*Wednesday Morning Devotional on August 28, 2024*

**Passage: Genesis 13:1-19**

In Genesis 12, Abraham enters Egypt due to a famine. But in today's passage from Genesis 13, we see that Abraham leaves Egypt with abundant livestock, silver, and gold. Life, indeed, has its seasons of famine and seasons of abundance. Naturally, we prefer abundance over famine, and there’s nothing wrong with that—wealth is a gift from God. However, it’s important to remember that for believers, even famine is a gift from God. In this sense, the blessing Abraham received was not just about material wealth. The true blessing was God Himself, who faithfully protected and provided for him.

When we lose sight of the fact that God Himself is the true blessing, we may fall into the following misconception: that while Abraham’s trip to Egypt might have been an act of unbelief, he still ended up wealthy and maintained his faith, so perhaps it’s okay for us to compromise with the world a little too.

However, what God truly wanted to teach Abraham was that even if he hadn’t become wealthy, living in Canaan with trust in God would have been more blessed.

We should never think of God’s blessing solely in terms of money. Between heavenly blessings and earthly ones, heavenly blessings are far more valuable.

In my ministry, I have rarely seen people become more prosperous materially and then trust in Jesus more or lead healthier spiritual lives. Instead, I have often seen people return to God when they lose their health, face bankruptcy, fall ill, or experience broken relationships. That’s why I don’t pray for someone who doesn’t have a relationship with God to become wealthy. When someone becomes rich, it’s easy for their heart to remain unyielding and prideful.

But does that mean being wealthy is bad? Not at all. Those who possess wealth and abundance, yet recognize that worldly riches are never hostile to God and remain humble before Him, are used by God through their wealth and abundance. In a world where many people need money and where money is often treated as a god, Christians who use their material wealth to do good can be a powerful witness to the Gospel. Such people are what we call a channel of blessing.

Remember, God called Abraham to be a channel of blessing. And we are all spiritual descendants of Abraham. Therefore, we too should strive to be channels of blessing—living in such a way that those around us are led to believe in Jesus and thrive because of our influence. This is the life of being a channel of blessing.

Abraham became wealthy, and Lot, who was with him, also became wealthy. Both of them had many livestock, and this eventually led to conflict.

The pastureland available was limited compared to the number of livestock they owned. Abraham heard about the conflict between his herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen and sought to resolve it. The simplest solution would have been to use his authority to control Lot, which is often the way of the world—protecting one's own interests while increasing one's possessions and power. He could have even justified it by saying that God had promised to make him into a great nation! However, Abraham chose not to do that. In a culture even more patriarchal and hierarchical than today, he made a decision that was far from easy. Abraham explained the situation to Lot and suggested that they part ways, giving Lot the choice of where to go, and stating that he would follow wherever Lot decided to go.

From Abraham’s attitude, we are reminded of the way God’s people should live. Even when we stand to benefit, we give up our advantage, even to the point of accepting potential loss, prioritizing others’ needs over our own. It’s not about using our power to resolve situations, but using that power to help those weaker than us flourish—this is the way of God’s Kingdom. Abraham’s experience in Egypt likely played a significant role in his ability to act this way. If he had viewed his wealth as merely a blessing, he might not have acted this way. But because he held something more important than money—his trust in God’s care and provision—he was able to act as he did.

In contrast, Lot’s actions reveal a different perspective. Thanks to Abraham’s consideration, Lot was able to choose first. His eyes were drawn to the lush, prosperous land, much like the land of Egypt. However, what seems prosperous and desirable to our eyes is not always beneficial. While verse 10 describes the land as rich and fruitful, like the garden of the Lord, verse 13 reveals that the people of the land were exceedingly wicked in God’s sight.

Lot was not someone without faith, yet he chose worldly wealth and pleasure over his faith. Wealth and prosperity are gifts from God, but when we prioritize them over God, they quickly become corrupted. At that point, wealth becomes a powerful idol, seeking to master us. That is why Paul said we cannot serve both God and money.

In verses 14-18, we see that Abraham moves to Hebron. Hebron, a mountainous region, was not an ideal place for grazing or farming. It was clear to everyone that Abraham had taken a loss. However, after Lot left, God spoke to Abraham, telling him to look in all directions and promising to give him and his descendants all the land he could see, forever. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not see the fulfillment of this promise during their lifetimes. They lived as sojourners in the land of Canaan, holding onto this promise by faith until they passed away.

This passage teaches us how God’s people should live on this earth. In a world filled with conflict and strife, we are called to be peacemakers.

How do we find peace? By being willing to lose. Conflicts arise because everyone tries to win and no one is willing to lose. But who is able to willingly give up and accept loss while yielding? The stronger person can yield, and the person with more can afford to take a loss and still yield.

We, as spiritual descendants, are called to be the channels of blessing to those around us. God promised that He will bless us so that we can become the channels of blessings. Be generous and kind to others through the rest of the week!

**Closing Prayer:**

**Gracious and loving God, we thank You for the timeless truths found in Your Word. Today, we are reminded that the true blessing in our lives is not in the wealth we may accumulate but in Your faithful presence with us. Help us, Lord, to trust in You during both the seasons of abundance and the seasons of scarcity. May we always remember that You are our ultimate provider and protector.**

**Lord, guide our hearts to be channels of blessing to others, just as Abraham was. Give us the wisdom to use whatever resources we have—be they great or small—for Your glory and the good of those around us. Teach us to be generous, not just with our money but with our time, love, and compassion, so that others may see Your grace at work in us and be drawn closer to You.**

**In a world where money and material possessions often take center stage, keep our hearts humble and fixed on the eternal treasures You offer. May we find our greatest joy not in what we own but in knowing You and being known by You.**

**As we go forth this week, empower us to live as Your faithful people, confident in Your promises and eager to share the blessings You have given us with those in need. May our lives be a testimony of Your love and faithfulness, bringing honor and glory to Your name.**

**We pray all these things in the precious name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.**