

03.08.26

Genesis

Chapter 20 - God's Grace Again

Moving Away from Faith (vs. 1-7)

Genesis 20:1-7: Now Abraham journeyed from there toward the land of the Negev, and settled between Kadesh and Shur; then he sojourned in Gerar. Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." So Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. But God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is married." Now Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You slay a nation, even though blameless? Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this." Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and I also kept you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her.

Now therefore, restore the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."

Second verse, same as the first, it's a little bit louder and a little bit worse. It doesn't seem to get any better, does it? You would think that you would learn from your lessons, but tradition, habits are a part of us. And things get ingrained, hard to get out. God's going to get them out, but it's not easy. It's not easy to let go of who you are and the way that you think. You've been working on it all your life. And really, at this particular juncture, Abraham's about 100 years old. So, to change at this point, wow, how difficult that is. But God is working in his life, and he is trusting God as time goes on. This particular moment of failing comes within a context.

So, as the passage starts off, if you look in Genesis 20:1, "Now Abraham journeyed..."

The “now” is letting us know that you have a sequence of events and that it is literally connected, or there is a connection to the previous passage. The previous passage, as you know, was about Lot and being in Sodom and Gomorrah. And of course, before that, Abraham was very much concerned about his nephew Lot, knowing that he lived in Sodom, and so did an intercessory thing with the Christ in the Old Testament. And you begin to see his concern as he wishes, if there were just 50, if there were 45, 40, and then he starts going in increments of 10 within the passage. We realized that God knew and God was already rescuing, for God knew the heart of Abraham. And the passage literally says that Lot was rescued because God felt compassion for Abraham or was listening to Abraham. And it was as a result of that intercessory and concern that we have. God actually is concerned for the things that concern us. And it's hard for us to believe that but certainly Psalm echoes that as we read.

What we see is that all the way around, Abraham has been concerned for his nephew from the very start. The

very fact that he took him with him on this journey, which God told him not to take any family with him, but he takes Lot, because of perhaps overcompensating for his brother's death, realizing that this guy is going to grow up without a father, "So, I'm going to take him under my wing." So, he does, and he takes him with him, and then there's a separation of events, and you would think that Abraham would go, "Okay, we're going to have to separate because we're not getting along with one another, so I'll just move on and he'll move on to his place." No, Abraham will move to a place where he can see Sodom. And so, he moves to Hebron and has an eagle's nest view of about 3,500 feet. Of course, Sodom is down way below sea level. And so, he can see the things that are happening down there and certainly is concerned. As he does his prayer of intercession, He is looking down, and they are looking down at that particular region. However, as the place begins to burn and God begins to destroy the five cities that are there, he sees that too. So, in connection with the passage, he now moves.

What the passage is telling us is that we all have different ways of dealing with issues, problems, hardship, heartache, in some cases loss, in some cases disappointment, perhaps failures of your own kind. When you go through the Old Testament and as we've been going through in Genesis, we've seen a couple of examples, so three or four, as we've come to this particular point. You look in Genesis at the very beginning with Adam and Eve, and I mean, talk about a massive failure. Everything was perfect and now it's not. And they are leaving the garden as great failures. The question is, how would you deal with that? And Adam and Eve in particular deal with it in a way that I would say that they hope to dream away or wish away their problems, especially as you come to Genesis 4. And Eve goes, "I've had a kid with God's help. This is the man-child; this is the one that's going to rescue us from everything."

There's an interesting thing in psychology, a word that is used, "Pygmalion" effect, actually starts off with a "Y," "P-Y," not a "P-I". But the Pygmalion effect is, if in fact, you have high expectations, then it will produce great

expectations. In other words, the higher the expectations that you have on somebody, they'll begin to perform according to that particular desire. And in some respects, it kind of goes into wishful thinking in the sphere of the churches, "name it, claim it." So, if you can wish it, it'll be so. And it kind of falls in the line of, "If in fact, I hope it to be, it will be." "If you wish upon a star..." I won't sing the song for you. But the point is that we have this tendency to think that it's by nature of our positive thinking that positive things will happen. And good things, better things do happen when you think more positively, there's no doubt about that. But you don't control the results by the way that you think or the way that you approach things. However, like Adam and Eve, there are a lot of people that begin to think, "Well, if I just hope this to be true, it's going to be true." And sometimes, I think we go into the realm of vicarious thinking in which we think, "Well, I was a failure, but my kid's not going to be." And so, we put the kid out there. Of course, Cain really was a major failure, as they called him the "gotten one," but he certainly turned out to be anything but that. So, we realize that in desire to deal with the failures that we have, we go to different

