

Devotional Thoughts :: Abraham, My Friend_46

Abraham, My Friend_46 - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/11/23 6:28

Abraham, My Friend
The Making of a Praying Man_46

Righteous Lot?

Today we will meditate on the walk of Abraham by contrasting him with his nephew. In writing the above title I was reminded of the story of a funeral. The deceased was a notorious character but the eulogies were flowing tributes to the sterling qualities of the dead man. "Go and take a quick look in that coffin" said the widow to her youngest son "we may be at the wrong funeral". I hope you won't think this too frivolous but it is my usual initial reaction on reading Peter's little eulogy to Lot; **and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter; and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds),** (2 Pe 2:6-8 NASB) So far in our meditations Lot has not enjoyed a very good 'press', and there is worse to come. And yet we have the divinely inspired comment that Lot was a **righteous man**. How can these things be?

Lot, as we recall, was the nephew of Abraham but also his contemporary being the son of Haran. Many of the earliest Rabbinical and Christian commentators equated Sarah with Iscah of Ge 11:29 who is described as the daughter of Haran. This would mean that Haran was considerably older than Abraham as we know that Abraham was only 10 years older than Sarah. Sarah is described as Terah's daughter in Ge 20:12, but this could as easily mean grand-daughter in the usage of the day. This would make Sarah and Lot brother and sister. So Abraham may have been doubly bonded to Lot who was both nephew and brother-in-law. Bible relationships are not quite so precise as our English translations might suggest. Our unit is the Nuclear Family theirs was the Extended Family.

Lot seems to have been 'easily led'. He was taken to the city of Haran initially by Terah **And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.** (Gen 11:31 ASV) Later he accompanied Abraham as they left the city of Haran; **So Abram went, as Jehovah had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.** (Gen 12:4 ASV) Notice the way this is expressed; it is pregnant with significance. The LORD had not spoken to Lot, but had spoken to Abraham; Lot was easily led. The danger in following another's 'word from God' is that when the trials come the 'follower' has no internal conviction to sustain him. He is plagued with 'what ifs'. What if I hadn't gone... What if I just do this instead... I have sometimes wondered whether this was part of the difficulty with John Mark's early steps; **So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus. When they reached Salamis, they began to proclaim the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; and they also had John as their helper.** (Act 13:4-5 NASB) Barnabas and Paul were expressly 'despatched by the Holy Spirit' but no such statement is made of John Mark's inclusion on the trip.

As Abraham's story unfolds so does Lot's; **And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.** (Gen 13:1 KJV) It is not wrong to honour God's servants and to learn from their lives but we must come to a place where it is no longer 'and Lot'. The man had become a 'p.s.' to Abraham's life. The writer to the Hebrews makes an important and distinct comment when speaking of our exemplars; **Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.** (Heb 13:7-8 NASB) It is not their route that we are to 'follow' but their faith.

Lot followed Abraham down into Egypt in what we described as a low point in Abraham's pilgrimage, and followed him out again. It may have appeared that Abraham and Lot 'got away' with this diversion from the main route, but there were after-effects. It seems most likely that Abraham's after-effect was a little Egyptian made for Sarah; her name was Hagar. The after-effects for Lot show through in another area. God blessed both men and their herds increased to such

an extent that their servants began to quarrel over pasture land. Abraham's generous instinct is to allow Lot to choose which pasture suited him best. The narrative is chilling. **And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.** (Gen 13:10 KJV) The feature that attracted Lot to this Jordan plain with its cities of Sodom and Gomorrah was that it was **like Egypt**. It is easier to get a man out of Egypt than to get Egypt out of a man. Something had entered in Lot's chamber of images; what he had set his heart on was a little bit of Egypt. And this is the essence of all compromise, just a little bit of Egypt.

The slide is on. **Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the Plain, and moved his tent as far as Sodom.** (Gen 13:12 ASV) During the later wilderness years Israel dwelled in tents. Each tent door faced towards God's tent, the Tabernacle. The first thing they saw when they opened up in the morning was the Tabernacle with its pillar of cloud; **For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.** (Exo 40:38 KJV) When Lot opened up his tent each morning the first thing he saw was Sodom. What does your tent open out onto? What is the first thing... the TV, the radio alarm, the newspaper, the world with all its busyness or a consciousness of the Presence of God? It is impossible to start the day looking at Sodom without being affected by it. Sara Groves has a song with the lines...

In the morning when I rise • Help me to prioritize • All the thoughts that fill my day • Before my schedule • Tells me that my day is full • Before I'm off and on my way • • I want to praise you • I need to praise you • Let the first song that I sing • Be praises to my God and king • • Before the curtains part • Before my day is starting • Before I make up the bed • Before the snooze alarm • Reminds me that it's morning • Before the dreams have left my head • • I want to praise you • I need to praise you • Let the first song that I sing • Be praises to my God and king... That's a 21st century version of 'facing your tent towards the Tabernacle'.

