

## The Life of Abraham: A Journey of Faith – Part 3

### Walking and the Word – Genesis 13:5-18

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022

#### Intro:

- Everyone's faith journey is uniquely personal and individual. And everyone's faith journey is strikingly similar and shared. In walking with Abraham as sacredly recorded in the Word of God, we see him. We also see ourselves as the Holy Spirit of God illuminates His word to our hearts so that we learn, are encouraged, and have hope, as we continue to wait for all the words of God to be fulfilled.
- Through this series, we are learning to *trust God's promises by living a life of faith*, seeing what is true about Him and what is true about us as we journey together for His glory and our good.
- This morning we pick up the story again as we have seen in the past weeks our man Abram receive the promises of God and step out courageously across the bridge of faith, moving forward in obedience, worship, prayer, and perseverance. In his life, along with ours, come times of hardships and difficulties, which may lead to missteps and misdirection. We learn that God will always be faithful to His word and extends opportunities to us to return to Him and His good path.
- Abram returned to the place of blessing and returned to calling on the name of the Lord as he did at first. This morning we will discover unmovable truths when it comes to our interaction with the word of God that will help direct you and encourage you in your journey of faith, so you will know what to expect and know what to do. The next principle we discover is following God's word leads us to tests.

#### Following God's word leads us to tests

#### Gen 13:5-7 NIV

Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. 6 But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together. 7 And quarreling arose between Abram's herders and Lot's. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.

- So Abram and his family returned to following the Lord. As they followed, they faced danger from without and conflict from within. Even within Christian families and communities, there will be conflict, pressure, and stress at times. Following God's word does not exempt you from tests and trials. Sometimes, it is directly because we are following God's words that we end up in tests and trials. These things are common to everyone's faith journey.
- Why? Because God's goal for us is to become like His son, mature, strong, and complete, lacking nothing. In order to become like this, we must persevere. In order to grow strong through perseverance, we must have testing and trials of many kinds. So then, how are we to respond to trials and tests? We are to consider it pure joy! And how are we to possibly consider it pure joy? By knowing what God is forming in us through them. And what does that require? Faith in His Word.

### **James 1:2-4 NIV**

**Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. <sup>4</sup> Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.**

- The surface issue that Abram was facing was who would have access to limited resources so they would thrive. The underlying issue is who would assert their will and be first, who was in charge, who's will would prevail. Who will win, and who will lose? The real test is who would trust God and His promises for their future, and who would trust in themselves and take matters into their own hands.
- Abram could have done what he did the last time there was lack, which was to do whatever he needed to survive in his own wisdom, power, and strength. Or he could trust God's promise and word for his future. From his response, we learn that Abram learned to trust God for his future, and we also learn that trusting God's word leads us to peace.

### **Trusting God's word leads us to peace**

### **Gen 13:8-9 NIV**

**So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herders and mine, for we are close relatives. <sup>9</sup> Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left."**

- Abram chooses to step aside and let someone else go first. What gave him the strength to do that? Trust in the promises of God. He knew that he did not need to fight for what he needed; he trusted God to provide what he needed. He did address the problem and took the lead to solve it, and his solution was to step aside and let his nephew choose first, be first and "win." Trusting God's word leads us to peace.
- How much conflict is there in your family over who's way and who's will and who has access to the "stuff?" Instead of grabbing on and pushing your way through to get what you want, how about letting go and trusting God for your future, and choosing peace over prominence and position because you trust God and his promotion and provision?
- Abram learned from failing the last test, and he passed this one. Now Lot had a choice to make. And from him, we learned this:

### **Forgetting God's word leads us to loss**

### **Gen 13:10-13 NIV**

**Lot looked around and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) <sup>11</sup> So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company: <sup>12</sup> Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. <sup>13</sup> Now the people of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord.**

