

Genesis 18 – God and Abraham (Pray)

❖ Let's Set the Stage Again this Morning with a Recap: The Life of Abraham so Far

- Ch 12 – The Call of Abraham (Called out of a land of Idols)
- Ch 13 – The Failure of Abraham (Calls Sarai his Sister)
- Ch 14 and 15 – The Faith of Abraham (Rescues his nephew)
- Ch 16 – The Failure of Abraham (Hagar and Ishmael)
- **Last Week Chapter 17**
 - **1) He is God Almighty**
 - **2) Nothing is Impossible with God Almighty**
 - **3) God Almighty Changes our Name**
 - **4) Abram Fell on His Face before God Almighty**
 - **5) Abram Obeyed the Voice of God Almighty**
 - **6) God Almighty Establishes and Keeps the Covenant**
 - **7) God Almighty Remains Patient and Merciful with His Children**
- **Can I say once more the importance of the Life of Abraham to you today?**
 - Besides Jesus... the Life of Abraham may be the most significant life in the Bible for you and me
 - He is our Father in the Faith... We can learn so much of how our walk with God should be
 - There are 50 chapters in the book of Genesis that cover 2,400 years of human history...
 - This covers billions of people... billions... yet one stands out..
- **God gives us the story of one man among billions during a 2,400 year period...**
 - And He devotes 14 of 50 chapters mainly to this one man's life...
 - Oh Abraham is so significant for you today... God tells his story for a reason...
 - That is almost 30 percent of a book that covers 2,400 years... spent on one man among billions
- **I share this with for a reason:**
 - So you don't see Abraham as an insignificant historical figure...
 - I say this to 7 years olds.... 17 year olds... and 77 year olds... all of us...

❖ This Week We Pick Up in Chapter 18:16

- Before we get here to verse 16... this is what has happened since Abraham was obedient to God
 - And He followed through with the Covenant sign of circumcision...
- **In Genesis 18:1 we see the Lord once again appearing to Abraham...**
 - But this time with what Abraham thinks are 2 more men..
 - **Genesis 18:1-3 And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. ² He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth ³ and said, "O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant.**
 - Abraham finds himself once again on his face before God... Humble before the Almighty God
 - **Now: Who were these three men?**
 - Without spending too much time on it... if you continue reading the text it becomes very clear
 - First we see that Abraham refers to one as Yahweh... which is God's special personal name
 - We see Abraham worshipping Him...
 - **Then we see the other two are actually angels that go in to Sodom**
 - ◆ They were sent to destroy Sodom
 - ◆ And they help get Lot out before it is destroyed...
- **So... Abraham sees these two angels and the Lord and they appear as men...**
 - And he brings them in and feeds them and speaks with them...

- At one point the Lord tells Abraham that in a year his wife will have the child of promise
- **To this Sarah was listening and laughed at the thought of it...**
 - When pressed on this... she denied laughing
- **But the Lord responded by saying:**
 - **“Is anything too hard for the Lord?”**
 - God is continuing to show his patience with them... and remind them of His greatness

❖ **Read: Genesis 18:16-33**

- **16** Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way. **17** The Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, **18** seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? **19** For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.” **20** Then the Lord said, “Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, **21** I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know.”
- **22** So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord. **23** Then Abraham drew near and said, “Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? **24** Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? **25** Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?” **26** And the Lord said, “If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake.”
- **27** Abraham answered and said, “Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. **28** Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?” And he said, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.” **29** Again he spoke to him and said, “Suppose forty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of forty I will not do it.” **30** Then he said, “Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there.” He answered, “I will not do it, if I find thirty there.” **31** He said, “Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it.” **32** Then he said, “Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.” **33** And the Lord went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

❖ **Introduction: 5 Things the People of God should Learn from Abraham and the Lord**

❖ **1) Abraham Bows Before The Lord Again**

- **2** When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth
- **If there is one thing we learn from Abraham our father in the faith...**
 - Let us learn this position... bowed to the earth before God
 - I do not think this is an accident...
- **Make much of God with your posture...**
 - Of course we do not want to draw attention to ourselves and away from God when we worship
 - **But... could it be in our desire to remain dignified... that we fail to make much of God?**
- **Illustration: Have you ever made much of something before?**
 - **Me catching the Home Run ball in the 1999 World Series Batting Practice**
 - **How much more should we make much of God?**
- **Example of King David**
 - **The ark of God had been lost when King Saul died...**