extremes to deal with them. And sometimes, it's basically in a dream world. You kind of see that in the Book of Colossians, and really, throughout the epistles. Paul will deal with different churches dealing with different issues in their specific way. That's a very interesting study. We'll talk about that in just a minute. But as you go in the Book of Genesis, now you have Noah. And what does Noah have to deal with? Well, Noah has to deal with the mass destruction of humanity. And don't think for one moment that didn't affect him. Because after the flood, what does he do? He gets drunk. So, you can dream it away, you can drink it away, or as Abraham will do, you can move away. And in every case, we deal with our problems in very unique ways.

And when you consider Abraham in particular, Genesis 12, remember the famine came into the land. And what does Abraham do? He moves down to Egypt. Right. And so, when there's a problem with his nephew, he moves to Hebron. Now, the grief and the disappointment of the way that things were turning out. And quite frankly, at this particular juncture, there's no way of knowing

whether he knows if Lot's okay or not. There's been a complete destruction of the land, and he doesn't know where Lot is. So, there's great disappointment, great sorrow over the things that have happened; once again, the destruction of humanity. What does he do?

Well, that's why it picks up the way that it does in Genesis 20:1,

“Now Abraham journeyed...”

Why? Because that's what he does. When there are problems, he moves away from the problems. And it's going to show within the passage that as he begins to move away, he falls into the same problems. The thought is, “If I just move away, I'm not going to have any problems.” Well, you're going to move away, but you're still going to have the same problems, because the problems follow you. That's one of the reasons I like Psalm 23 so much, because if in fact the Lord is your shepherd, mercies will follow you. Goodness and mercy will follow you all the days of your life. You'll turn around and you'll say, “What is that following me?” And

goodness and mercy are just waving and telling us how glad they are that we're walking the trail.

So, as we go through, what we're going to see is the tendency to deal with particular issues in certain ways. If you were to do a study of the epistles, you're going to see that same thing. For instance, we know, according to the Book of James, that there were many that were actually being dispersed abroad because of their faith. And it was literally James' church there in Jerusalem. Now, they're living in strange places. They've lost loved ones. They've lost perhaps much of their possessions, and they're working for people that aren't paying them. In the context of that, how do they deal with that? They get mad. I mean, it is interesting when you think of how people deal with things. I mean, oftentimes something will happen that upsets Connie and I, she'll cry, I'll get mad. But it's the same particular issue that we're dealing with. But we all deal with things in a different way. Of course, James will say, "the anger of man doesn't accomplish the righteousness of God," so don't go there. But in that, you also realize as you go in the Book of James that he's not

only dealing with anger, but they begin to go into the realm of usury. “Well, you know, I'm going to start manipulating my circumstances in order to get even,” so to speak. There's that bumper sticker, “I don't get mad, I just get even.” So, there are people that go that trip, and that's the way they handle the disappointments of life and the trials of life. You think of Thessalonians, in 1 Thessalonians 4, by the time you get there, you have people once again that are dealing with fear and anxiety over the future. And you would ask them, “How do you deal with that?” And they'd go, “Well, we throw up our hands and go, might as well go back to our debauchery.” So, Paul has to write them in 1 Thessalonians 4, and he says, “Now, you do know that you don't want to go to immorality for your relief.” You actually know that some people go to immorality for relief? Yeah. So, they're looking for some sort of payoff, some sort of immediate gratification in order to deal with the problem. Of course, Thessalonians will deal with that. And he'll also state to them, “Look, you need to work hard with your hands and not be in any need. The whole problem is you're sitting around twiddling your thumbs doing nothing and just

thinking about yourself. I'm going to tell you this, if you don't work, you're not going to eat." And so, he begins to motivate them to move them off of the very things that will bring greater depression. And that's sitting there doing nothing, throwing up your hands, living like an Epicurean, saying, "Let's eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. It's all going to be bad anyway, so let's just have as much fun as we can until we go," which is not going to bring you down the path of fun, but sorrow.

