

THE GOD WHO PROMISES

THE STORY OF ABRAHAM GENESIS 12-22

Abraham and Lot - Genesis 13-14

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders, please use these questions as a guide for discussion. Please don't feel like you have to go through every one!)

Connect: How can God's faithfulness to us in Jesus encourage us this week to live for him?

Warm-Up

1. How do people usually determine who is "in charge" in our world?
2. When life feels chaotic or uncertain, what helps you trust that God is still in control?

Read Genesis 13:5-13

3. What problem arises between Abram and Lot? Why is this significant?
4. How does Abram respond differently here compared to his actions in Egypt in Genesis 12?
5. What does Lot base his decision on when choosing where to live?
6. Why is the mention of Sodom in verse 13 such an important warning sign?
7. In what ways can comfort, wealth, or success slowly pull Christians away from God today?
8. The sermon said, "A small compromise can lead to bigger ones." Where do you see that pattern happen in real life?
9. What are some practical ways we can guard our faith from slowly drifting?
10. Is there any area of your life where comfort, ambition, busyness, or security is beginning to crowd God out?

Read Genesis 14:17-24

11. What has happened to Lot? How does Abram respond to Lot's situation?
12. Why do you think Abram was motivated to rescue Lot? How does Lot's (relatively undeserving!) rescue compare with how God has rescued us?
13. Read Hebrews 7:23-27. In what way does the writer of the letter say Melchizedek points to Jesus?
14. Why is it such phenomenal news that Jesus is the ultimate King and ultimate Priest (and sacrifice)?
15. How does Jesus show us God's dependability and help us to depend on him?
16. Abram refuses the riches of Sodom. What does this reveal about his trust in God?
17. What temptations today most commonly compete for our trust and loyalty instead of God?
18. What would it look like for you this week to trust God more fully as your rescuer, provider, and king?

Apply: What would it look like to make one shift, in one area of your life, that would help express or enable your dependence on God?

PRAY: *Gracious God, thank you that you are faithful and that your promises are sure. Please help us to depend on you, seek out your ways, and make decisions that reflect our security in you. In Jesus' Name, Amen*

TITLE: Abraham and Lot

PASSAGE: Genesis 13-14

LOCATION: St John's Wishart 9AM

BI: God is the God of nations who is in control and is mighty to save his people

AIM: For people to renew their trust in the God of the nations

STRUCTURE:

- Gen 13 - Lot's Choice
- Gen 14:1-12 - World War
- Gen 14:13-16 - The Great Rescue
- Gen 14:17-24 - The Great Rescuer

- OPEN: How do you tell who is in charge? When you get a job, how do you know, or when you watch the TV news, [or read the newspapers] who do you know who is in charge?
 - In the business world, it's usually the one who gets the biggest paycheck and biggest bonuses!
 - In the TV News and in politics - well it's probably the person who gets the most airtime;
 - In the Calder family, Hudson may think he's in charge, but no - mum and dad are...
- But as we examine our world and the constant war, the unrest, the hurt, and the sorrow - we might be let to think about who is really in charge here?
 - Are we just here all alone on this blue marble floating through space and left to our own devices?
 - To me - that just doesn't stack up
 - And we see that so clearly here in Genesis 13-14.
- We see that on the world stage - God is the one in charge. God is the God of the nations and he is in control, and he is mighty to save his people.

- **Lot's Choice**
- Now we're going to be covering a lot of ground, but hopefully you've read this section already in preparation for today, or maybe tonight you can give it a read, as it is a thrilling read!
- But last week - we saw Abraham in Egypt, lying about his wife, getting into all sorts of trouble, but God gloriously saving them, and they left with riches and animals and donkeys and servants.
- In the beginning of chapter 13, we see Abram coming again to the promised land - worshipping God once again.
- But it wasn't too long until he came across another problem
- 13:5-6 "And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together,"
- Lot was Abram's nephew - and while we don't know exactly what was happening during the whole Egypt saga - he got rich as well as Abram!
- They both had cattle and people and donkeys and stuff...
- BUT the problem is that the land can't sustain it all!
 - *I'm no farmer, but there's only so much food that the ground can produce! There's only so much water to go around!*
- And so - Lot's people and Abram's people began to fight.
- Once again, Abram is faced with the problem of a lack of food and provision in the promised land!
- But this time, he does something different rather than fleeing.
- He says to Lot:

