we keep back a little bit from ourselves, God won't mind is Saul saying, hey, I mean, what's the big deal?

[33 : 27] I did, we destroyed a bunch of it, and now we're going to sacrifice the stuff to the Lord. God won't mind. Well, God minds. God minds when we withhold from him.

God minds. Someone who doesn't fear the Lord says something consciously or subconsciously like God doesn't mind. When it comes down to it, Jesus wants what he paid for.

Jesus wants what he paid for. And Jesus should get what he paid for. Psalm 49, verse 7 says, truly no man can ransom another or give to God the price of his life.

For the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice, that he should live on forever and never see the pit. So you can't pay the ransom that is required to pay the debt that we owe.

That's what he's saying here. So what did Jesus do? Well, 1 Peter 1, 17-19 says, if you call on him as father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

[34 : 49] You were ransomed. You were ransomed with the precious blood of Christ. Mark 10, 45 says, even the son of man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

He paid our debt. 1 Corinthians 6, 19-20 says, you are not your own. You were bought with a price, so glorify God in your body.

He goes on in 1 Corinthians 7, verse 22 and he says, he who has called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freed man of the Lord. Likewise, he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ.

You were bought with a price. Do not become bonds servants of men. God bought us. He purchased us. We were in debt. We couldn't pay it. God said, I will pay your debt and then you are mine.

I own you. You're no longer your own. So glorify God with your body. You've been bought with a price. We don't live like we're on our own. You know how you live like your own when you withhold from the one who owns you.

[35 : 55] Withholding from the one who owns you is not living like you've been bought with a price. Acts 20, 28 in the CSB says, be on your guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, speaking to elders, to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood.

He purchased the church. It's his. Colossians 2, 13 to 14 says, you were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh.

God made you alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. How did he cancel the debt? With the cross. The cross was the payment for your debt. The cross canceled the debt because it was the payment. Do you believe that?

If he purchased your debt with the cross, he purchased you. You're not your own anymore. This is why we sing like the hymn this, my sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought, my sin not in part but the whole, was nailed to the cross and I bear it no more.

[37 : 05] Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, oh my soul. Or the other hymn that says, Jesus paid it all, all to him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain.

He washed it white as snow. If Jesus paid it all, then all to him we owe. We give it gladly. We don't withhold. We say, Jesus, if you ask it, I give it.

If you ask it, there's no conversation. I'm having short conversations with the flesh. They look like this. No. I'm not negotiating with the flesh.

I'm not negotiating with my flesh to say, well God, I'll give you this much but not all of it. No. He paid for it on the cross. It's paid for. He owns me. Jesus paid it all, so all to him I owe.

And from that comes the kind of love that is a joy. Luke 7, 41 to 47 says a certain money lender had two debtors. One owed 500 denarii.

[38 : 05] A denarii was a day's wage. Okay. So 500 denarii, if you're working 250 days out of the year, that's two years wages right there.

Okay. So one was forgiven two years wages. The other was forgiven 50, which is 10 weeks. Okay. And when they could not pay, he canceled the debt of both.

One was 10 weeks pay. One was two years of pay. And he says to him, which one will love more? Simon answered and said, the one I suppose for whom he canceled the larger debt.

And he said to him, you have judged rightly. Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, do you see this woman? I entered your house. You gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

You gave me no kiss. But from the time I came in, she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you her sins, which are many are forgiven for she loved much, but he was forgiven.

[39 : 10] Little loves little. She gave because she was forgiven much. She knew that Jesus has paid it all. She's not withholding.

Simon withheld from the Lord. The Lord himself was standing in front of Simon and he withheld. He didn't give extravagantly. He didn't even give him anything to wash his feet.

And this woman, she gives water for the feet. She's wetting. She's wetting his feet with her hair and her tears. He didn't give any kiss, but she has not ceased kissing.

And people who look at that and say that's extravagant, that's too much. No, that's the only thing that's appropriate. And the only time it's inappropriate for us is if we've forgotten how much we've been forgiven.

