

## Micah Hess - Withholding Nothing

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So what we want to do this evening is take a look at faith, specifically the faith shown by Abraham. We want to take a closer look at it and see what examples we can draw away from that. His example specifically. We'll look first at the text in Genesis 22. We'll read verses 1 through 18.

We'll read a big chunk of it, and we'll kind of refer back to it as we move through. So. So Genesis 22, verses 1 through 18. I'll read from New American Standard. Now, it came about after these things that God tested Abraham and said to him, Abraham.

And he said, here I am. He said, take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac. Go to the land of Moriah, offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I will tell you. So Abraham arose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, took two of his young men with him, and Isaac, his son. He split wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

On the third day, Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. Abraham said to his young men, stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there. We will worship and return to you. Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, laid it on Isaac, his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together.

Isaac spoke to Abraham, his father, and said, my father, and he said, here I am, my son, and he said, behold the fire in the wood. Where is the lamb for the burnt offering? And Abraham said, God will provide for himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.

So the two of them walked on together. Then they came to the place of which God had told him, and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham.

And he said, here I am. Said, do not stretch out your hand against the lad and do nothing to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, for me. Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son.

Abraham called the name of that place. The Lord will provide, as it is said to this day, Mount of the Lord, it will be provided. Then 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 thing and have not withheld your son, your only son. Indeed, I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heaven and as the sand on which is on the seashore, and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.

In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice. So the first thing we want to say in regards to this text is that this is the culmination of Abraham's faith. It just so happens that this faith, this example, is lifted up to us time and time again in Scripture, both the Old and New Testament. The apostle Paul, he uses the example of this faith, Abraham's faith, in the foundational writings about justification in both Romans and Galatians. So when we look into Genesis 22, we want to see more than just Abraham and Isaac in the text.

## Micah Hess - Withholding Nothing

We see actually here that the Abrahamic promise comes at the end of this. It's reiterated both the stars of the heavens, the spiritual class, as well as that sands of the shore, earthly class, and one thing to consider is that Abraham, he showed this exceedingly deep faith on just the most basic understanding of God's plan to bless humanity. You know, we see through a glass darkly, but was Abraham even shown the glass to look through? And yet, the little bit of faith that God gave him, the little bit of truth that God gave him, Abraham grabbed it, he put his trust in it.

And that trust caused that faith to do a work upon him. Within him, it resulted in an unshakable faith, both tempered to withstand great trauma, and yet still remaining buoyant and hopeful in the future that God had promised him. So how much more should we, the household of sons to whom he has revealed so much more of his plan to be able to build on the rock solid foundation of that faith. So by studying and exploring the text, we want to ask and answer the question, how do I get that? A faith strong enough to say to God that I will hold nothing back.

So Here in Genesis 22, we have this God given example of what it looks like to have that level of faith, and what we want to draw out from the text today, Lord willing, is basically three things. We have a blueprint for faith here. The first thing is faith is built. The second thing, that faith is then tested.

That faith is trusting. That's the third thing. So point number one, Faith is built. Maybe we should add to that. Faith is built, not stumbled upon.

So Abraham did not wake up and hear God calling him to leave his home and offer up Isaac all in the same day. You know, the journey of Abraham's faith is recorded to us throughout a whole bunch of chapters in Genesis, including its victories as well as its setbacks. So of all the important events that we'd like to consider, we'll just take one as the build up to this. In Genesis 14, verses 21 through 24, Abraham had the strength of will and the wisdom to turn down an offer from the king of Sodom to keep the spoils of war that he had captured. Abraham's reply to the king is found in Genesis 14, 22 and 23, which I'll read.

And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoelacet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou should say, I have made Abraham rich. So Abraham saw that if he accepted the spoils of war here, then men would be able to look at him and say, his success is due to the king of Sodom or to his own earthly endeavors. His wealth would be the result of human handiwork. But Abraham was wise enough to know that's simply not true when you're in a relationship with God. That's not how it works.

Not for Abraham, and certainly not for the church. God is much more integrated into our decisions, into our outcomes, of our decisions in our lives. But Abraham saw the value of his relationship with God, and here he showed how important it was to him that no one would be able to deny that his blessings were from God and not from man.

So he saw that his success was due to his faith. Because of that faith, Abraham was promised by God that he would have an heir. But just like everything else in his life, even that heir would be the result of God, not of his own work. So the same is true for the church. Everything good we have is from God.

