



THE BEGINNINGS!

The Book of Genesis

There is no fear of God!

Genesis 20:1-18

Message #22 of 50 – S921

Sermon given on November 15, 2020

@ Hawk Ranch, Murrieta, CA



Sunday Morning Service

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There is no fear of God!

Genesis 20:1-18

Opening Comments

- Good morning – turn to **Genesis 20**
- Today we continue our journey through **Genesis: THE BEGINNINGS!**
- Today we are going to talk about the fear of God
- The Bible teaches us that fear of the Lord/God is vital to living in a way that pleases God **Proverbs 9:10**

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

- The fear of the Lord is the conduit through which wisdom flows
- It is not unusual to hear someone ask, ‘What is wrong with people?’ or ‘What is wrong with this world?’
- The answer is simple – there is no fear of the Lord!
- Twice the Bible says **Psalm 14:1; 53:1**

The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good.

- It is a lack of the fear of the Lord that causes people to do all the terrible things we see going on in the world
- Abortion, murder, hatred, violence, racism, sexual perversion
- The fear of the Lord is not a topic just for the wicked and lost
- As believers, born-again Christians, we need to understand and have a healthy fear of the Lord
- A healthy fear of the Lord will help us to live in a world that has no fear of God
- Let’s pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us to grow in this area
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **There is no fear of God!**
- The last chapter focused on the Lord saving Lot out of Sodom and Gomorrah before He destroyed it
- Lot’s life slips into obscurity – focus shifts back to Abraham
- **Genesis 20:1**

- This is immediately after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah
- And probably before Sarah becomes pregnant
- Gerar – near Gaza, land of Philistines
- **Genesis 20:2**
- Same thing he did in Egypt 25 years earlier
- Didn't learn his lesson
- Tells everyone that she is his sister, not wife **Kent Hughes**
- Abraham's clinging sin when pressured was to trust himself rather than God.**
- Just like Egypt, thought someone would want/kill him
- Was partly correct
- Abimelech saw her and took her - Well within his rights as king
- Why Sarah? 90 years old! Probably because she was beautiful
- Seems like God's plan of using Sarah to fulfill promise in jeopardy
- What is going to happen? God's sovereignty happens
- **Genesis 20:3**
- God's promise to Abraham not to be blocked by lack of faith by Abraham
- God comes to pagan king Abimelech
- Promises to kill him because of adultery
- Adultery was a sin before Law of Moses - Punishable by death
- Abimelech responds in his dream
- **Genesis 20:4-5**
- Abimelech defends himself – I'm innocent
- Didn't know she was married – we're not like Sodom and Gomorrah
- Abraham said sister, Sarah said brother
- God responds to Abimelech
- **Genesis 20:6**
- 2 of God's attributes are described here
- Omniscience – God knew what was in Abimelech's heart
- Integrity – 1st use in Bible here w/pagan king
- More integrity than Abraham
- Omnipotence – able to prevent Abimelech from sinning
- Somehow prevented Abimelech from sleeping with Sarah
- Maybe she had a headache
- Sovereignty of God - Nowhere in Bible is word 'sovereign' used

- Concept runs through entire Bible
- Creator, King, Almighty, Judge - Just, holy, righteous
- God's plans will come to pass - Nothing can get in the way of that
- Not even the faithlessness of His people
- God will move heaven and earth and saints and sinners to accomplish His will - Our mistakes and sins cannot stop God's plans
- Our failures cannot prevent God's works - He is in complete control
- Could have prevented Abraham from going to Gerar
- Needed to teach him about his fears
- Needed to reveal to Abraham – great God
- God then gives Abimelech some instructions
- **Genesis 20:7**
- Simply tells him to give her back
- Then calls Abraham His prophet
- First time used in Scripture
- Only used once in Genesis – next time w/Moses
- Seems like an odd time unveil this calling
- Abraham's witness to Abimelech is shot
- Proves God's grace doesn't depend on recipient **Biblica**
- God's covenant does not depend on the recipient being worthy, strong, good, or even faithful.**
- Only depends upon God's grace
- Abimelech responds to this dream
- **Genesis 20:8-10**
- Takes the dream seriously
- Talks to his servants and they take it seriously
- Calls for Abraham, asks him to explain himself
- 'What were you thinking about?'
- Only himself, his safety - Not wife, not God's promise, not His power
- Abraham then tries to justify his shameful behavior
- **Genesis 20:11-13**
- No fear of God in the place
- Fear was in Abraham's heart **Proverbs 29:25**
- The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.**
- Abraham had a choice, fear man or trust God

