

Genesis: God and Man

Genesis 13 - Abram Called on the Name of the LORD

Continued study of the relationships between God and people

Recently

- Famine, Abram continuing on, going down to Egypt
- So desperate to survive, barter Sarai
- God intervenes, Pharaoh as an honest guy won't take her
- Headed back to where he was supposed to be

How real is your relationship with the Lord?

Do you hear Him speak?

Do you listen when He does?

Or are we like Abram, hearing the call, even finally obeying the call, but not really believing the call or the God who's calling.

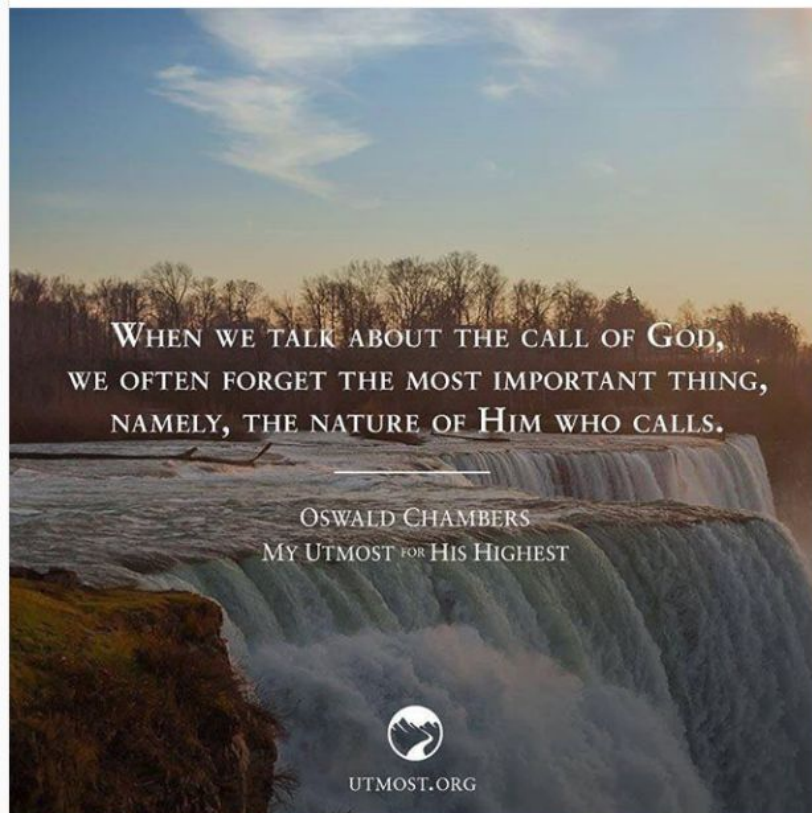
[Jer 20:7-9 NKJV] 7 O LORD, You induced me, and I was persuaded; You are stronger than I, and have prevailed. I am in derision daily; Everyone mocks me. 8 For when I spoke, I cried out; I shouted, "Violence and plunder!" Because the word of the LORD was made to me A reproach and a derision daily. 9 Then I said, "I will not make mention of Him, Nor speak anymore in His name." But [His word] was in my heart like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding [it] back, And I could not.

Things weren't going the way Jeremiah wanted. No one was listening. Preaching the Word became something he hated facing because he knew what was in store. But he could not.

As we read last week, we are not our own.

[1Co 6:19-20 NKJV] 19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit [who is] in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

The living God calls you and me. He will be alive and active in whatever circumstance you are called, even a famine.



**GOD IS MORE
CONCERNED WITH
THE STATE OF
PEOPLE'S HEARTS
THAN WITH THE
STATE OF THEIR
FEELINGS.**

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Genesis 13:1-4

Went up - sort of the reverse “what goes up will always come down”

With God, no matter how low we go, he can always restore us, bring us back up

[Joe 2:25-26 NKJV] 25 "So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, The crawling locust, The consuming locust, And the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you. 26 You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, And praise the name of the LORD your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; And My people shall never be put to shame.

- *Abram's wanderings to Egypt*
- *The Israelites 40 years in the wilderness*
- *Peter's betrayal, Pauls' life before Christ...God flips those all around*

The south, Negeb - south, modern Negev?

He didn't go south, he went back through the southern region of Israel (from his original perspective and Moses' and the reader's)

Where his tent had been at the beginning

Sometimes we have to go backward to go forward - retracing steps, rethinking an approach, going back to the drawing board

Jesus in revelation to Ephesus "Left your first love" repent and do the first works

Where were you dwelling in the beginning of your walk? The last milestone in your faith?

What was your tent like? Where did you set up camp?

Was it at church? Was it in private time? Were there places you'd go to spend time with the Lord?

Are you feeling lost? Have you not heard from him in a while, feeling dejected, coming back with your tail between your legs like Abram? Go back, pitch your tent where you used to meet God

5 pillars - Worship / Prayer / Communion-Fellowship / Bible Study / Evangelism

Between Bethl-el (house of God), Ai (heap of ruins)

God meets us there, between His house and ours
 It's ok to be broken
 It's ok to realize you're in a ruined situation
 Perhaps it's not OK, so-to-speak that you got yourself in that situation
 But God won't cast you off if you'll just come to him

[Jhn 6:37 NKJV] 37 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

[Isa 42:3 NKJV] 3 A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth.