And the material blessings that he's allowed to heap upon us here at this end of the age are quite staggering. But they're not even comparable to the immensity of the spiritual blessings he's allowed

## Micah Hess - Withholding Nothing

us to take hold of. So even those earthly blessings, though, that we are allowed to so graciously have, no, we have to recognize those aren't based on our own making. Not solely, anyways. Yes, we make real choices in the real world that have a real impact upon our everyday lives.

But the results are overruled and allowed by the grace of God. But we're talking tonight about what we can do to build our faith. So in this case, it was as simple as Abraham making a decision. A decision that showed he valued his relationship with God more than the material wealth that was right at his fingertips, and that's a model for how we should approach daily life.

Make decisions that show we value our relationship with God more than the material abundance that we're inundated with at every corner in this life. So when we practice contentment, that's a big part of it. Practicing contentment. We watch the Lord's overruling in our lives, and he directs us towards greater opportunities for strengthening that faith. You know, one scripture comes to mind with this is Psalm 127, verse 1.

Just read that briefly. Psalm 127. 1. Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it. Unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.

What I take away from that, what I think we can all take away from it, is that if we try to build something by ourselves, without the precepts and without the principles of God, it's a waste of time. Even if we manage to cobble something together, then it won't be good for the condition of our heart, and it certainly won't last. It doesn't mean that we don't work hard at everything. We do exactly the opposite. If you think you've worked hard to get where you are, to get what you have, then good, you should work hard.

Because your hard work is the testament of the kind of work that a footstep follower of Christ should be expected to do. But again we go back to we can build nothing without the foundation of our faith in Christ. That foundation of faith is our justification. Don't try to build your own justification. There's a whole Old Testament to teach us about why that's not a good idea, because we can't.

So simply put, it means work hard to build your faith. But don't think that hard work justifies you to certain privileges or positions in God's sight. Because we would have no position if it wasn't for God's gift. Gift of Christ. So we leave the work of our faith to God.

That's exactly what Abraham did in Genesis 15:6. Abraham believed it was counted to him as righteousness. That is the scripture that comes up again and again and again in the Old Testament and the New Scripture is trying to tell us to pay attention to that. So that isn't to say though, that everything Abraham did was perfect or even great for his faith. After all, when he was promised a son between Sarah, Abram and Hagar, they ended up with Ishmael.

And right before the Genesis 22 account. Genesis 21 tells us that the sending away of Hagar and Ishmael, this is in 21:11. It tells us that was a grievous task for Abraham. Abraham, he lost one son and then he was about to be asked to give up the next, and yet through that, Abraham never lost the vision of his faith, even if it was dim at times due to his mistakes.

And yet those missteps, did they make God's blessings stop? No. Will they make it stop for the new creation? Of course not. First John 2:1, if any man sins, has an advocate with the Father.

The intentional step by step building of faith doesn't translate into every step we take is another step towards perfection. It's more like every step we take, there's an additional piece of experience

## Micah Hess - Withholding Nothing

of the difficulties of walking in the narrow way. Sometimes another success, sometimes a failure. Those failures remind us of our great need for the grace and mercy found only in Christ. That's kind of the point.

The purpose of our Christian walk, the building of our faith, is not to build a faith that is self sustaining, complete and complete apart from Christ. It's exactly the opposite we want. Instead, what we long for is a faith that's so entwined and infused with the sacrifice and forgiveness of Christ that it can no longer be distinguished aside from that sacrifice by the grace of God. Even our failures can and will be used to accomplish that end. But it doesn't happen in a day, nor with any fanfare.

Recognition or recognition from the world comes through those quick and nitty gritty decisions that take place in the trenches of life. Three things come to mind there. What can we do to build that faith over time? Maybe you'll come up with better ones for yourself. But these are the ones that seem to apply to me is time.

Where am I spending my time? How much of it is immersed in scripture and truth? You know, and sometimes the picture in my head can be kind of intimidating of that, you know, Bible and concordance volumes in hand that, you know, if I'm not memorizing something or getting some new point out of it, that it's a waste of time or something like that. But, you know, not everything has to be that intense. You know, There are seasons of life where it's a little easier to come by than in others.

So some of that is good. Some of that intense study and learning new things is necessary for the health of the new creature. But sometimes you just spend a little time on a devotional. You talk about it with your spouse, you talk about it with your kids, you repeat the things you already know, take what you already have in those memory banks, and you then explain that to your kids or whoever. So one brick at a time, that faith is finally built.