- Lot at this time certainly knew of God's promises to Abram: that God would make him into a great nation, that He would bless him, make his name great and make him a blessing to the families on the earth, that those who blessed him would be blessed, and that those who dishonored him would be cursed. Lot certainly could have learned his lessons from Abram and his choices. Lot could have paid attention to these things and made a better choice.
- He could have said, "no Abram, God has blessed you, and I have been blessed because of you. I want to honor you and give you the first pick of the land," knowing that to honor Abram would be trusting and honoring God's word and from doing this he would also receive a blessing.
- But he fell into the same trap that Abram did and took what he thought was best so that he would thrive and survive, forgetting God's word and his promise. Through the unfolding of the story, we will see Abram's nephew's name change from being "a lot" to "a little" because he chose his own pathway instead of God's good path. In living contrary to God's word, more always become less. You have more holding on to God's promises than you have holding on to anything this world has to offer.

### Trusting God's word leads us to reward

#### Gen 13:14-17 NIV

**The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. 15 All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. 16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. 17 Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you."**

- After Abram made his choice to allow Lot to choose first and Lot moved away into the best part of the land, Abram now had to deal with the reality of the choice he made. In that place of trusting and transition, God met with him again.
- Because Abram chose what was better in trusting Him, God reaffirmed, further explained, and expanded His initial words to him. Now, look around, Abram, in every direction (including to the east, the direction Lot traveled). I am going to give all this to you and to your offspring. And by the way, your offspring are going to be like the dust of the earth, so numerous that no one can count them. Now go walking all around in this land. I will protect you from those outside. Don't be afraid. I am with you, for I AM giving it to you.
- Reconfirmation and recommitment based on continued trust resulting in a great reward. This is what God promises for those who continue to trust in His word. Those who trust in anyone or anything else will suffer loss. These principles are seen in the light of the New Testament, as summed up in the following passage from Paul the Apostle:

#### 1 Cor 3:10-15 NIV

**By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. 14 If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a**

**reward. 15 If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.**

- Paul laid it out. Jesus is the foundation. All those who are building on the foundation of Jesus Christ should build their life with care. You can choose to build your life with things that will not make it to eternity. Or you can choose to build your life with things that make a difference in eternity. If you trust God's word and live your life according to it, you will have a reward, but if you build your life on things that will not last, you will suffer loss, as one who will be saved by escaping through the flames.
- Just look at Lot. By the mercies of God he was literally saved through the flames. He ended up living in fear in a cave with just his daughters, after he started out so well with so much (we will see the rest of this story in the weeks to come). Trust God's word and know that He will be true to His word, and you will receive your reward on the day of eternal account.
- Because of the integrity and trustworthiness of His character and word, God renewed His word to Abram. He provided blessings, protection, and provision for the present, and explained and expanded what was to come. The last thing we will see in our passage this morning is that believing God's word leads us to worship.

**Believing God's word leads us to worship**

**Gen 13:18 NIV**

**So Abram went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he pitched his tents. There he built an altar to the Lord.**

- Abram moved on from there to a new place. In this new place, he built another altar and worshiped the Lord. *If you believe the word of the Lord, then you will worship the Lord of the word, regardless of your location or who is with you or not with you. Because wherever you go, there He is, and He is worthy of our worship. Those who believe God's word will worship Him because His word leads to this.*
- When you are in a time of transition, and you find yourself in a different place, be it in Colorado or Kenya, Rockford or Romania, Wisconsin, Ohio or Florida, will you find a place dedicated to God and worship Him? You go because you believe the word, not out of obligation, location, tradition, or family but because you believe. Believing in God's word leads us to worship the God of the word, and in so doing, there is great reward.

**Conclusion**

- Walking in our journey of faith according to promises of the word of God leads us to great reward. Know that God will always be true to His word. Along the way, we will have tests, hardships and difficulties. Choose to continue to trust in the promises of God. If you misstep, turn back then continue to move forward, becoming tested and true, stronger and more like Christ as the Holy Spirit continues to work in us and through us, conforming us to the image of Jesus. You can see God's working in our lives and in the world.
- Prayer, people, and pray.