We've forgotten the debt that's been paid. He didn't just make our debt less. He paid it all. He paid it all. And so an extravagant response is natural.

[40 : 12] It's normal. It's evidence that you've been forgiven of much. Because if you've been forgiven much, you love much. If you've been forgiven little, you love little.

And when you know this and you believe this, you can say as they sing in Revelation chapter 5 verse 9, the new song saying, worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals.

For you were slain and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them a kingdom of priests to our God that they shall reign on this earth.

You say worthy is the lamb. You say worthy. Lord, you're worthy. I will not withhold anything from you because you're worthy. You're worth it all. Like, it's worth it.

It's not a bad deal for me. This isn't a bad transaction. I'm giving to you and actually it's a bad transaction for you. It's totally unfair. It seems ridiculous for me to give my life after all that you've given to me.

[41 : 13] It's an unfair trade. It's totally out of the whack. Like, my sacrifice to you, it doesn't even look like a sacrifice. It seems so small and petty in comparison because of the lamb who was slain, who was worthy, who redeemed all over the earth, who ransomed the people from the earth.

He paid their debt. He purchased them. You purchased me and the least I can give you is everything. Is everything. How dare I withhold anything from you? See, when you know that God didn't withhold anything for us, it says in Psalm 84 11, the Lord God is a sun and shield.

The Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly. Do you know that he's not withholding anything from you? He never has.

He doesn't withhold. He's given extravagantly. And the devil lies to us and whispers and says, God's not, God's withholding from you. Are you kidding me? When you ever think that, just look at the cross.

Look at the cross. Did he withhold anything on the cross? No, he gave it all. Jesus gave it all. Jesus paid it all. Jesus gave it all. And he asked that in view of this, in light of this, that we would offer our bodies as a living sacrifice.

[42 : 31] Have you seen this treasure? Is he your treasure? Is he your joy? Is he of exceeding value and worth so that when you see all the things that he's calling you to give to him, the things you naturally want to withhold?

You look at it and say, this is so cheap compared to what I get when I sell this. If I sell all I have, the treasure that I get is so much more worth it. I'm not only not fighting to keep these things, I'm so excited to get rid of them because what I'm getting is so beautiful.

It's so precious. It's such a great treasure because the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up. That in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

He sells all that he has. He doesn't withhold. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls. Who on finding one pearl of great value went and sold all he had and bought it.

In his joy. In his joy. So like in 1 Thessalonians 2, 11 to 12, I say to you, like a father with his children, we exhorted each of you, we encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God.

[43 : 52] Worthy of God. And that's my exhortation to you today. My exhortation, my encouragement, my charge to you is don't withhold anything from him. Don't keep anything back.

Don't withhold your evangelism. Don't withhold your time. Don't withhold anything. Don't withhold anything that's in front of you. Give it all to him. Because he's worthy. He's worthy.

And he said to us in Luke 14, 33, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples. This is discipleship. But I'm not telling you to do something that makes no sense.

I'm not calling you to do something and charging you to do something that is not the most joyful thing you could possibly do. I'm telling you to sell all to get the treasure.

I'm telling you to give your worthless life in comparison to the worth of Jesus and to gain all. I'm telling you to lose your life so you can find it. This is the good news.

[44 : 53] This is good news. And yet, how often do we say no to Jesus and we withhold things back and say, God, I want to keep this thing. This is better. This is better than what you offer Jesus.

Me keeping this is better. Me holding back is better. It's never better. This is the faith that God requires for salvation. That Jesus is better. He's always better. And therefore, I keep, I bear fruit in keeping with repentance by turning from all these things that I want to withhold and I gladly give them because he is the treasure.

He is the treasure. And he is greater. And we have a church where the normal flow of life, the normal culture of the church is one of, I don't withhold anything. It's all Jesus's.

And when he says do it, it's such a joyful yes. Yes. Whatever you want, Lord. Whatever you want. Whatever you want.

I don't want to withhold anything from you because the lamb who was slain is worthy to receive the reward that is suffering. And I want to give it to him. Amen.