So another thing, relationships in the home. It may not surprise you that maybe the stage of life I'm in, a lot of my examples have to do with things going on in the home. But, you know, think of the home and the family culture that you're a part of, you know, whether you live alone or with four kids and a wife. Every day we strive to build a family culture as permeated with scripture and the principles of righteousness. Are we spending time together as a family in God's word?

Are we practicing grace, giving and receiving it both with humility, practicing patience, not neglecting godly discipline? You ever heard that scripture? Be angry and sin not. Kids will humble you with that one. If I.

If my experience is representative, every day we hope to build not only our own faith, but the faith of our spouse and our kids as well. You know, regarding kids, probably more is caught than taught in that stage, but at the same time, the teaching is still important. We don't want to neglect that. The last thing on this topic is rest. Even how we rest can be something that adds to our faith.

Most of the time, though, when I think about something restful, it revolves around a screen of some type. But I'm not sure all that watching, swiping and tapping and liking on those screens is all that restful. Is it addictive? Yeah. But restful, I'm not so sure.

I mean, you tell me, do you feel better or worse after one Netflix turns into about a dozen, or, you know, you pull out your phone to answer one quick text message, and then before you know it, 30

## Micah Hess - Withholding Nothing

minutes went by that happen. But for me, I don't feel particularly restful after that. In fact, it's quite a struggle. You know, you want to balance those outside concerns with being present in the moment with the people that you're actually with. So where do we truly find rest?

Well, Psalm 19:7 gives us some good advice along these lines. Psalm 19, verse 7. I won't read the whole verse, but the law of the Lord is Perfect. Reviving the soul. What I think that's trying to tell us is that we have to actually seek rest in a restful place, and being immersed in Scripture and in truth should be a part of that rest.

If we can manage to do that, then we can receive the joy we're promised from that. Go to the end of Psalm 19, same chapter. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. That's a restful state of mind. Okay, number point, number two.

I'll have to pick up the pace a little bit. Faith is tested. When we look at Genesis 22, right there in the first verse, we see what's going on, you know. But why does God have to test us like this? The short answer is everyone has or puts their faith and something lives their life in a way that conforms to the values of their faith.

And I don't care if you're talking to the most secular or atheistic person in the world. Your theology is going to come through your fingertips whether you like it or not. Because sometimes, though, if we're really honest with ourselves, we may profess and even believe we have faith in certain things, but sometimes we still do things that don't align with those professed beliefs. Hypocrisy is a tale as old as time. We can look at those warnings that even Moses was giving to the Israelites soon after they received the law covenant.

But basically the lesson is we sinful human beings are always looking for that next big new thing, the next adventure that will somehow cure or at least dull the drudgery of our sinful existence. You know, and in Deuteronomy 13, verses 1 through 4, we won't read it. But Moses warns them that there is going to come a time when idolatrous prophets are going to come and try to deceive you, but they can't give you what you found in God. They can lead you on just enough of a scavenger hunt to get just enough of a trail of breadcrumbs to slowly pull you and take you away from God, though, if you let them. So.

It would be a grave mistake, though, to think that our flesh is not prone to those same tendencies of the flesh as were recorded to us in Israel. You know, it tells us in Scripture those things were recorded for our benefit, for our learning. But maybe even more importantly, we can go to Hebrews 5:8. Hebrews 5:8 tells us, though he was a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered. I think that the thing this scripture really tells us, or at least how interpreted, is what your faith is worth to you.

You don't really know the answer to that until it costs you something. It was one thing for Jesus to obey our Heavenly Father in the courts of heaven where that obedience was met with praise and adoration. It was another thing to obey God and be receiving the hostile jeering and scoffing of sinners. So our faith is something that we don't really know what it is worth to us until it costs us something, and if our Savior's faith was tested, how much more do we need that same testing?

So why this test was so severe upon Abraham though as it mentions there in the text, it tells us basically why Abraham, take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest. Isaac was a special gift to Abraham, and Abraham had a special love and appreciation for that gift. That verse, the first

## Micah Hess - Withholding Nothing

verse of Genesis 22, just in a few words, it tells us about that love he had for his son. Now every child is a gift from God, but Isaac, even more so, he came after Sarah and Abram were able to conceive a child.

So that puts an interesting crossover in those two things. One, he was Abraham's beloved son. But two, he was also Isaac was Abraham's most treasured gift from God. Isaac was that promised child, the miracle child. As we've mentioned, I think already, Abraham was a wealthy man when Isaac was born.

Imagine the new richness of life that gave to him. So this test upon Abraham would test his loyalty to God against his loyalty to his most loved gift from God. What was more important, God or the gift? This wasn't just an excuse to poke and prod Abraham to see if he would stumble. That's the point.