And then you think of Peter in which Peter begins to deal with those that are going through hardship, and he says, "I know your tendency is to rebel with bad behavior, but keep your behavior excellent in the midst of this suffering. God has called you for this purpose." Colossians, to me, is a very interesting book, because you not only see people going into a type of masochism. Have you ever known of people cutting themselves and stuff like that when they're going through difficulty or maybe beating themselves, perhaps dealing with the issues that they're dealing with? But they're also going into fantasy play. And in that particular realm, they're dealing with metaphysical

mysticism in which they take their stand on visions, he says, and on the worship of angels. What he's talking about is that they're going into fantasy land. And a lot of people deal with their problems and issues by doing that. "I just won't deal with reality. I'll go into virtual reality and it's a lot more friendly and I can control that in so many ways," whether it's in their mind or whether it's with a game or whether it's with a multitude of things. They lose themselves in some other place. The fact of the matter is that we all deal with our problems in very different ways. That's why you have all these books of the Bible, quite frankly.

So, as we come to this passage, we're dealing with somebody that's dealing with a moment of sorrow, clear disappointment. How do you deal with it? He just moves away. Now, what's interesting about the beginning of this chapter is he doesn't seem to be as focused as he was earlier when he moves away, famine in the land, he goes straight down to Egypt because he knows that there's water down there with the Nile. It's always going to be coming through. They'll be able to grow stuff. It's going to

be safer down there. That was kind of a more pragmatic decision. At this point, it's almost like he's disoriented and discombobulated in the sense that he's not really sure what he's going to do. The reason I say that is, he goes to one place and he goes to another.

If you read the passage, it reads this way,

(Genesis 20:1) “Now Abraham journeyed from there...”

That is to say, from his perch that he had chosen earlier.

“... toward the land of the Negev...”

He's heading south.

“... and settled between Kadesh and Shur...”

Which is actually at the border of Egypt. It was a place where Hagar, when she was running, actually was there in that particular region. So, he's almost in Egypt. I don't want to read too much in it, but I can just see him scratching his head, “I'm not going to make that same mistake again.” So, at that point, he turns. So, that's what's so interesting about the passage.

“... and settled between Kadesh and Shur; then he sojourned in Gerar.”

So, he goes all the way down; he hits the border. It's like he stops, and he goes, "No, I'm not going to go to Egypt." And then he heads north. So, he heads into the land of the Philistines, which is Gerar; in which their king's name, they don't name their king "king," they name their king "Abimelech". "Abimelech" is actually a title. "Ab," is where we get the word, "Abba," is father, so "father-king". That's the title that he's given. So, he comes into this land. What, to me, is telling with God in the text is that God doesn't go into as much detail as He did with the whole Pharaoh thing. He goes to Abimelech; he does the passing off of his wife as a sister again. I mean, he just jumps right into the particular scenario that he had fallen into in Chapter 12 of Genesis.

So, it says, he goes to Gerar, verse 2. All of a sudden, it's like, well, did he visit anybody? Did he talk to anybody? There's none of that.

(Genesis 20:2) "Abraham said of Sarah his wife..."

Now, he's instantly talking to the king. I don't even know how he got in the presence of the king. But God says, "It's

not important. He's doing it again.” And that's the point of what God is wanting to convey within the passage.

“Abraham said of Sarah his wife, “She is my sister.” ...”

Once again, the same thing that he did with Pharaoh in Egypt, because of his fear of Pharaoh. And he tells his wife, “They're going to certainly kill me if in fact they find out.”

Now, an interesting point too, I just want to kind of throw into the mix, is in Chapter 18, the angel came in the household of Abraham and Sarah, and says, “This time next year you'll have a child.” Is she expecting at this moment? I'm not sure. Because when he says this time next year, I think you have three months play period between the nine months, right? This time next year, that's a 12-month period. So, you have three months. And how much time was involved in the whole thing of Sodom and Gomorrah? Probably just a matter of a day or two or weeks. So, she's not yet expecting. Although the promise is ironclad, “This time next year, you're going to have a son.” She's not expecting yet. So, promises have not been fulfilled yet. And so, you're kind of in a state of

vulnerability with that. I'm trying to cut Abraham a little slack. So, there's a lot of disappointment, there's a lot of sorrow, and his promises are not yet realized about his wife having a child. And obviously, her appearance has not been in any way changed because she seems to be so beautiful that these kings want her. And that's hard to believe around 90 years old that you're still looking pretty good. I'm not saying, ladies, you don't look good at 90 or whatever. So, please don't misunderstand me.