- The ark was a symbol and actual resting place of the glory of God among the people of Israel
- After one failed attempt to bring the ark back to the capital city of Jerusalem...
- In which one of David's men is struck down by the Lord for touching the ark...
- **David has finally brought the ark back home...**
 - And he was so excited because the symbol of God's presence was back...
 - So what did he do?
 - He danced! And He sang!
- **Look at the text:**
 - **2 Samuel 6:14 ¹⁴ And David danced before the Lord with all his might. And David was wearing a linen ephod.**
 - David took off his normal kingly attire... and He dressed like common people..
 - He didn't dress above others in this time of worship...
- **His wife was... shall we say embarrassed? Maybe like many of us are in here?**
 - **2 Samuel 6:16,20 ¹⁶ As the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, and she despised him in her heart... ²⁰ And David returned to bless his household. But Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David and said, "How the king of Israel honored himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants' female servants, as one of the vulgar fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!"**
 - **Now really... who is to blame her right?**
 - ◆ Her dad was the first King of Israel... she was a princess...
 - ◆ She knew how to be dignified... she knew how to be presentable among people...
 - ◆ She pretty much was saying... My dad would have never acted like this!!!!
- **But there was a big problem... in her desire to be distinguished... she lost her heart for God...**
 - And David responded rightly... He reminds her that God had chosen him over her dad...
 - And then he reveals his heart in his dancing...
 - **1 Samuel 6:21-22 And David said to Michal, "It was before the Lord, who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of the Lord—and I will celebrate before the Lord. ²² I will make myself yet more contemptible than this, and I will be abased in your eyes.**
 - ◆ You hear what he is saying... I don't care what you or anyone else thinks...
 - ◆ My sole focus was Yahweh... I celebrated before Him...
 - ◆ And I will become even more undignified that this in your eyes

➤ **Example of the Pharisee and Sinner**

- **Luke 18:9-14 ⁹ He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: ¹⁰ "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' ¹³ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."**
- **Notice a few things...**
 - The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed... was glad he wasn't a sinner...
 - ◆ He obviously did not notice his sinfulness... and bragged over his works in his prayer
 - **The Tax Collector... stood far off it says.. Would not even lift up his eyes to heaven...**
 - ◆ Obviously in some position of bowed reverence...
 - ◆ And he beat his breast... begging God to be merciful to him... He saw his sinfulness...

- **The tax collector was doing business with God...**
 - ◆ He was making much of God...
- **Interestingly... Jesus did not speak down on the man for bowing and beating his breasts...**
 - ◆ Which obviously would have drawn attention...
 - ◆ But the man did not care... he needed to business with God...
 - ◆ He humbled himself before God...
- **Our Posture before God indicates a great many things about our heart...**
 - I do not want to get legalistic or robotic this morning... don't want to say... hey do this...
 - And then this means you are right before God...
 - **But... when the Holy Spirit is moving... He stirs us within... He stirs our emotions...**
 - He does this with the truth... but it still stirs our emotions...
 - If you find yourself unmoved by God's Word... Unstirred in your emotions...
 - We need to check your spiritual heart beat...
 - **The people of God have always been an emotional bunch...**
 - But not emotion without truth... not reckless emotion...
 - Rather... it was God stirred emotion....
- **We should never remain dignified before men when God is calling you to make a fool of yourself**
 - Don't sit still and stay quiet saying... I will not draw attention to myself...
 - And miss out on drawing attention toward God...

❖ 2) The Lord Reveals His Plan to His People

- **¹⁷The Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, ¹⁸seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? ¹⁹For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice**
- **Here in the example of Abraham we see God showing His People His plans...**
 - Here this is specifically about what God will do in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah..
 - But it shows us how God works in speaking to his children
- **God has given us His plan... He has told us what He is going to do...**
 - Notice 3 things here...
- **1st... God's communicates with His Children**
 - Praise God that He has given us His word... and let's all ask for God's help if we don't read it...
 - It is a blessing to have the Word of God at our fingertips...
 - But to me... this shows me how personal God is...
 - God did not have to be so kind and personal toward His creation... but in His goodness He is
- **2nd... God's Plan has always been about Jesus...**
 - **And we see it here in this text...**
 - "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him..."
 - **What God is referring to is the future coming of Jesus...**
 - Later on when Paul the Apostle writes... He explains this all to us...
 - That the way all the nations of the earth are blessed... is through Jesus...
 - **God set His plan in motion with Abraham...**
 - To send His very own Son to die as a sacrifice for the sins of the world...
 - So that all that believe on the Name of Jesus... will have their sins removed...
 - Jesus would become a sacrificial animal...
 - **God communicates these things to us....**
 - He warns us of the coming judgment...
 - Send His Son as Salvation... and offers it freely to those who repent and believe...

- **3rd... We are to lead our families in God's Ways...**
 - that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice
 - **God has been good to you if you know Him...**
 - Have you been diligent to know Him and make Him known within your home?
 - **If we look back into the text we notice two ways Abraham would do this...**
 - He would command and keep...
 - Meaning he would teach and then they would do...
 - **1) Teach: That he may command his children and household to keep the way of the Lord**
 - He made sure to tell them of God Almighty...
 - He reminded them of the great things that God had done
 - He taught them that there is only one God
 - **2) Do: By doing righteousness and Justice**
 - He built altars to worship... He went where God told him to go
 - He followed God when he was told to circumcise himself and his whole household...
 - He stood for righteousness and justice... walking in faith
- **We should lament the failure of parents to teach their children about God...**
 - They either ignore this all together or they leave it to Sunday school teachers or pastors...
 - **Sadly... there is a reason for that**
 - Many people in the church do not know their God very well
 - Research by lifeway suggests only 20 percent of professions Christians have read entire Bible
 - **You... Teach your Children about God and His ways...**
 - And encourage them to walk in His ways and do right... Even if it costs them their lives...

