

Faithful Living in a Fallen World: A Study in the Life of Abraham

Lesson #3: *Genesis 13:5-18*

“You don’t belong here, do you?”



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If you’re “Southern-Born” and “Southern-Bread” and you’ve taken a trip “up Nawth”, you probably know what it’s like to be “out of your element”, culturally speaking. [*Family trip to Boston (BAHS-tin), stayed w/the Steve LaValley Family . . . Restaurant, “What di youse gies wanna drink? “EYE wooouul liike sum SWAET TAE!” Waiter, “You talk funny. Youse not from dees pahts, are ya’?” low, subtext: “You’re a STRANGER passing through Boston, aren’t you?” low, You don’t belong here! You look / sound OUT*

OF PLACE. AWKWARD. STAND OUT LIKE A SORE THUMB!] On a larger, more spiritual scale, WE DON’T BELONG HERE! The Bible reminds us: In our Journey through this fallen world as it is right now, we don’t belong here and we shouldn’t get too settled into the world’s system.

What is one of the analogies the Bible uses to describe God’s People?

**** We are **PILGRIMS**. **** (cf 1 Peter 2:11; Hebrews 11:13) Also called **SOJOURNERS**, citizens of another country on a temporary stay in the country where we are.

The message from this particular episode in the life of Abraham is this:

**** In this world, we must be **FAITHFUL** to “live out” a **PILGRIM** identity. ** NOT permanent, just passing through this world as it is right now . . . bound for the promised land . . . by God’s grace **CITIZENS** of what the Bible calls “A New Heaven & a New Earth”.**

1. There’s a **NEGATIVE** side to living out a “Pilgrim Identity”.

- In *Vv 10-13*, what does Lot see – and not see? *Lot sees the **ADVANTAGES** (10, security from famine, abundance for Lot’s livestock) but not the **DANGERS** (Vs 13). [Hercules . . . “Smells like \$\$ to me!"] Lot sees the **PERKS** but not the **PERILS** of living in Sodom. Lot buys into the “It’s the economy, stupid” way of looking at life. In your work, what are you focusing on? Are you so focused on the **PERKS** of a possibility of a move or job advancement that you become blind to the **PERILS**? (interviewing . . . What’s **WRONG** w/this church? What does he **NOT** do well?)*

- Our concerns come true in **Genesis 19**. **What does Lot LOSE? FF button, not really, but IF . . . take you to Genesis 19, where you discover Lot's LOSSES. Living in Sodom, Lot lost his MORAL BACKBONE, and Lot loses His FAMILY. & all because of what Lot DIDN'T see in Genesis 13! ["When you really want something, you become SOOOO unobjective!!"] [A man sees an incredibly attractive woman (just freshly divorced from her 4th Husband in 5 years), and makes a bad choice. A woman sees a wealthy, attractive man (known for being unfaithful to his wife – a "serial adulterer", and makes a bad choice "He said I am the SOULMATE he's been looking for all his life!" What we DON'T see can be LETHAL.**
- What do we learn about our own ability to assess our circumstances from the perspective of assuming "I can handle this"? **NOT trying to read Lot's mind. I don't know what Lot was feeling / thinking. About 99.9% of the time, in most every circumstance of life, we CANNOT handle what we think we can. [hitting a golf ball into the back plate-glass window of a house b/c I CANNOT handle a golf club like I thought I could! We THINK we can pay off the \$6K credit card debt we've accumulated in the past 12 months, but we cannot . . .]**
- What does **Proverbs 3:5** tell us NOT to do? A word about "**lean...**". Here are some **questions** to ask when making a decision (especially a lifestyle-changing decision)? **This Vs isn't saying we shouldn't USE our own understanding. It's saying we should not LEAN on OUR OWN understanding! We need to PLEAD w/the Lord for DISCERNMENT & NOT be easily influenced by ECONOMIC factors and PHYSICAL appearances.**

 - Will this opportunity **damage** my marriage? **Some work can work against marriages!**
 - Will it **DISTANCE** me from my family? **"Why is Daddy never home?" ["Cat's in the Cradle"]**
 - Will it **DISRUPT** my worship, at any level? **If your work or whatever is keeping you away from church . . .**
 - Will it **DE -- SENSITIZE** me to sin and evil? **Inspector for a company making car parts . . . economically smart decisions to cut corners on quality and make more \$\$ + commission . . . before you know it. BF writing up commercials w/o client's permission & billing the cilents.**

... but enough of the "DOWNSIDE" of being a Pilgrim. Now on to the "UPSIDE"!