If you're broken and come to him, he will not beat you. He will not make you feel guilty. He will heal you. He will restore you. Your relationship with him will be deeper.

*I'm sure Abram felt these things. Thought these things.
 How do i know? Because he and I are cut from the same cloth...dirt.*

[Psa 103:14 NKJV] 14 For He knows our frame; He remembers that we [are] dust.

[Mat 21:44 NKJV] 44 "And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."

Part of coming to God, becoming a disciple, a child of God...is being broken
 A lot of times we have to be broken first to come to him, at least before we know him

Other times, we come to him, thinking we're ok, and he will gently break us
 "Sweetly broken"

If you've been walking a while with the Lord, and find yourself being broken, that's a good place to be. It's the only way we can grow and be made into what he wants

**The question is, where will we be broken? At the altar or in our mess?
 If it's not at the altar, it will eventually be in a mess**

If you haven't been broken by God in a while. STOP. Come to him. Ask him what needs to be broken.

An attitude? A habit? A relationship? A way of thinking? A way of behaving?

Sometimes the hardships in life are to get us to depend on God. Abram hadn't learned that yet. Thankfully his riches didn't get in the way of finding that relationship with God, but for many of us, they would.

And there Abram called on the name of the Lord

I believe this is where Abram really started walking with God (we'll see his fruitful behavior later and in ch14)

Some of us come to the faith, but it takes a while for us to truly follow

You'd see this a lot in youth ministry. Some kids would get it right away. Some kids wouldn't. Some kids would certainly believe but something was holding them back and then one day, usually after them struggling for a while, you'd see God trying to get their attention, their potential, but they hadn't quite made the commitment

The importance of Baptism

Not for salvation, but for a clean conscience - a point in time where following got serious

But even more so, the baptism of the Holy Spirit

The disciples received it, but they had to wait for it, had to be in the right place to receive it
It changed everything

The lack of waiting for the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers today

In the church. So much doing. Planning. Meeting. Rushing. Not enough waiting. Not enough breaking. Not enough seeking.

Remember where the heart of the wise is...the house of mourning...being broken

13:5-9

Lot also went with him - he journeyed physically with Abram, but he didn't spiritually
Our spiritual journey is our own. We can and should influence others, but ultimately it is up to them

We cannot be a crutch to someone forever. We cannot play the Holy Spirit in their lives.
It will only drag us down

Lot had stuff too...and tents. He was able to do his own thing, but he and Abram were still intertwined (more like tangled)

We need to be careful who we get wrapped up with.

Relationships are so important because they deeply affect us in every way,
even ways we can't see

Seeing friends getting caught up with other things and them changing

Seeing differences in families when others are introduced

Good and bad

One way to tell if someone is a believer is if their life gets wrapped up in the Lord and the things of the Lord. and I don't mean just having a bible and going to church - great starts - but everything they are about becomes about the Lord and his business and not in a superficial way.

Land was not able to support them

Bear, carry, support

There were a lot of mouths to feed - human and animal

All of Abram's people

All of lot's people

The others in the land

Not enough to go around

In one way it was necessary, a healthy split so that everyone had provision
(too much competition, no need to stick together)

But also the people weren't getting along.

*Cabin fever, spending too much time with even the best of friends, cramped in a small setting
and you can quickly be less than loving*

It was time to separate

They just COULD NOT dwell together

Sometimes that's ok.

There can be good church splits

But most often, sadly, they are bad

There should be healthy growth and splitting

No need to build our kingdom, build his

Abram, the older, one who now had relationship with the Lord

Sought peace first

[Rom 12:18 NKJV] 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Abram was living that verse thousands of years before it was written, because his heart was changed

Abram didn't kick Lot out, he gave him the choice. He could have demanded the better, but he gave opportunity for Lot to choose. He could have looked out for his own life, but instead, was looking out for everyone else's.

[Phi 2:4 NKJV] 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

I see a change already in him.

We're brethren, we're family...oh if the church acted this way! If we did! Couldn't we put our differences aside, agree to disagree when necessary, and be a much healthier family? Forgiving, forgetting? Loving? Putting the others first?

This is why God can't use us most of the time. There's too much strife.

[Jhn 13:35 NKJV] 35 "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

All too often we just have love for ourselves, want the best for ourselves, even if strife and fighting is the result of it. We spiritualize it somehow, come up with some judgment on the other person as to why it's happening, instead of taking the low road, washing their feet, taking responsibility to mend the situation even if it isn't our fault..."Lot, let's not fight, we're family, you take what you want, I'll go the other way. **It doesn't matter as long as we're at peace.**"

When's the last time you saw the church act like this?

When's the last time you acted like this?

The church won't do it if we don't...because we're the church.

Separate, divide

Sometimes that separation and division is necessary for health

Kids growing up

This town ain't big enough for the both of us

But when it does, do everything you can to make it a peaceful, loving, helpful divide. Bless instead of wanting the blessing.

