



THE BEGINNINGS!

The Book of Genesis

Being blessed in a cursed world!

Genesis 18:16-33

Message #20 of 50 – S919

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@ Hawk Ranch, Murrieta, CA



Sunday Morning Service

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Being blessed in a cursed world!

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Opening Comments

- Good morning – turn to **Genesis 18**
- Today we continue our journey through **Genesis: THE BEGINNINGS!**
- Last time, the Lord and two angels appear to Abraham
- Abraham responds serving them a kingly feast
- As the meal is ending, the Lord asks about Sarah and then declares that she will have a son in about a year
- She laughs within herself and the Lord challenges her to believe
- ‘Is anything too hard for the Lord?’
- Within a year she will have Isaac, the beginning of the fulfilment of God’s promise to make Abraham into a great nation
- Two millennia later, one of their descendants, a virgin by the name of Mary was visited by an angel – tells her she is going to have a miraculous Son **Luke 1:34-35**

Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?” And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

- And it is through this Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, that God’s promise to bless all the nations through Abraham would be fulfilled
- But our text for the today makes it clear that not all the world is going to experience the blessings of God
- Instead of God’s blessing, most of the world will experience the curse/wrath of God **John 3:36**

He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.

- Personally, I would rather experience God’s blessing than His wrath
- Not only that, I want as many people around me to experience God’s blessings as possible
- And as I grow to understand what it means to experience God’s wrath; I don’t want anyone to have to experience it

- That is what today's message is all about – experiencing more of God's blessings, helping others to experience God's blessing, and helping others to escape God's wrath
- Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to speak to our hearts
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Being blessed in a cursed world!**
- The midday meal is over, and the Lord prepares to go do what He came to do
- **Genesis 18:16-18**
- The Lord has already determined what is going to happen in Sodom
Genesis 19:24-25

Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.

- Because Abraham is to be a blessing to all the nations – he needs to understand what the Lord is doing when He judges Sodom and Gomorrah
- **Genesis 18:19**
- There is a lot there so let's unpack it
- 'For I have known him...' – this is the Lord's justification for telling Abraham what he is about to do
- 'known' – speaks to the relationship the Lord has with Abraham – unique in all the world – 'as a friend'
- This is much more than knowledge – God knows everyone and everything completely, perfectly
- It is about intimacy – communion – connection
- 'in order that he may command his children and his household after him...' – What the Lord is doing in and with Abraham is not just for Abraham
- Men/fathers/grandfathers – take note – this is a word for you
- You have a responsibility to the generations that follow you
- If you are a believer – you can say that the Lord 'has known you'
- Three things to pass on to the future generations

- First – ‘that they keep the way of the Lord’ – to do what the Lord commands – obedience to His revealed will and Word
- Do what God says!
- Second – ‘do righteousness’ – Do whatever it takes to maintain a right relationship with God – worship Him, seek Him, humble yourself before Him, repent and forgive,
- Third – ‘do...justice’ - Do what is right, even if it is hard or unpopular – to do what is right, not what makes you happy – to do what is right even if it costs you something
- ‘that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.’
- It was God’s desire to bless Abraham and to use him to be a blessing to the whole world
- The conduit through which those blessings flow are obedience, righteousness, and justice.
- Take away any one of the three and you cut off the flow of blessing and God’s grace
- And the more like Christ you are in those things, the more God’s grace and blessing flows through your life into the lives of those around you
- And the more of God’s grace and blessing that flows through your life, your life will glorify God, bless others, and help others grow in faith
- The Lord is about to do something, and He wants Abraham to understand it
- **Genesis 18:20-21**
- The Lord tells Abraham to see how the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah are
- The Lord is speaking anthropomorphically (like a mere human) to describe His personal attention to the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah
- We usually think that the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah are primarily sexual
- The Hebrew word for ‘outcry’ carries the idea of oppression and brutality – notice Ezekiel’s description of Sodom’s sin – **Ezekiel 16:49**

Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

- Sexual perversion was just one of Sodom's sin – there where the word sodomy comes from
- God hears the cry of the oppressed.
- He hears the wail of the abused or neglected child or wife.
- He hears the moan of the man stripped of his dignity by a system that doesn't care.
- He hears the silent cry of the girls abducted and trafficked.
- He hears the silent desperation of lonely.
- He hears the cries of the sick, broken, and dying. God hears you!
- And He responds
- We will look at that response more fully next time

• **Genesis 18:22-25**

- Abraham boldly approaches the Lord to ask Him a question
- Abraham knows what the Lord is going to find when He goes there
- It was a wicked place - we saw that when Lot decided to move there

Genesis 13:13

But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD.

- Abraham knows that when the Lord gets to Sodom, destruction is coming – deserves God's judgment
- He also knows that his nephew Lot is living in Sodom
- Lot's association might cause us to question his character but **2 Peter 2:6-8**

...and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned *them* to destruction, making *them* an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, *who was* oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented *his* righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing *their* lawless deeds)...

- Peter describes Lot as righteous and so Abraham's question is directed to the character of God
- In this exchange we find the basis for all prayer
- Many people believe that prayer is based upon my need
- But James challenges that viewpoint **James 4:2-3**

Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.

- Lord, heal me because I don't want to be sick.

- Lord, fix my marriage, because I don't want to be miserable
- Lord, get me a new job so that I can get out of debt
- The problem with all these prayers is that they are focused on the prayer
- Better prayers would be Heal me so that they can witness your power and glory
- Fix my marriage so that they can see the love and unity of the Godhead
- Help me get out of debt so that I can serve you in any way you might call me
- Abraham is concerned that God's character will be called into question if He destroys wicked Sodom and any righteous in the city are killed also
- God's character is never in question here – He is the Righteous Judge
- He always does what s right, He never makes a mistakes
- Notice what Abraham is asking the Lord to do
- If there are fifty righteous people in Sodom – spare the whole city – the righteous and the wicked
- Abraham is praying with the heart of the Lord **2 Peter 3:9**
The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.
- God takes no pleasure in judging the wicked
- It is an absolute necessity because of His holiness and justice
- Abraham says – if there are fifty... The Lord responds
- **Genesis 18:26**
- The Lord exactly how many righteous are in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and the rest of the cities of the plains – one! – Lot
- Notice how patiently the Lord responds to Abraham's requests
- **Genesis 18:27-32**
- There are a couple of things we should draw from this conversation that should be applied to our prayer life
- Abraham is praying in accordance with his relationship with the Lord – Abraham is be humbly reverential but at the same time he is being bold – 50, 45, 40, 30, 20, 10

- He is also persistent; he keeps asking until he is either comfortable with his request or uncomfortable going further with his request
- The Lord waits patiently for Abraham to finish
- **Genesis 18:33**
- Judgment was coming to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah
- Abraham was separated from that judgment because he chose to walk with the Lord
- We find ourselves in a similar situation
- We live in a world that is overdue for God's judgment
- But that is not something we should be happy about or seeking to accelerate
- I desperately want Jesus to come back, but the thought of what that means for the lost makes me sick to my stomach
- This world is under God's curse – a day is coming when the Lord will return and set up His kingdom on this earth
- We have to live in this cursed world until Jesus gets here, but we can be blessed while we wait
- We do it through obedience to His revealed Word, and by doing righteousness and justice
- And if we are in a place of any kind or amount of influence with others, we are to lead them to do the same
- But it starts with you
- If you do that, this cursed world cannot stop God's grace and blessings from pouring into your life and then out into the world
- And just maybe God will use you to lead someone out of the darkness and into the family of God
- **Pray!**