So, in the passage, he begins to talk to the king,

(Genesis 20:2) “... So Abimelech king of Gerar...”

Which is the area of the Philistines.

“... sent and took Sarah.”

Why? She's not his wife. So, she's fair game to him, and “You came up to Gerar for some sort of safekeeping, so you're under my care, and because you placed yourself under the auspice of my kingdom, I can do whatever I want to do.” And so, Abraham has literally relinquished his autonomy in some ways and his freedom to do whatever he wants to do.

Verse 3, God begins to intercede once again on behalf of Abraham. Now, He did that in chapter 12 with the Pharaoh; He's doing it again with Abimelech. Once again, it's like, here we go again

(Genesis 20:3) “But God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, “Behold, you are a dead man...””

That's a pretty convincing dream. And at that moment, I'd go, “Why?” Well, He tells him.

“... because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is married.”

Which is something God has to keep reminding Abraham of, “She's your wife, Abraham.”

(Genesis 20:4) “Now Abimelech had not come near her; and he said...”

Which is clearly the Lord's timing; He's not going to let him do something that He doesn't want him to do.

“Now Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, “Lord, will You slay a nation, even though blameless?”

And he's not referring to the fact that they are blameless of all sin, but blameless of this sin.

(Genesis 20:5) “Did he not himself say to me...”

In other words, “Not my fault that he lied.”

“... ‘She is my sister’? And she herself said, ‘He is my brother.’”

She went along with it. Actually, that was the deal. In fact, Abraham's going to bring this up later on, in which he's going to tell Abimelech, “We made a deal. My wife and I made a deal. She said she'd be my sister. I said I'd be her brother. That's what we did.” He goes into explanation, and in some way, rationalization.

But as we go on,

(Genesis 20:4) “Now Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, ‘Lord, will You slay a nation, even though blameless?’”

(Genesis 20:5) Did he not himself say to me, ‘She is my sister’? And she herself said, ‘He is my brother.’ In the integrity of my heart...”

And really, “In the innocence of my heart,” making reference to the fact that “I didn't know.”

“... and the innocence of my hands I have done this.”

“I didn't do this, because if I knew that it was his wife, I wouldn't have done it.”

(Genesis 20:6) “Then God said to him in the dream, “Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and I also kept you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her.”

(Genesis 20:7) Now therefore, restore the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you...”

That's a bizarre thought in the context, because Abraham is really the one that's kind of off base in all of this.

“... he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours.”

So, God has not given him an option within this context.

All of this is to say that by virtue of Abraham trying to deal with things his way, Abraham is the father of faith, but at this juncture, he begins to move away from faith. And the

question is, what happens when I begin to move away from faith? What are the ramifications that come into play? What begins to reveal itself as I begin to move away from faith? Because, you know, I mean, there are times that I try to work things out myself, but what's the big deal? Right? It's not all the time. I mean, Abraham was walking by faith, let's say, 85% of the time. So, what's the big deal of not walking by faith at this time? When you begin to move away from that, what happens?

Well, the first thing that the text really reveals is that immediately when you begin to turn away from faith, you go into the realm of deception. Because the only way that you deal with protection is through deception if you don't have God with you because God controls everything. But you begin to think that you're going to take control. Now, because you don't control everything, now you have to go into deception, which of course, obviously, you're trusting in what is called falsehood. You're trusting in things that you don't control. You're trusting in man that doesn't control these things. So, you lapse into, as the psalmist will tell us when we look at the passage, you lapse into

falsehood. And you begin to make excuses, rationalize, begin to deal with things clearly not on an above-board level.

Then the second thing within the passage that you see is that you begin to cause needless pain to those that you love. Oh, you thought it was just you, right? I mean, you're not walking by faith; how does that hurt anybody else? Well, his wife was dragged into this. His whole family's dragged into this. They're at a place that they shouldn't be, and everybody's in harm's way. If it wasn't for God's interceding, they would have been in big trouble. They've gone to a place of hope. But now, because of the whole deception thing, he's placed everybody in a vulnerable position. And like his wife in Egypt, she now is vulnerable to the desires of a king that is not her husband. It's placing her in great compromise and needless pain that you begin to shower upon other people because of the fact that you decided not to walk by faith. You're going to ultimately end up compromising some way once you stop walking by faith.