13:10-18

Lot lifted up his eyes.

Lot was still a man of the flesh (looking for what looks the best in this life, not the next)
And sadly, we know how that turns out in the end (Sodom and Gomorrah do get destroyed, and Lot's family)

Lot wanted the best for himself and his family,
he goes after what he thinks is the best, and it ultimately destroys them

*We need to be careful what we esteem good in life
What we think is best.
What we base our decisions on.*

Are we using our spiritual or physical eyes to make decisions?

I can tell you, fleshly eyes will only reap fleshly reward...and what's' the reward of the flesh?
Death.

Lot is trying to get as close as he can get to the big city
The latest and greatest
The cultural heartbeat
On point, on trend, and in lights

I think vs. 14 is the most telling in the whole chapter, most interesting perhaps, given the foundation of calling on the the Lord in v4

And the Lord said to Abram, AFTER Lot had separated from him...

Until Lot had been removed from Abram's inner circle, daily life and affairs
Until Abram had finally been obedient to leave his family behind like God had said to him so long ago"Get out of your country, your father's house..."

He wouldn't hear the next word from the Lord on the promised land. On his journey. In his faith.

*Guys, there is stuff in our life that is separating us from the voice and blessing of God
And the only way for us to be not separated from God is to be separated from it*

To be Holy means to be separate

[1Pe 1:13-16 NKJV] 13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest [your] hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, [as] in your ignorance; 15 but as He who

called you [is] holy, you also be holy in all [your] conduct, 16 because it is written, "**Be holy, for I am holy.**" (Leviticus)

[Mat 5:8-9 NKJV] 8 Blessed [are] the pure in heart, For they shall see God. 9 Blessed [are] the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. (we'll see the second half of this in Ch 14)

Maybe you've been praying for something, God has even promised you something, maybe it was a long time ago, maybe it's been for a long time...but you haven't seen it...God hasn't said anything else about it in a long time...

Have you gone back to the first place spiritually (physically if need be?)

Have you separate yourself from anything that could be getting in the way of either hearing or receiving? Or could disqualify you?

A lot of times we pray and ask and God even is ready to give it - but we've been unwilling to let go of not the best things or even bad things and we wonder why God hasn't answered our prayer.

We need to be both in the place to receive it spiritually and physically
God won't give new direction until we've obeyed the old direction

So often we want the things of God, but when he presents them to us, we dismiss them because it's too simple, it's too right-in-front of us, or it's not what we expected at all - so we go on looking for the answer when it's already been given

Be wary of wanting the big things of God without first obeying the small things

You want your marriage to be healed but you won't give up your overly flirtatious ways or "friends"

You want your finances to be turned around but you won't start putting \$10 into savings every paycheck

You want to be used big time by God but you'll barely put down the remote to hear from him

It had been so long maybe Abram didn't even realize this was still a part of being obedient to God

Maybe he did remember what God told him, didn't know how to go about it, and then strife started happening and it became obvious

The men of sodom were exceedingly wicked and against the Lord

Yet Lot saw nothing wrong with heading that direction

The carnal Christian

Maybe Abram knew that and he wanted nothing to do with it. He learned his lesson in Egypt and said i'm going to stay here with God, no matter how good it looks over there

It was obvious to Abram that separating from Lot to be closer to God was more important than seeking the best life now with his family close by

Abram was looking at things with his spiritual eyes

God tells Abram to lift his eyes now (remember Lot lifted his eyes of his own accord)

Now it was Abram's turn - it's OK to do so when God tells us to do so! Marriage, work, blessing, all OK when God directs us to it

Lot chose one way, to the east

God told Abram to look every way - north, east, south, west

Look from the place you are (set your eyes on things above)

We always limit the blessing when we chose it for ourselves

When we let God chose our inheritance, it's always more than we could ever ask or think or imagine

That applies to everything in this life and the next

The person you'd chose for yourself to marry vs. the person God chose for you to marry

The career you always wanted vs. the career God has for you

The place you wanted to be in life vs. the place God would have you be in life

Well meaning people say to me, "I just want you to be happy. Follow your heart."

It's not about happiness, it's about peace with God and with others.

... being where God has me to be

I just picture the Lord's arm around Abram's shoulder, pointing and turning him, speaking these words to Him

Arise...Abram wasn't to sit still, he was to get up, walk through all the land God had given him

That's so healthy for us to do when God shows us something

Spy out the land, walk through the land, get to know where you're going, get to know the people, let them get to know you

And we can go in confidence, because God has already given it, we just have to receive it

So often we go about our lives timid and afraid, hoping to get what we want, playing politics, being a pushover, or pushing others over, taking what we want first and cutting in line, whatever...because it wasn't promised to us

Mamre - strength, fatness - from brokenness to strength

Hebron - associated

When we're associated with God, we will find our strength

But when it's promised there's peace

When there's peace we find our place

We find our place when we obey what God instructed

To get out from your country, your father's house, your land, to a place which I will show you - to be separated

The personal nature of God in the call - to a land I WILL SHOW YOU. Our personal guide in this life. Not an impersonal God. An intimate God. A loving God. A caring Father.