- Mate, here's the deal. We're family and we shouldn't be fighting, so you take your pick. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right, if you go to the right, I'll go to the left. We'll go our separate ways, but you take the first pick.
- And so Lot looked around - and he saw somewhere that looked really good.
- The writer describes it as the perfect place. Well watered. Good streams nearby. Moses, the writer of Genesis, describes it like Eden!
- And so - he goes in that way.
 - *And if we just stopped there, we'd be pretty supportive of Lot's choice!*
 - *If you had any pick of a place to live in Australia, what would be the equivalent?*
 - *Maybe a house at Kangaroo Point? Or a beachside place on the Sunshine Coast?*
 - *Or maybe a place near the vineyards in the Adelaide Hills, or maybe somewhere west in the countryside?*
 - *I remember cycling around Toowoomba after recent rain, and the land and country was just lush! Perfect for grazing cattle or sheep.*
- But is this actually the right choice?
- Well let's look:
- V12: "Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD"
- Now this should sound alarm bells if it hasn't already.
- Lot settled near the city of Sodom, which if you glance up a few verses - God is going to destroy soon!
- And we're told that the men of Sodom were wicked! Great sinners! These are the lowest of the lows.../
- But this is where Lot chooses to settle near...in order to have the best land.
- Remember - he's already rich! And yet, he still wants more riches...at the risk of losing his faith.
 - He's flirting with danger here - wanting more stuff at the potential cost of his faith...
 - His getting his priorities around the wrong way!
- And if you just flip the page - by 14:12 - he's not only living near Sodom, he's living IN Sodom...
 - A small compromise can lead to bigger ones!
 - A seemingly small habit can turn into a bigger habit - and then years down the track, we may wonder how far we've drifted off course!
 - *A few weeks ago - I went for a run with my brother around Sydney harbour - and at times we went near the waters edge - without any intention of going in the water, but it only would have taken one slip and I would have been in the drink!*
- Compromising our faith for the sake of stuff - isn't worth it!
 - And yet we do this all the time and we see it all the time.
 - Western Christianity can be so comfortable...we can get so busy that we end up scheduling God out of the picture, in the pressing culture of comfort - we put up boundaries that put God and church on the outside...we can withdraw from accountability or community, because it feels nicer and safer...
 - We can choose wealth and stuff and our peace over our faith - just as Lot did!
- And years later we can find ourselves and our faith so cold - because of choices and habits that we let creep in months or years or decades ago.
- Worse, we can find ourselves in a tangled mess just as Lot found himself in.
- Friends, let this not be the case with us!
 - Our relationship with God is far too important and precious to be scheduled out! Too important to let slip down the priority list!
 - Our God's grace and love is too radical to be forgotten about.

- Because if we do... our faith might grow so dim, that our torch gets put out...or the word of God gets choked out...or scorched and shrivelled.
- Don't let that happen brothers and sisters. Don't let that happen to your neighbours here!

- And for Lot...who thought he was choosing the easy life...life is going to get a lot more complicated...

- **World War**
- Now 14:1-12 is a thrilling read, that I'm not going to read because of all the long names...
- But it essentially tells the story of an international conflict.
- This was a world war type situation in the Ancient near east.
- The long story short version is that:
- 4 Kings led by Chedaloamer launched an attack on 5 other kings and overran them, and so they became one big coalition army of 9.
- That was until a rebellion happened 12 years later...the original 5 kings who were defeated tried to launch an attack on the other 4 - but failed dramatically, some of the army falling into bitumen pits, and Chedaloamer's crew went and pillaged the countries of Sodom and Gomorrah [Part of the Rebellion] - and then took Lot and all his family, and people, and possessions and carted them away.

- **The Great Rescue**
- So Lot has been taken captive.
- Abram hears the news - and he enters the fray.
- He takes 318 men of his, and went to the very north of Canan chasing the enemies away.
- The enemies consisting of 4 armies VS 318 men. 80 people per army. Led by Abram.
- Abram was trying to do what 5 kings of the rebellion with their armies couldn't do!
 - *Logically, Abram had no chance! He had no chance against kings and armies.*
 - *Like Bangladesh VS Australia in Cricket...your money would be on Australia to win because they're going to win 99% of the time. Similarly Your money would be on the Kings and armies, not on Abram..*
- But - he won!
- He defeated them! He rescued Lot and his family and possessions and everything he had and brought him back!
- An unlikely victory!
- A powerful one and comprehensive!
- But not because of his own strength, but because of the strength of his Lord and God who is the great rescuer.

