

Kings Norton Baptist Church

Sunday 18th September 2022 10 am

Making Right Choices - Genesis 13 Abram and Lot

Welcome to all.

Opening Scripture

Hymn We praise Thee, O God! For the Son of Thy love.

Scripture Isaiah 43:1-13

Prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

Children's talk Mt 7: 24-27 The wise and foolish builders / ex of QEII

Video

Chorus The wise man built his house on the rock

Notices Queen's funeral tomorrow, Hope Magazine,
Harvest 2nd Oct Communion 9th,

Mission focus

Prayer time

Reading Genesis 13:1-18

Hymn MP 31 Amazing Grace

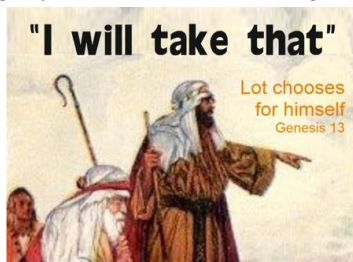
Sermon Making right choices

Hymn MP 1008 The Lord's my shepherd

Closing Prayer

Close

Alternative closing Hymn I am trusting thee Lord Jesus



Exordium and Prayer

- Years ago sadly my father divorced my mother for another woman. Although it was in 1972 the consequences are still being felt now 50 later. He died in 1997 yet the effects of that decision, are here today.
- In 1986 I was looking for Engineering work. Being slightly specialized the recruitment agency made some suggestions, It could be Ford at Dagenham, north London, Ricardo's on the south coast or maybe RR at Crewe, Then there was a R&D position with Rover Group at L/B
- I started work there in September of that year and as they say - the rest is history. Baptised here, a mortgage on a house at the top of the hill, now all these years later Vanessa is proud of the city in which she was born and bred. I have worked at BCM etc etc.

Decisions made years ago have a long tail, they leave their mark. The consequences of choices made far back in the past are still playing out today

We are constantly making decisions, can you think of any that stand out?

The devil will always try to say "*nothing bad will come of it, go ahead!*"

The result is many make decisions lightly, or are bounced into it by others, or make a rash ill considered move, or decide on the spur of the moment – and are later regretted. How much of what we do is not thought through never alone prayer about, "Lord is this wise? Is this in line with you will? The result? Regret, and often a trail of damage.

How good are you at making choices? Maybe you in the midst of one as I speak, right now? Where will it leave you in a year's time? Have you looked ahead? Have you thought and prayed about it? Have you sought the counsel of others? Or are you impetuous like Peter?

✚ Here we have two people, two choices and two consequences. x2

Did their choice stem from the kind or person they were? Or did their choices make them the kind of people they became?

Both. The die is cast very early in life. Character is formed early, a repeated 'no' to the prompting of conscience, always taking the easy option, not controlling the tendency to selfishness, closing out the need of others, to help others, all set the bearings onto the wrong path ahead. .. and once on that road it is much harder, - even impossible, - to turn back.

First we have Abram who the Lord had called Ch 12:1 to **walk before him and be blameless** (Gen 17:1).

Then there is his nephew Lot. Lot had allowed 'self' to dominate.

Although he knew the Lord's grace in his life, he so resisted Him that he ends up the ultimate example of a backslidden, disobedient Christian.

Let us learn from Lot how not to do it!

Let's set the scene....

1 So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him.

The previous chapter ends with Abraham sinning, in other words he makes bad choices. He had been in Egypt because of the famine but while there had not been a good witness to the Lord. He now returns to the land of Canaan where God has made promises to him.

What do you do when you sin? When you mess up? You go back to the cross, you go back to square one, you start again. This is what Abram did.

3 he went ... to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier 4 and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the LORD. Look back and see It's exactly the same as Ch 12:8.

This is where he started – and restarted. It is at the altar (the place of sacrifice, the cross) where he sought the Lord.

✚ **The cross is the place where you and I as sinners can meet with God.**

Abram is learning from a mistake – I say 'is' although he repeated it sadly doing exactly the same again see ch 20.

How about you? do you learn from your mistakes? Do you - Are you?

2 Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.

He was very rich, He was very heavy, so the Hebrew word has it; for riches are a burden, and those that will be rich load themselves down.

✚ **Great possessions as he had, make us heavy and unwieldy.**

✚ **There is a burden of care in getting them, fear in keeping them, temptation in using them, guilt in abusing them, sorrow in losing them, and a burden of account, at last, to be given up concerning them.**

How do you cope with the material blessings the Lord has given you? They are a test? Can you live without them distracting or influencing you? – or do they lead you astray promising to enhance your life – but you ended up trapped by them, in bondage to them.