❖ 3) The Lord Sees the Sin of Man

- **²⁰Then the Lord said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, ²¹I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know."**
- **What do we see here?**
 - Does the Lord need to come down and investigate?
 - Can He not see the sin of man?
- **I believe what we have here is God showing He is very personal...**
 - God... although a Spirit... is spoken of in human ways many times...
 - He relates to us on our level...
 - Although God is not man... He came as a man in Jesus Christ...
- **Here... Although God knows the actions of Sodom and Gomorrah...**
 - He comes down to see... and I also believe... to test...
 - Because He will send the two angels into Sodom...
 - And immediately the men of city will be consumed in their lust for them
- **God... even in this... continues to be merciful...**
 - But God will not overlook sin forever... His patience will run out.
 - If not... sin would win... sin would have its way...
 - Although the idea of judgment is scary it is necessary to maintain the goodness of God
- **God is still a personal God...**
 - The book of Revelation teaches us that Jesus walks among the church...
 - He is with us... and He sees us...
- **Here we see the Lord coming to see these two cities...**
 - One day the whole earth will be held accountable

- Revelation 19: 11-16 ¹¹ Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. ¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. ¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords
 - This is the coming judgment of God on this earth that could come at any day...
 - God has told His saints His intentions... we are to warn others about this day...
 - And we are to stand for them... we are to plead with God for them...
 - Notice what Abraham does...

❖ 4) Abraham Stands and Pleads Before The Lord

➤ 1) He stood Before the Lord

- ²² So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord. ²³ Then Abraham drew near and said,
 - **They went to leave... but Abraham stood before the Lord...**
 - **Can you see the picture here?**
 - ◆ God is on His way to do something but Abraham stands before Him first...
 - ◆ Almost as if to stop Him... And then notice what He does...

➤ 2) He Pleads with the Lord

- “Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? ²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?”
 - **He appeals to God and His justice... He calls upon God’s justice...**
 - ◆ He knows He is the judge of all the earth
 - ◆ He asks... will this good judge of the earth do what is just...?
 - **This is Abraham... our father in the faith appealing to justice of God...**
 - ◆ We are called to do the same in prayer...
 - ◆ Stand before God and appeal to His character...
 - **We can say... God you are sovereign... Please move in your power...**
 - ◆ Save this person from their sin... overwhelm them with your grace
 - ◆ Remove this sin from my life... for you hate sin...
 - ◆ Oh so many passionate prayers we can pray...
 - **But Abraham doesn’t stop there... He continues fervently...**
 - ²⁷ Abraham answered and said, “Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. ²⁸ Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?”
 - ◆ He humbles Himself... asks God to hear but admits He is nothing for God to hear...
 - ◆ Just dust and ashes... Yet God continues to listen
 - **A Third time...**
 - ²⁹ Again he spoke to him and said, “Suppose forty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of forty I will not do it.” ³⁰ Then he said, “Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there.”
 - ◆ In this prayer he asks God not to be angry by his continued pleadings...

- ◆ And God again hears him...

- **He asks a fourth time...**

- ³¹ He said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there."

- ◆ He knows who He is speaking to.... He is reverent and bowed down...

- ◆ But He also feels as if he is allowed to do this...

- ◆ There is a mixture of reverence, adoration and friendship here...

- **Then a fifth time He asks...**

- ³² Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there."

- ◆ Finally... Abraham feels as if he is pushing the limits on asking...

- ◆ But He does so again... He continues to change his request...

- ◆ If God is merciful for the sake of 50... maybe for the sake of 10?

- **Do We Plead with God in the Manner?**

- **Abraham is like the woman Jesus spoke of...**

- Who continued to plead with the unjust judge on her own behalf

- Until the judge finally gives in to her righteous request... even though he himself was not

- **Abraham is pleading for the sake of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah...**

- But he is probably thinking mainly of his nephew Lot...

- **We see Abraham standing in the gap as it were... pleading with God on behalf of someone else...**

- Do we pray with this fervency and consistency?

- And how does the Lord respond?

- ❖ **5) The Lord Shows His Mercy**

- ²⁶ And the Lord said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake."

- The Lord heard and answered Abraham's initial request...

- He would spare the whole city for the sake of 50

- This was a large city at that time... although we do not know how many people lived there..

- **God's mercy was even greater as He was pressed...**

- He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it." ³³ And the Lord went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

- The Lord answers Abraham's final prayer.... Even for the sake of ten he would spare it...

- The Lord is abundant in His mercy...

- Titus 3:4-6 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy,

- 1 Timothy 1:16 But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

- **We also see something else here...**

- The righteous believers are a blessing to the unbelieving world around them...

- They hold back the judgment of God...

- They speak on their behalf...

- And they can reach them with the Gospel of Jesus Christ...

- ❖ **Invitation**

- **How is your prayer life? How is your posture before God?**

- **Have you ever given your life to Jesus?**