And then the third thing that you see within the passages is that it ultimately will bring disrepute and I would say damage to the mission itself. God has called us to a mission, and the mission is... Well, all you have to do is go back to Genesis 12. What's the mission? "You're going to be blessed, and I'm going to make you a blessing." Okay, so I just want you to hear one little phrase, "You're a dead man." Now, does that sound like a blessing has just visited you? "I'm going to wipe out you and your whole family." I'm just not feeling the wonder of all of that. And so, what we're seeing is that the very thing that he should be doing, that is to say, being a messenger of blessing to those around him, is actually the opposite. And I would say, when you start walking in your way, start doing what you want to do, fundamentally, any action that you take, any attitude that you have, any advice that you give that is not of faith, is not only bringing damage to those people that are hearing, but ultimately is doing damage to the message itself. Because they're seeing you as the messenger of the good news. You're the messenger of the good news. You give them bad advice, and they take the advice, then they equate your advice with the message of

the good news. So, it brings disrepute to the message of God. "You're a servant of God, really? Would you come to kill me?" And you begin to realize, "Where did that begin?" Well, it began with a step out of line, moving away from faith.

All the way through Scripture, there are reminders of not moving away, not running away. And once again, it's not a sin necessarily for anybody to move. It's okay to move. But to solve your problems, it's not. And what we see in many of the actions that we take, we go to those actions for the purpose of solving our problems, that we see them as the answer rather than God as the answer.

There's a great passage, if you turn to me in 1 Corinthians 7. And the Corinthians were at a state, they were immature in their faith, specifically. He actually calls them infants. He says, "I wish I could talk to you like adults, but you're just a bunch of infants and you don't understand what I'm saying." But he proves that they're childish by virtue of his, I would say, rebukes throughout the epistle. At first, of course, he deals with the fact that they're arguing with one another, who's the greatest, and who

belongs with what club. You know, "I'm of this person, I'm of that person." And he says, "Grow up. You know, we're not forming little clubs here." And then, of course, they're taking brother to court. They're laughing about sin. They're going into the communion time, gorging themselves, and telling people they can't sit with them, saving seats, not waiting for one another. It's interesting that whole passage in 1 Corinthians 11, when it deals with coming to communion, after he talks about "When you come together, examine yourself," and goes into the details of that, he ends the whole text this way, "Therefore," which is a conclusive statement, "when you come together, wait for one another." The whole passage is, "Wait for one another." In other words, "You have no consideration for anybody. You're just thinking of yourself." And a lot of the Corinthians were going to bars and they go, "What's the big deal?" You know, he says, "Well, you are causing people to stumble even if you don't take a drink." And they go, "So what?" He goes, "You don't want to think about one another?" So, of course, the great theme there in 1 Corinthians 13 is that you want to grow up, you want to walk in love.

By the time you come into 1 Corinthians 7, you're dealing with an issue in which their thought is, "Life isn't the way that we'd like it to be. We've just been saved. We have a new life. But I don't like my husband." So, they were basically asking Paul, "Can I get rid of him?" Or maybe you can get rid of your wife, "She's not a Christian. Can I get rid of her?" So, he says, "No, stay, remain." And you'll see the word "remain" several times.

If you look in 1 Corinthians 7:8.

(1 Corinthians 7:8) "But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I."

If you look in verse 17, continue to walk in a manner that you've been walking.

(1 Corinthians 7:20) "Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called."

(1 Corinthians 7:24) "Brethren, each one is to remain with God..."

I don't know if you're catching the drift, but stay. Don't move. Some of them were Jews, and they go, "Should we become Gentiles?" And some were Gentiles, "Should we

become a Jew?" And he says, "No, stay." So, all the way through, he's encouraging them to remain where they are. Why? Because at this juncture, they would see the change as the thing that saved them. And God is calling us not to look at our own understanding, but in all our ways acknowledging Him and trusting Him with all of our hearts. That's the key, isn't it? And how easy it is to allow these things to come in.