Both Abram and his nephew Lot had become wealthy. **5 Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. But the land**

could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together. And quarrelling arose between Abram's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot.

Quarrelling arose – there will be **quarrelling** – it will happen and how often it is found within the family. Wherever there is a sinful heart there will be a tendency to quarrel. Expect it. Quarrelling in the family – and trouble in the nation. **The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.**

8 So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarrelling x2 between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers.

Christians should not quarrel – it is a reproach to the Lord, and gives an opening, as much as anything, for the devil to make us to curse each other.

the Lord's servants must not quarrel; says Paul to Timothy but **instead, be kind to everyone,** 2 Tim 2:24

✚ **We are to be peacemakers**

The people of God should always be a peaceable people; whatever others are for, we must be for peace. **If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.** Rom 12:18

And as peacemakers – we will have to be the first to make the move. That requires *Humility – as Jesus humbled himself.*

And it is likely that we will suffer loss a sacrifice *as Jesus did* *Cross*

So Abram says: **Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company.**

The answer is 'separation' – **Let's part company**, sometimes we need to part company, to speedily deal with it and quench the fire before it spreads.

Separation - for safety's sake, - for the sake of peace, in relationships it's often the right course of action. So too at work, the need to change offices.

Abram decided and acted, he did not leave it, he did not think "if I do nothing it will fix itself" - no it doesn't x2 - he did not procrastinate and never make up his mind, problems that linger tend to bounce back twice as bad. No, he did something.

How, in what way do you deal with quarrels? Do you stand your ground? Do you stand on your rights? After all the devil's a lawyer! He's an expert at finding fault, at finding the lawbreaker, he is an expert at finding out when someone has done something wrong saying "make sure you keep a record of that, build a case, you will win!" He hates grace, the devil hates grace. Jesus is the Grace of God. those who have Jesus display Grace. To

not show grace, to not show humility is a sure sign that that person does not know Christ and His salvation.

Abram had already decided what to do. As the older one he could have rightly had first choice, as the richer one he could have given himself first choice and argued to have the land necessary for his flocks.

No he had decided that Lot should have first choice, what about himself? He would entrust himself to the Lord. "Lord I trust you" x2

So he said to Lot: **If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left."**

Lot's choice

10 **Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, towards Zoar.**

Lot looked and Lot saw. He could see good, lush, fertile land ahead, a view pleasing to his eyes. *this is the best choice – for me – for my prosperity*"

"But Lot you know Sodom lies that way". He did, He knew about that city!

13 **the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD.**

Sodom from which comes the word 'sodomy' a by-word for perversion and sin. 'Sodom' warns us of ungodliness and God's right anger and judgment.

Lot could have said to himself "wait a moment x2 there might be a snare here, there could be trouble ahead if I go this way"

- Car pile-up in America on the expressway I could see it as they came down the hill ahead car after car crashing into the one in front. Why did it happen? They weren't looking ahead x2. They say it takes 100k for a young driver to become safe on the roads? Why? It takes training to notice things far off ahead of them.

How are Lot's eyes? Can he see clearly? What he sees with his eyes is what he wants to see - He did not look at things the way the Lord looks at them.

Many Christians doesn't think biblically, are you one of them? Many spend so little time in His word they still look at everything the world's way.

There's a lack of wisdom, a lack of discernment. The result is the misery of wrong choices, and a life that dishonours the Lord.

Lot was shortsighted, he saw the best before him, but that's as far he saw

How far do you look when choosing friends? – choosing a girl / boyfriend? Is it appearance and only superficial things?

Beware – where are your eyes taking you? Do you love buying things? what do you look at? your eyes are what lead you, "*be careful little eyes what you see*" never a wiser word.

Drawn by a good price? That deal which seems too good to be true – is!

- I remember years ago with others going into a bar in central London, the drinks were cheap, so we ordered, then found out at the end at the bottom in small print there was a minimum charge per person.
- In different ways we have all been there, greed blinds me to the catch, - I believe I can benefit and there'll be no downside.

May I never say Lord "**lead me not into temptation**" and then go off and lead myself into temptation. Remember temptation comes from me! **each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.** Ja 1:14

Maybe Lot excused it and reasoned it away thinking "I know Sodom is nearby, but I am strong, I can resist. I can cope. To him, and us, come the words "**let he who is standing firm beware lest he fall.** Here is a man who did not know himself, he did not know his weakness.

Lead by his greed Lot starts his fatal action 11 **So Lot chose for himself x2 the whole plain of the Jordan and set out towards the east. ... Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom.**

What of the consequences?