By the time we get to Genesis 19 Lot is 'sitting in the gate of Sodom'. In Eastern cities the 'city gate' is the market, the seat of justice, of social intercourse and amusement, especially a favourite lounge in the evenings, the arched roof affording a pleasant shade. Lot is no stranger here; he is 'at home' in Sodom. And yet Peter describes him as 'righteous Lot' and says **And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)** (2Pe 2:7-8 KJV) The KJV uses the word 'vex' twice but there are different Greek words behind the English ones. The first word means 'to wear something down' and the second means 'tormented'. Lot was 'worn down' with the way of life of the people of Sodom and tormented by their behaviour. The next question is an obvious one; why stay? Because this is the nature of compromise... just a little bit of Egypt. There is nothing so permanent as a short term compromise. **I went by the field of a slacker and by the vineyard of a man lacking sense. Thistles had come up everywhere, weeds covered the ground, and the stone wall was ruined. I saw, and took it to heart; I looked, and received instruction: a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the arms to rest, and your poverty will come like a robber, your need, like a bandit.** (Pro 24:30-34 HCSB) Oh that we might 'see' and 'take it to heart'.

When the judgements were about to descend on Sodom we hear the prayer of the compromiser again; **And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the Plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my lord: behold now, thy servant hath found favor in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy lovingkindness, which thou hast showed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest evil overtake me, and I die: behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one. Oh let me escape thither (is it not a little one?), and my soul shall live.** (Gen 19:17-20 ASV)

His compromise ultimately dragged him into incest and the fathering of two of Israel's abiding enemies; the Moabites and the Ammonites. (Gen 19:30ff) But was he 'saved' asks the evangelical? **Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.** (2Ti 2:19 KJV) He was 'righteous' says Peter. I don't know whether or not his 'soul' was saved, but I do know that his 'life' was wasted. I see that even when judgement came God demonstrated His integrity. Abraham had asked **That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?** (Gen 18:25 KJV) But He did so not by sparing the unrighteous but by delivering the righteous. **The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:** (2Pe 2:9 KJV) Shall we see Lot one day? The Lord 'knoweth' but if we do, he will not be the only prodigal in that great throng.

Re: Abraham, My Friend_46 - posted by RobertW (), on: 2004/11/23 9:59

Hi Bro. Ron,

This latest entry is practically a revival sermon!

Quote:

-----Something had entered in Lot's chamber of images; what he had set his heart on was a little bit of Egypt. And this is the essence of all compromise, just a little bit of Egypt.

A little bit of Egypt will destroy nearly all desire for a genuine revival of holiness.

Quote:

-----When Lot opened up his tent each morning the first thing he saw was Sodom. What does your tent open out onto? What is the first thing... the TV, the radio alarm, the newspaper, the world with all its busyness or a consciousness of the Presence of God? It is impossible to start the day looking at Sodom without being affected by it.

This is a classic statement and I will be using it I'm sure. ;-)

Quote:

-----That's a 21st century version of 'facing your tent towards the Tabernacle'.

Sermon title:

FACE YOUR TENTS TOWARD THE TABERNACLE

For it is time to seek the Lord...

Quote:

-----and yet Peter describes him as 'righteous Lot' and says And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) (2Pe 2:7-8 KJV) The KJV uses the word 'vex' twice but there are different Greek words behind the English ones. The first word means 'to wear something down' and the second means 'tormented'. Lot was 'worn down' with the way of life of the people of Sodom and tormented by their behaviour.

Lot was worn down by his compromise. Worn down how? I would suggest that it wears down our zeal and love for the Lord. We leave the love we had at first because we give that love to 'Egypt.' On the other hand there was something about Sodom that made him want to be there or else he would have packed up and left; but the same thing that pleased his 'flesh' wore him down and tormented him spiritually.

Awesome message brother!

God Bless,

-Robert

Sunday PM Service - posted by RobertW (), on: 2004/11/29 12:00

Wanted to give an update on the sermon the Lord gave me that utilized portions of this Abraham My Friend entry. The sermon was titled Turn Thy Tent Toward The Tabernacle . Bro. Ron had given permission to use excerpts and the Lord really blessed. Many came in around the altars and cried out to the Lord. One of our youth rededicated her life to God and one of the elders informed me they had laid down something in their life that was a hindrance to their relationship with God. Many other I did not get to speak to. I want to thank God for Bro. Ron and the work he did and is doing with our youth and adults.

God Bless,

-Robert

Re: Sunday PM Service - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/11/29 12:04

Quote:
-----Bro. Ron had given permission to use excerpts and the Lord really blessed. Many came in around the altars and cried out to the Lord. One of our youth rededicated her life to God and one of the elders informed me they had laid down something in their life that was a hindrance to their relationship with God. Many other I did not get to speak to. I want to thank God for Bro. Ron and the work he did and is doing with our youth and adults.

Praise God that's wonderful to hear! There seems to be much meat to glean from Brother Ron's contributions in the Abraham series, I know it's being used to effect this world for Christ.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/11/29 13:22

Thanks Robert.
This is thrilling isn't it; to be part of the Church of Christ?

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2004/11/29 13:37

Quote:
-----This is thrilling isn't it to be part of the Church of Christ?

I marvel at how God could bring His people together and effect multitudes for His glory from so far away. It was an awesome meeting. One of the most powerful I have ever ministered in. The thrilling thing is that it was geared toward the youth and nearly all of them were in the altar. I may be able to get the audio portion of it together. I had 9 pages of handwritten notes that I went through in about 20 minutes. The rest of the service was an altar meeting. To God be the glory!

God Bless,

-Robert