If you've ever done a study of 1 Thessalonians, and some of that was shared within the passage, you can see Paul's great concern for the church at Thessalonica. There's no doubt that he has a great concern for them. But in the first chapter, the second chapter, and the third chapter, he's fundamentally saying, "You guys need help. I need to go. I need to go visit you. I need to come visit you." But God sends Satan to not let him go. He says, "Satan has stopped me from going." God goes, "Well, you know, I'm kind of using him." Just like with Satan buffeting Peter, "He requested, so I said, 'Go ahead.' He needs that, because he needs a little humble pie in order to be in My kingdom." So, all the way through, you see God's hand,

and Paul is fundamentally so frustrated that he has to send out Timothy. He has to send out other people to find out what's going on because he's anxious about this. "I've got to go." And God goes, "Paul, there's a lesson I need to teach you, and that is, I can handle this if you stay there." So, Paul will ultimately come to that conclusion, and he wants the Thessalonians to see his example of wrestling through this, so that they'll come to that conclusion rather than running to debauchery or running to immorality for some sort of relief. Once again, we're all running somewhere, see? So, he says, "The Lord has taught me to stay and to trust in Him, to believe that He's going to do the work." That's hard to do. It's hard to do.

If you look with me in Psalm 40, just a couple of Psalms in closing, that'll give reference to just simply trusting in the Lord. One of the great verses that are found in Chapter 40 of Psalm is this verse 4. Watch the way it reads.

(Psalm 40:4) "How blessed is the man..."

Once again, you could put the word "happy".

"How blessed (happy) is the man who has made the LORD his trust..."

That's such a simple phrase, isn't it? You want to be happy? Trust in the Lord. Don't try to figure it out. Don't try to deal with it your way. Trust in the Lord.

Once again, just to remind you of that passage in Jeremiah 17:5,

“Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind
And makes flesh his strength,
And whose heart turns away from the LORD.”

That's a moving away from faith. Once you turn away from trusting in God and you begin to trust in something else, anything else, it's not going to be good.

One of the statements that David makes in Psalm 116:11,

“I said in my alarm, “All men are liars.””

And his point is that when he finally comes to the end of his rope and he sees that man has an end to their rope, he realizes that they're not the savior that they said they were. And that kind of happens when everybody throws up their hands, and they said, “We did everything we could.” When you hear that, you go, “Okay, now we're done. We're done with what they can do.” Then God

turns and whispers in our ear, “Yeah, but I can raise you from the dead.”

(Psalm 40:4) “How blessed is the man who has made the LORD his trust,
And has not turned to the proud, nor to those who lapse into falsehood.”

Now, once again, his point is that it's easy to go to a greater nation, it's easy to go to greater people and say, “I'll be safe here, or they'll provide something for me that would give me some sort of comfort.” There are a lot of proud people out there that will say that “We can fix this, we can help you,” whatever. Once you begin to hear those kinds of words coming from man, you go, “Okay, this is not true.” But then on top of that, we tend to lapse into falsehood, into trusting in things; once again, perhaps in some cases our escapism, perhaps defense mechanisms, but we have a plan. It doesn't make any sense. You know, I've oftentimes thought about obsessive-compulsive behavior. It doesn't make any sense. You're doing the same thing. You're tapping the... How's that going to help things? But your thought is, and

of course Abraham goes, "I'll do the same thing again. It's going to turn out better." It's not going to turn out better.

When you look at this passage, I think one of the great things that God is revealing, because God didn't tell Abraham to move down; He didn't say, "Go down to Egypt. Oh, nope, go north." He didn't tell him that. But you can see that Abraham's conflicted. You can see that he's dealing with particular issues. The thought is that "I'm going to do the same thing. Maybe the reason why it didn't work out the first time is because I just moved to the wrong place. Maybe if I move to another place, it'll work."

If you go on in this passage,

(Psalm 40:11) "You, O LORD, will not withhold Your compassion from me..."

That's the faith that we have.

"... Your lovingkindness and Your truth will continually preserve me."

What preserves you? God's love. He said, "I would never leave you nor forsake you." Didn't He say that?

(Psalm 40:12) “For evils beyond number have surrounded me;

My iniquities have overtaken me...”

I think there are times in our life where we go, “But I don't deserve His lovingkindness.” And God goes, “Right. But I'm full of lovingkindness. It has nothing to do with your ability to earn it.”

And so, the cry is in verse 13,

(Psalm 40:13) “Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me;
Make haste, O LORD, to help me.”

Actually, what we're seeing within this passage is the solution. What's the solution? Cry to God. Turn to Him.

(Psalm 40:14) “Let those be ashamed and humiliated together

Who seek my life to destroy it;

Let those be turned back and dishonored

Who delight in my hurt.

(Psalm 40:15) Let those be appalled because of their shame

Who say to me, “Aha, aha!”

(Psalm 40:16) Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You;

Let those who love Your salvation say continually,
“The LORD be magnified!””