No, this is testing is actually the natural outgrowth having faith. These testings and experiences of that we go through, these are the life altering and heart piercing identity shaping events that we need. Or at least they will be if we let them. Now let's consider what did Abraham do to allow him to successfully live up to this? You know, right there we'll we're still in the first verse.

But everything about the way Abraham responds to this test shows his willingness to obey, and we might be tempted to take that for granted. But Scripture is full of people who use their own selfish motives to equivocate away God's commands. The Pharisees, Cain, Balaam, Israelites, over and over again, Judas, Ananias and Sapphira, King Saul, we can even look to the book of Jonah to see that even God's own prophets could be a bit wily at times. So man, are we sinful human beings good at excusing our own sin and condemning it at others?

And I say that knowing full well that I'm just as susceptible as the next person to do that. Matthew 7:3 in the Sermon on the Mount. Might as well say, brother Micah, don't let that log hit you in the eye on the way up to heaven. So Acts 26:14 also tells us that Jesus said to Paul, saul, Saul, why persecute rescuest thou me? It's hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

But just like Saul, how often have we kicked against the bricks of our hearts, the pricks of our conscience, justifying poor or selfish behavior in the name of I deserve this or why shouldn't I get what I want? Why should I be the one to have to yield? You know, we've all been there. I've been there, and when God's word inevitably catches up to us, it's pretty humbling to find yourself having been in that position.

But Abraham exhibited none of this second guessing. So when God gives us these opportunities to serve, do we jump at the chance saying, here I am, God. What's next? And when I say service opportunities, I don't mean the public ones, conventions, or even within the ecclesia. What about the smaller, less public ones?

What about the opportunity to serve our spouses? Ephesians 5 comes to mind. Husbands, you know the command, love your wives, wives, respect your husbands. What that scripture is telling us, do the things for your brethren that they need to be built up. What about pouring ourselves into our children?

Like so much of life, faith starts at home. Fathers, lead your families in worship, study and learning and teaching those biblical values at home. So let's look at another 1. In Genesis 22:3, Abraham rose up early in the morning. We'll call this one Obedience.

## Micah Hess - Withholding Nothing

The first time with a happy heart. So despite whatever misgivings that he may or may not have had about this, Abraham wasted absolutely no time in getting to the task at hand. No excuses or lollygagging. Simple obedience. You know, that says a lot about Abraham's character as a parent.

I, and probably many, not all of you, can testify that you can tell a lot about a child's heart by watching how they do or do not practice obedience. Also, as a parent, the manner of obedience will determine my reaction to the child. Obedience with a happy heart. That's the goal. That's a joyful thing makes the whole house joyful, elicits mutual delight from both parent and the child.

That's a harmonious relationship. But I have come to learn through parenting that it's actually possible to watch somebody follow your instructions, but to do so in such a way, and at the bare minimum that it makes it clear we still need an intervention.

Glad I'm not the only one. Which one of those reactions do we want as parents? Obviously we, you know, Sorry. Of those two that we want as parents, you know, obviously God wants the same thing from us and for the same reason. When we delight in doing God's word, it's a reflection of the condition of our hearts that makes our whole lives more joyful.

Try teaching that to a three year old though, if you are not completely authentic in that, they'll see right through it, you know. So we really have to work through and model that obedience to God's standard if we want them to pick it up. But we want to show, I think ultimately that we don't just obey God's standard because we have to for some, some reason. We obey the standard because we love to. Even when it's painful.

It's the best medicine for our tumultuous souls. That's the same thing we want for our kids. We don't want cold and mechanical obedience to the standard. We want their hearts. We want them to love the standard of God as well.

Not claiming to have that figured out, but it sounds like the right thing to do. Genesis 22:3. He split wood for the burnt offering. He did what was in his power to ensure the success of this command from God. Very much along similar lines as the previous point, but a little different.

He chopped the wood and he brought the fire and knife, verse 6. Those are things that would be needed for the sacrifice. He didn't get up to Mount Moriah and say, oh man, no wood, no fire. Yes, we're off the hook. He did everything, everything in his power instead to ensure that he could be faithful to God's command.

When we have a direction from the Lord, we put in that work for the Lord to bless. Getting to the final point here, faith that trusts. Let's recap. Faith is built. Abraham built his faith over a lifetime of believing in God's promises.

And when that faith was tested, Abraham used the experience of that faith so that he could be proved faithful. This adds up to one thing. Trust. So faith that trusts, even when it's stepping out into the unknown, you know, and trust is important in any relationship. If that relationship is going to be healthy and vigorous.