2. There's a **POSITIVE** side to living out a "Pilgrim Identity".

Vv 8-9 and 14-18 indicates we can tell a "pilgrim" by what he/she HAS and what he/she ENJOYS. We're not talking about certain kinds of clothing [Amish Country in PA / super long hair & dresses showing off just too much "ankle"; wearing crosses, putting WWJD or FISH bumper stickers / windows stickers on your car. [Van next door, "How Great Thou Art".]

- A "pilgrim" enjoys the **FREEDOM** of the **PROVIDENCE** of God. (12:7). What does a "pilgrim" say – and really mean it?!? (**Psalm 31:15**) *When you REALLY believe God WILL provide, you will NOT try to manipulate circumstances or people to get what you want.* [2nd Samuel 15, ABSOLOM is trying to overthrow the throne in Jerusalem & David & his people are getting out of Dodge. 2 of David's Priests are trying to take the ARK of the COVENANT w/them. Iow, having God's FURNITURE means having God's FAVOR. David says, "Take the ark back. And let God do w/me as He will." David did not want to try to USE God. He simply rested in the grace of God.] WE rest on the PROMISES of God. We, like Abraham, WILL rest in the LAND God will provide (NH & NE). If you really believe God PROVIDES, then you will be a truly FREE person!
- A "pilgrim" has the **WORD** of the **PROMISES** of God (14-16). What kind of "flavor" do many of the promises of God have? (**Hebrews 11:13**) Many of God's promises to us have a "not yet" flavor. Abraham holds on to EVERY PROMISE of God – even those promises that have NOT YET come to pass!

In what sense, this side of the cross, the open grave, and the ascension of Jesus, does the promises of God still have the "flavor" of the promise made to Abraham? (**cf John 14:2-3**) What keeps us holding on to the promise? We have NOT received that promise, we ARE standing in Abraham's "not yet" sandals; BUT what keeps us holding on to the PROMISE is the CHARACTER of the PROMISE-KEEPER, "if it were not so . . ."! Unlike many politicians these days, Jesus DELIVERS on EVERY PROMISE He makes!

- A "pilgrim" enjoys a **FORETASTE** of the goodness of God (Vs 17). How might this help us to enjoy The Lord's Supper in a different way? (**Matthew 8:11; Revelation 19**). [*This pimento cheese is going to be good! How do I know? Carol gave me a small sample to try! It's only a taste, but the taste tells me there's*

more to come!] Samples of food NOW hint @ a MEAL yet to come. WHEN WE CELEBRATE THE LORD'S SUPPER, it's NOT yet the feast of Matthew 8 where Jesus says "MANY will come from the East & west & recline @ the table w/A, I, & J." TLS is NOT the marriage supper of the Lamb in Revelation 19. But TLS is a FORETASTE, an appetizer of what is to come. We PRIZE the APPETIZER & look forward to the FEAST of the FUTURE

- A "pilgrim" enjoys the **PRIVILEGE** of **WORSHIP** (Vs 18). Remember the basis of His Worship and the implication of this worship to US! How is reciting the Apostle's Creed an act of defiance? What about when we join together in saying The Lord's Prayer?

We APPROACH God in worship b/c of the ALTAR, which points to an ATONING SACRIFICE, which points us to JESUS' SACRIFICE on the cross! DON'T MISS THIS!! A person who has the PROMISE of the Gospel is a person who consistently & openly WORSHIPS, w/o shame, fear, or embarrassment.

Saying THE APOSTLE'S CREED is an act of DEFIANCE. Friends, the CHRIST you CONFESS is the Christ REJECTED by the WORLD. When we confess our common Faith by using TAC, We're sticking our jaw out & saying, "No matter WHAT you say, I acknowledge THIS Christ . . . born of the Virgin Mary, crucified, dead, buried, ascended, sitted @ the right hand of God the Father, in a place of ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY, and coming back to judge the quick & the dead! So THERE!!!

When it comes to THE LORD'S PRAYER, we're claiming each petition, ". . . lead us not . . ." Keep me from being dominated & deceived by the evil one. Keep me from a "Lot" perspective of life, looking only @ what is superficial. Help me to see the "HOOK" and NOT just the "BAIT" (Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*).

**** "Pilgrim People must be careful to REMAIN pilgrims. HOW? By distrusting APPEARANCES (focus NOT on the BAIT but instead focus on the HOOK) and by holding on to the PROMISES of God. ****