- **The Great Rescuer**
- So Abram goes for some post-victory drinks...he's having a bit of a catch up with some of the Kings and we are introduced to the King of Salem [King of Jerusalem] Melchizedek.
- Now Melckizedek has got to be one of the most interesting and mysterious figures in the bible.
- The only information about him is here in Genesis. This then gets picked up in the Psalms and then eventually in the letter to the Hebrews.
- He kind of just wafts into the scene and out of the scene with no real beginning or end. He's just there!
- And he is a King and a Priest.
 - In Israel - these roles are separated, but here, Melchizedek is a Priest-King
- His name means King of Righteousness; AND
- He is greater than Abraham.

- The superior always blesses the inferior.:AND
- The inferior always pays tithes to the superior.

- He says this to Abram
- V19 “And he blessed him and said, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!”
- Blessed be God - **who has delivered your enemies into your hand.**
- Notice that It’s God who has won the victory. It’s God who is the great rescuer, It’s God who is mighty to save and powerful.
- And it’s God who is in control!
- Even on the world stage in an international conflict - it’s still God who is calling the shots and saving his people, even in the most unlikely of circumstances.
- He is mighty to save. He is strong and Kind! Merciful and Mighty!

- And 2000 years later, someone came who was in the line of Abraham, **but greater** than him.
- He had the role of a **priest**. A great high priest who was able to make a sacrifice for the sins of his people.
- He was a priest not like the ones in the old testament in Israel, but he was a priest like **Melchizedek** who had no beginning and no end.
- And his sacrifice was better than those of old...
- His sacrifice for the sins and rebellion of his people, was a perfect and unblemished sacrifice. It was himself.
- Through the sacrifice of his own life, Jesus Christ won the unlikely victory against sin and death in the most unlikely ways.
- He did it through weakness. Through death as a slave. Through death on the cross.
- But unlike the priests of old - he didn’t stay dead, but rose again and lives forever - he has no end, just as Melchizedek has no end here in Genesis!
- And just as Lot received the benefits from Abram’s victory - we receive the benefits of Jesus’ victory. We get rescued from sin and death and slavery to sin!
- Jesus is the great rescuer!
- He is our warrior! Our champion!

- And yes - today, we might still feel the effects of evil. After all, Paul describes in Ephesians that our fight isn’t against flesh and blood - it isn’t against things of this world, but is against the evil one and his forces.
- But we can fight this battle in God’s strength, with God’s armour on, and with God’s weapons - knowing that Jesus has started to win and is going to win the war!

- And we have been saved in order to flee from sin...flee from compromise.
- Melchizedek wasn’t the only king visiting Abram in the post-match debrief...
- But the King of Sodom came. (and remember, Sodom was the great sinful nation!!)
- And he came to Abram saying - you can keep the goods, but give me the people!!
- And so Abram had a similar dilemma to Lot - go for the riches and wealth...take the stuff! - or do the faithful thing and look after his family...
- And this is what he says:
 - V22 “But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have lifted my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, that I would not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich.”
- He doesn’t want to benefit from the sinful Sodom. He didn’t want anything to do with them! He doesn’t want to get rich from them - HE DOESN’T COMPROMISE....
- But he **relies** on the Lord. He **depends** on God to provide and to go before him.

- He recognises that God is “God most high - possessor of heaven and earth.”
- It’s interesting this phrase “possessor of heaven and earth”. It’s only ever used here in the whole bible.
- God’s the rightful owner...the purchaser...the creator of heaven and earth..
- He’s the one in control! He’s the one sitting on the throne even in world events!
- And what’s even more comforting is that we can be on God’s side through Jesus!
- Through Jesus’ victory - God welcomes us in as a son or daughter of him. He welcomes us onto his team, his family, his side!

- And if this God is for us - who can be against us?
- If Jesus is our rescuer and our warrior, our perfect great high priest; and nothing can separate us from his love - why would we turn to anywhere or anyone else for peace, hope, satisfaction, and comfort?
- Why would we compromise our faith as Lot did by:
 - prioritising wealth? Or
 - Prioritising career opportunities; or
 - prioritising comfort? Or
 - Prioritising ‘our peace’?
- If you have been getting your priorities all wrong - as I have - then confess them and acknowledge this as sin. Say sorry to God...
- But do this in the confidence of God’s rescue from sin - from the penalty and pollution of sin - through Jesus.
- And then be comforted and strengthened to reorder those priorities...
- Because as we’ve seen from Genesis 13-14 our God is both in control and our rescuer and so is therefore worthy and deserving of our trust and praise and worship.