

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
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Abraham Pleads for God's Mercy Regarding Sodom

Genesis 18:16-32

August 18, 2019

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I have two points in my message today:

- Abraham pleaded for God's mercy regarding Sodom.
- May we plead for God's mercy like Abraham did.

INTRODUCTION: Abraham was a man who was called by God to take a journey to a new place. He packed up everything he had and went. Along with him, was his wife and all their belongings, including livestock and servants. His nephew Lot went too, along with his wife and all their belongings, including livestock and servants.

They went through Canaan land and continued south. Abraham needed food and water so he made a long detour and went to Egypt. There, he lied about his wife to protect his own hide. Things didn't go so well for him and the Pharaoh sent him away. All the while Abraham's and Lot's estates grew until they reached a point where their servants quarreled. They went their separate ways because the land could not support both of their large estates.

Lot settled near Sodom and Abraham settled in Canaan. Sodom was overtaken by enemies and Abraham and his men engaged in the first recorded war in the Bible. They overcame the enemies and rescued Lot and his estate.

On their way home, they were blessed by Melchizedek, an unusual man in the scripture. He represents those outside the narrative of the family of faith who were included as God's children.

Later, God reiterated and reinforced his covenant with Abraham. And last week we studied three visitors who came to tell him that in a year he would be a father.

And now the scripture turns toward Sodom. Abraham had only seen God do good things, but from this passage of scripture – if we read between the lines – we see that Abraham reasoned that if God's mercy was so great, then his judgement must be equally as great. Abraham knew the worst possible thing in the universe was the wrath of God. You see, by now Abraham's faith had grown to the point where he saw God in a more mature, way.

We know that Lot had become a resident of Sodom.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 18:16-21

When the men got up to leave, [that is, the men who came to visit Abraham to tell him he would be a father. They were simply referenced as ‘the Lord’.] they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way. ¹⁷ Then the LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? ¹⁸ Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. ¹⁹ For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.”

²⁰ Then the LORD said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous ²¹ that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know.”

ABRAHAM PLEADED FOR GOD’S MERCY REGARDING SODOM

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 18:22-26

The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. ²³ Then Abraham approached him and said: “Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? ²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

²⁶ The LORD said, “If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.”

Then Abraham starts negotiating:

“What if there are 5 less than 50 righteous people?”

God lowers the number to 45.

“What if only 40 are righteous?”

God lowers the number of 40.

“What if there are only 30.”

God lowers the number to 30.

What about 20?

What about 10?

Verse 32: *“For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.”*

Abraham knew the city was wicked. He had encountered their king earlier in chapter 14 after he had rescued Lot from the enemies of Sodom. The king tried to repay him.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 14:21-23

The king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the people and keep the goods for yourself.”

²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “With raised hand I have sworn an oath to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, ²³ that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the strap of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, ‘I made Abram rich.’”

Abraham knew the king was a disgusting individual. He knew the people of Sodom were wicked. Yet he pled for them anyway.

MAY WE PLEAD FOR GOD’S MERCY LIKE ABRAHAM DID

EXPLANATION: Genesis is the book of firsts. This is the first story of a person being burdened for another people group. We have this as a repeating theme throughout the Bible, too many to even name.

Jonah, the reluctant prophet, preached the message of repentance to the people of Ninevah, and as we know, the people repented and Jonah got mad. He didn’t think they would repent, but they did and he got mad.

And remember, in Luke 19, Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem.

APPLICATION: Now, we know Jesus is going to return someday. The Bible is very clear about that. A friend of mine said something I'd never thought of before: since we know Jesus is going to return, let's ask God to delay the return of Christ so more people can be saved. I had never thought of that before.

“Lord, please, can you put it off so my cousin can be saved?” “Lord can you please delay so that 50 can be saved?” “How about 20?” “How about 10?”

Listen: when Christ returns, that's it. We've never considered that.

Abraham knew the worst thing that could happen was to face the wrath of God. Instead of looking at a lost, decrepit, reprobate, degenerate world with the thought of, “They can just go to hell,” how about we plead that God will spare them so hopefully they will repent?

How about we plead that God gives us the courage to share the gospel so that no one will die and go to hell and meet the wrath of God?

When was the last time you went to God and pled for your family? We see that each time Abraham negotiated with God, God granted his request.

Lord, would help me win 50 people to you? 45? 30? 20? 10? Would you please delay your return until all of my family have heard the Gospel? We've never thought like that before, have we?

May we be as passionate as Abraham was for the souls of people.

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I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

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Sincerely, Paul Gunn
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