Trust allows us to take chances that can lead to greater growth. If we trust God, then we can take the next step. Even if that's as far as we can see. You know, consider trust, the importance of trust in a marriage. How did you get to know your spouse in the first place?

## Micah Hess - Withholding Nothing

You probably spent time together, and as you spent time together, you likely talked through many things and learned about each other's values and priorities. That's what you're doing. When you do that, you build a little trust. We start to develop that little trust.

We get comfortable enough to ask more meaningful, deeper questions. That's trust working over a length of time, building up confidence in one another to a point where you can ask personal questions about faith life and work through difficulties and topics that you may even disagree on. It's not just in conversation that relationships open up in a marriage. That trust has to be built and maintained. If truth is, if trust is present and strong.

When a problem comes up or you need something, you and your spouse can go to each other and deal with it openly. Say something, hey, I'm feeling kind of emotionally detached, struggling with this thing. I need some more from you. If you can't communicate even that, then those small problems can eat. Dig away at even a small amount of trust that has been built up.

Or it can go the other way. If you have a healthy amount of trust in the relationship, you know, and sister Lauren has experienced this one many times. I have this big thing at work or something outside the house. Are you okay? So that I can focus on this other thing?

Yeah, but if you don't have trust, if you don't have that repertoire built up, then that can be difficult to do. When that trust, though, is strong and healthy, there's a reserve or a flexibility in the relationship that's not otherwise present. So with trust, there's a willingness to give and the ability to ask for help when you're empty and need some support. Even when both parties feel empty and in need, there is or should be a willingness to pour out into one another. Even when you feel like you're pouring from an empty cup.

The reason we can do that, though, is not because we're pouring from our own cup. We're pouring from the cup of Christ. We want to ultimately direct people to Christ. We can never achieve that goal. But what we can do is point people to the source of contentment, the source of that ultimate filling of the cup.

So what we ultimately want to do is build up our trust in one another and ultimately in our heavenly Father. So Abraham's trust, though, is Showcased in Genesis 22:8. God will provide for himself the land for the burnt offering. My son. Even in this trial, Abraham believed and trusted that God would still fulfill the promises he had made to him.

As impossible as it seemed to human logic, his faith still believed, and we don't know what exactly was going on internally. But there may be a hint in Hebrews chapter 11, 17, 19, which reads, by faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said that in Isaac shall thy seed be called accounting. That God was able to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure. So that verse in Hebrews 11:17, 19 speaks of the promises that were given to Abraham immediately.

Of course, we think of the Abrahamic promise, but how was that promise fulfilled at its first step through Isaac? How did he receive Isaac? We've already said it wasn't naturally, it was by the grace of God. So in a sense, he had already received Isaac received nothingness once. So it seemed that Abraham had faith to believe that if he had received him once, he would receive him again, even from the dead.

## Micah Hess - Withholding Nothing

And again, verse 19, Paul says that's basically what he did. Again, in his mind he was as good as gone, and in Abraham's time, in that era of the Middle East, a father had pretty much complete control over any children he had. That was in human sacrifice. Maybe common is too strong of a word, but it wasn't unheard of in that era of society.

So when God asked Abraham to offer his son, he was testing him to see if he was willing to let go of that control, was he willing to let go of the thing that he loved the most? Abraham did have faith enough to completely release that control because everything he had was from God, even Isaac. So how could he possibly hold anything back from him? That's the trust we want to have. There seem to be two elements to that trust as is exhibited by Abraham.

One, his faith went further than his line of sight, meaning he didn't know how God was going to work it out, but he did trust that it would work out. He trusted that God would guide him through this, and Hebrews 11:13 tells us that he saw these promises of promise of God from afar, but he was still persuaded of them and embraced them, and the second thing, his faith was not limited by what he was capable of. Romans 4 Fascinating chapter where Paul uses the example of Abraham.

But verses 18 through 21 tells us that Abraham hoped against hope, and yet it wasn't a blind hope. He knew what God had promised him, an air through which the promised blessings to all the families of the earth would flow through. But he knew also that it was impossible for him and Sarah to achieve this on their own. But that same passage of Romans tells us that he contemplated that with his own body and saw that his body was as good as dead, and yet he did so without becoming weak in the faith.