“I’m trusting in God!” Can you just see that? Wouldn't that have been great to see Abraham at that particular juncture go, “You know what? I'm trusting in God. I'm not going anywhere till He tells me to.” And wouldn't that have been the great blessing as people began to see God then work on behalf of Abraham as they stand back and they watch? “My goodness, look how God does this.” It's the goodness of the Lord.

Isaiah 28:15 says, as the Israelites would declare, “We have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood, we have actually hid ourselves.” Isn't that funny how we feel safe when we lie to ourselves? “I think I've whipped this thing.” Okay, so the blanket that you're hiding under is false.

Psalms 62, in closing, a great passage, as a reminder. And once again, let me say this, that in Psalm 62, what you have is the word, and you might want to circle it, “only”.

So, you're going to trust in God **only**. You're going to wait for Him **only**.

So, it starts off this way,

(Psalm 62:1) “My soul waits in silence for God only;
From Him is my salvation.

(Psalm 62:2) He only is my rock and my salvation,
My stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken.”

There are times that we get a little shaken up, but I would not be greatly shaken.

(Psalm 62:3) “How long will you assail a man,
That you may murder him, all of you,
Like a leaning wall, like a tottering fence?”

In other words, you can't trust in man, and they're just a bunch of hot air, really.

(Psalm 62:4) “They have counseled only to thrust him
down from his high position;
They delight in falsehood;
They bless with their mouth,
But inwardly they curse.

(Psalm 62:5) My soul, wait in silence for God only,
For my hope is from Him.

(Psalm 62:6) He only is my rock and my salvation,
My stronghold; I shall not be shaken.

(Psalm 62:7) On God my salvation and my glory rest;
The rock of my strength, my refuge is in God.

(Psalm 62:8) Trust in Him at all times..."

There's a pretty interesting phrase. That means that you don't compartmentalize your faith; you trust Him for everything.

(Psalm 62:10) "Do not trust in oppression
And do not vainly hope in robbery;
If riches increase, do not set your heart upon them."

"I've got enough money, I think I can pull through."

(Psalm 62:11) "Once God has spoken;
Twice I have heard this: ..."

That would go well for Abraham, wouldn't it? "I told you once and we're going to do this again." That's the reason why we have Deuteronomy. The Book of Deuteronomy just means "say it again." So, God has to say it again.

“... That power belongs to God;

(Psalm 62:12) And lovingkindness is Yours, O Lord,
For You recompense a man according to his work.”

What a great passage and a good reminder.

Let me just kind of say this in closing, and I think one of the great lessons that we see in this, if you belong to God, nothing's going to separate you from His love. You're going to make errors. You're going to make wrong turns. God won't abandon you. And is it possible that even in my sin that God can turn it around for good? Yeah. God can cause all things to work together for good to those who love Him. He knew that Abraham loved Him. Abraham will turn back to Him, put his trust in Him, and ultimately lay his son on the altar; do something that most of us would have a terrible, hard time doing. But he would do that. And what Scripture is revealing to us is God saw his heart. And what He does in this particular passage is He turns it into good because He will ultimately have Abraham pray for this man. This man will see the power of God bring healing to his people because Abraham prayed, and he will become a blessing in spite of himself. I can't begin to

count the many a times where God has made me a blessing in spite of myself; of all the wrong turns that I've taken, and God goes, "Okay, so you're there. Alright we'll bless there." And God begins to use you where you are. But that's why it's so important to those who love Him now and to those who walk according to His purpose now. Today, you can change everything by confessing your sins, by getting right with God. If you confess Him, He is faithful and just to forgive you. He'll cleanse you from all unrighteousness. It's not only a new day, it's a new way in which everything that you did wrong is being turned into good. What an amazing thought that is.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and we give You thanks for lessons learned. And as we see the humanity of

the different ones in the Old Testament, it has never been Your purpose to reveal them as perfect paragons of Scripture, but to reveal to us that You take man in his simplicity and with all his problems. But you see their heart and those You embrace to Yourself and you mold us. In fact, ultimately, You promised to transform us into the image of Your Son. Thank You for not leaving us or abandoning us or discarding us when oftentimes we bring disrepute to Your name and damage to the mission, we cause hurt to those around us, and we find ourselves in deception.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, what we're asking you to do is confess, get right, watch God work in a great way. God still will bless through you. What an amazing promise that is.