- Feared man – chose to lie to protect himself
 - Same man that fearlessly chased down kings to save nephew Lot
 - Boldly interceded for Sodom with LORD
 - Was it a lie? No and yes!
 - Sarah was his half-sister – that was truth
 - Left out fact she was his wife
 - Half-truth = whole lie
 - It was wrong – it was sin - Should have trusted God
 - Abimelech then responds with incredible grace
 - **Genesis 20:14-15**
 - Abimelech continuing to show himself man of integrity
 - Treating Abraham with great respect
 - Wants Abraham to pray for him
 - Though includes a rebuke for Sarah
 - **Genesis 20:16**
 - Thousand pieces = bride price of princess - Sarah = princess
 - Abraham then prays for Abimelech
 - **Genesis 20:17-18**
 - God answered Abraham's prayer
 - Opened the wombs of all the women
 - Fascinating that was how God chose to punish Abimelech
 - Sarah's womb closed by God
 - God had promised her a son
 - Proves to her that He could through this act
 - Possible he opened her womb here
 - Next verse seems to say that
 - That's for next time
 - Abraham moved into an area where he believed there was no fear of the Lord
 - His response was to lean back on his own understanding and do something he shouldn't have done **Proverbs 3:5-6**
- Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.**
- This ought to be a warning to all of us
 - Abraham is described in this chapter as a prophet of God

- That means he heard from God in a way that no one else did and that he was called to speak for God to the people around him
- Righteous Abraham, the prophet of God looked around and sensed that there was no fear of the Lord in the place where he was
- And in Abraham's heart his fear of man outweighed his fear of the Lord
- Fear can be interpreted two ways in the Scriptures
- The most common is to be afraid – the idea of terror
- In the NT, the Greek word would be 'phobos' = phobia
- Here in the Hebrew, it is also used to describe reverence – deep honor, respect, and worship
- Abraham looked at his surroundings and his fear of man was greater than his reverence of God
- It is not unfair or unkind or reactionary to say that we live in a culture that has no fear of the Lord – Jesus said **Luke 12:4-5**

And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!

- Most people in this world have no fear of the fact that they are hanging over the precipice of eternal torment in hell
- And so, they live and do the things they do
- And they are opposed to anyone who would question their right to be that way
- It made logical sense from a human perspective for Abraham to be afraid – Abimelech could have killed him and taken Sarah
- But, from the perspective of faith, he had nothing to be afraid of
- This chapter describes Abimelech as a man of integrity
- How sad it is when an unbeliever has more integrity than a man of God, especially a prophet of God
- Living in a culture where there is no fear of the Lord guarantees that we will be confronted by the choice between the fear of man or the fear of the Lord
- In this chapter we saw that God's sovereign will cannot be thwarted
- And that He is omniscient and omnipotent

- Abraham's response to this dilemma should have been to tell the truth and then trust God to protect him
- We, as a church, faced a similar dilemma
- We were told to close the church and keep it closed
- We chose to reverence God and trust Him to protect this church
- We are aware that could lead to consequences
- But the God we fear, reverence, love is bigger than any consequences that might come
- When you find yourself in a similar place – do what you know God is telling you to do – and then trust Him to protect you from those things you are afraid of
- That is what makes Christianity so exciting – walking in faith through your fears
- Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us to walk boldly and fearlessly in faith through this culture that has no fear of God
- **Pray!**