His fleshly limitation, instead of causing him to waver in disbelief, instead helped him to grow stronger in faith, knowing that God has what God has promised, he's able to do. So we've covered three things that we should do. One, focus on what we can do to intentionally build our faith. Two, when God blesses those efforts and our faith is tested, we endure that testing obediently, with a happy heart. Three, we add into our faith that last element of trust, which sees beyond the next step and into the bigger picture of God's divine plan.

Again, the main point there, we don't let our trust be limited by what we can do on our own. If you can do that, you're probably ready for the last thing. Faith that holds nothing back because it knows the Lord will provide. The faith of Abraham is able to hold nothing back because it's able to rest in the quiet confidence of knowing that the Lord will provide. Believing that at the deepest level of our soul, to a point where it's so ingrained in us that it's a part of our identity.

That's the important part of our faith that we're all striving to get to, and we won't reach that overnight. We may stumble again and again on our way to it, but that's how we live the life. Self sacrifice, withholding nothing because of that quiet confidence that the Lord is able and will provide. Not because of where we're, but in spite of where we're lacking.

And in asking all of this of us, asking us to hold nothing back, God is really not requiring anything from us that he's not already shown he's willing to do. When we take the broader account, view of this account, I might suggest you reprint 5180 is where some of the thoughts are kind of gathered from. But reprint 5180 is a nice article on the testing of Abraham. But if we were to grasp, if we're going to grasp the full import of these events, we take that broader view, it's not just a journal entry for us to read. It's full of actually what God would reveal to us about Himself and His divine plan.

## Micah Hess - Withholding Nothing

And in Genesis 22, we see the most difficult choice a Father could be called upon to make. Father with only one dearly beloved Son in whom there was mutual love and delight. Isn't that exactly the position our Father in heaven found himself in? A Father with only one begotten Son. How fortunate for us that God's grace and mercy do not stop at the end of his heavenly courts, but instead condescend down to his footstool.

The earth. The entirety of our heavenly Father's creation declares his glory, and mankind, and made in his image, should have been the crown jewel of that earthly creation. But Eve was deceived and Adam disobeyed, willingly condemning not only himself, but all future generations to a life of sin, and God watched as mankind suffered under that heavy burden.

But the justice of his verdict cannot be second guessed, and with that disobedience, our right to life was forfeit. You know, and we sometimes marvel that Esau would cast aside the blessing for a bowl of soup, and yet, aren't all the sins we've committed in the name of the pursuit of those trivial things of the world, is that also a bowl of soup? And that's how it stood for thousands of years.

A sinful race destined to return to the dust it was created from after a few weary days of suffering under toil of suffering and toil under sin. Thankfully, God is not passive about salvation. But how would God relieve the demands of justice upon an insurgent and rebellious human race? He would put the cost of lifting that verse that would require, though no less than the death of a perfect human life, someone to take the place of Adam, and who would be willing to do something, to give up something as dear as life itself for a sinful man. We know in Psalm 49:7, none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.

So who then? And the answer, of course, is, as you all know, John 3:16. For God, so loved gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. What we want to say here is God. What God has offered up on our behalf is no less costly or painful than what God tested Abraham with.

And that was all in order to redeem the fallen race of man. But no other sacrifice. So in Genesis 22, I think we get the first hint of just how costly the gift of our redemption from sin would be to God personally pictured here in Genesis 22 by the Father and son relationship between Abraham and Isaac is that close heavenly relationship between God and his son, his only son, Jesus. There is, however, an important difference between what Abraham did and what God did. When God sent Jesus to die upon the cross, there was a death that no angel would stop.

God did not hand Jesus over to a trusted friend who was loyal and gracious. Instead, he sent him into an ungrateful and unruly crowd of sinners. There would be no angel to stay the hand of the angry mob as they shouted, crucify him. Crucify him, and in no way was the death of Christ any easier to bear than the potential death of Isaac.

Yet it was no less than God his Father, who was the architect of this divine plan of salvation for all mankind.

So in Abraham's case, though, even Isaac, that sacrifice was to be offered up that was provided by God. Remember, we said he was the promised gift from God. When Abraham said that the Lord would provide, I wonder if that's what he meant. Isaac wouldn't have understood it, but maybe we can. God will provide.

## **Micah Hess - Withholding Nothing**

And Isaac, you were the commanded one to be provided. But since Abraham knew, Abraham knew that everything he had was from God, and if you're in that position where you truly know and you've made that decision time and time again, that what God has offered you is so much greater than anything you could have ever done yourself, if God asks you for one thing, how could you possibly ever withhold it? We'll ask that the Lord overrule anything said amiss, and thank you, brother.

It's a pleasure to be here with you. So thanks.