See the sad progression? Lot **pitched his tents near Sodom**, Lot who doesn't know himself is gradually drawn in Gen 14:12 **he was living in Sodom.** Sin, falling away from the Lord comes bit by bit. If it is not resisted and bad choices are continued to be made, the point comes **like that famous lobster in the pot** when it is too late.

Gen 19:1 **lot was sitting in the gateway** in other words he had become part of the establishment, he had become one of the city elders who as was the custom.. presided at the city gate. What had happened? He had become embedded in the social fabric of the city.

✚ **One Godless decision had led to another - and another - and another.**

He had found a wife from the city. We see that for when she was being rescued she looked back ... her heart was really there in that city.

Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." 1 Cor 15:33

She couldn't take away his salvation - but she took away his walk with the Lord, she took away his witness. Those early decisions bore their ugly fruit.

If that is you then quick - come before the Lord and seek forgiveness.

Learn the lesson of David. Before he sinned with Bathsheba he was involved with the Lord's work and his life was full of victory – then he became idle and was led to sin – The rest of his life was beset with trouble. After Bathsheba there was trouble and strife often from within the family.

✦ David quickly sought forgiveness – but the consequences remained x2

Feeling the slippery slope towards sin? Usually end up going your way?

✦ Let us take some advice from Charles Spurgeon. “What settings are you in when you fall? Avoid them. What props do you have that support your sin? Eliminate them. What people are you usually with? Avoid them. There are two equally damning lies Satan wants you to believe: 1) Just once won't hurt. 2) Now that you have ruined your life, you are beyond God's use, and might as well enjoy sinning. Learn to say ‘no’”

Lot was restrained when he was with godly Abram. We all affect each other for good or for bad. Abram's influence restrained Lot's greed as Abram (rich though he was) showed no sign of it. In fact Abram acquired everything - except children. Maybe the fact that Abram had so much and yet no heir to inherit it all meant that Lot saw himself, positioned himself to be, the next in line. Abram had ironically said a servant would receive it..... and not Lot. Perhaps he knew what Lot was like.

Lot became the example compromised Christian

Lot did escape as God's judgment against Sodom as it went up in flames. Paul alludes to this in 1 Cor 3. Here is someone who did not build his life well – He escapes through the flames, he is saved - for it is the Lord who saves – but he only just makes it - and there is no reward. Why? Because he made foolish choices, he did not build well. He chose the wrong materials. Instead of the way of holiness - he chose the way of the world.

Let me summarise, let us learn from Lot

1. He had given priority to the material not spiritual.
 2. He gave over his relationship with Abram for personal gain.
 3. Short term benefit - at a long-term cost, and severe one at that.
 4. Yes “He had bought now and would certainly have to pay later!”
- Just like my parent's divorce – If my father had considered the consequences I believe he would have thought again.
- But we are all making decisions, and even the small ones can have a large effect. I know some who used to read the Bible regularly, but bit by bit it has fallen away. Where will that leave them?

- Every new morning you wake up - what will you do today? Will you do something to serve the Lord and His people? or will you make your own plans that centre around what you want?

If you profess to be a follower of Jesus: “Is that fulfilling your pledge? Is he pleased with that?”

Final blessing from the Lord

Abram entrusted his life to the Lord – and the Lord spoke to him. 14 **The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west.**

The Lord is saying “Abram you have trusted me – and the one who does that will never lose his reward”.

Abram was told look and see "**Lift up your eyes from where you are and look** 15 **All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring for ever.** Abram will always remain in what the Bible speaks of as the ‘land of the living’

To childless Abram, the sign of everlasting prosperity 16 **I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted.** 17 **Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you."** 18 **So Abram moved his tents and went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the LORD."** Genesis 13:1-18 *Thank you Thank you*

In conclusion – Have you messed up? I have come back to the Lord, say “**Not my will but yours be done.**” Say with David “**renew a right Spirit within me**”

One thing I have been slowly learning is this - There is only one way to really live – and that is in the Lord's will. That is where you find him, that is where I meet with God, not outside of it but in it. That is why repentance is so important. to actively and constantly pull round my will - to his will.

Some of you here are far from finding the Lord because you will not give up your will for his will. You want Him but you don't find him because there is something in the way – someone in the way – you are in the way!

So it was with Lot – but we are going to be like Abram the man of faith who is learning to live by faith – that means in everything, in all the decisions we go his way. Will you do that? Let us *like him* entrust everything to the Lord.

The Lord's my shepherd (new version) and “*I will trust in you alone*”