

Dickering with God  
Genesis 18:20-33  
July 24, 2022

If you were to give me a synopsis, a statement or two on what is going on here, what would you say? You might say that Sodom and Gomorrah were cesspool cities that the three who came to see Abraham were going down to destroy but Abraham thought they were worth saving if just a few, 50, 45, 40, 30, 20, or even ten were still believers. Yes, that is the situation. That is what most people would come up with. The question is, why should Abraham even care?

Oh, yes, his nephew chose those cities, that area, to settle, to live out his life. He got the cities, Abraham got the hill country. Now, Abraham has just been visited by these three men. He is probably wondering about he and Sarah's life together and now, it looks like his nephew, the one who came with him, in a call by God was about to be wiped out by God.

Could it really be that bad that an outcry comes to God so that He would choose to wipe it off the face of the earth? Abraham had always thought to look to the good out there. Yes, there was evil but Abraham knew he had been blessed so much and with the recent news of a son to come, how could he not think of something good for the whole world?

So what was going on in Abraham's mind? We don't know other than to put ourselves in his shoes? What does he know? He knows how the Lord has dealt with him in the past. No, he hasn't been perfect either. He has sinned and deserved the judgement of God just as we all do. Not that the fact that we have all sinned is no big deal because it is. Abraham knew that and for others to have to undergo the wrath of God while he enjoys the favor of the all mighty, all powerful, all knowing God, why shouldn't they get the same treatment from the God he loves and who loves him so much?

We think of what Abraham must have gone through and we know, we might have been acting the same way or at least hope we would have instead of saying, go ahead, they deserve it, they have fallen so far, there is no way to bring them back, any way. Get them out of here before they pollute some other young minds and hearts.

Had Abraham heard about what was going on down in the plain? In those days, he couldn't just pick up the phone and call down to Lot to see how things were going. They didn't even have the pony express as far as I know. No, I think he knew it was bad but how bad, maybe, 50, 45, 40, 30, 20 or 10 might still remain.

So, Abraham confronts God, in a good way, making it sound like he is being polite to the Lord, supposing there were some that are still faithful. He speaks to the God he knows, the God who is merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and is as he said, just.

He starts at 50 and makes his way to 10. We might ask, why not go to just the family of Lot, his wife and two daughters and possibly two fiancés, 6 in all but he stops at 10, small but not yet quite as far as the family that entered the ark and were saved, 8 total.

He leaves it at 10 as the LORD went His way, as the two have gone down to the cities where we all know what happened there. He leaves Abraham to go his way, returning to his encampment, to see if what was promised will come to pass or not. No doubt he was wondering if the cities would be destroyed or not but now it was in the Lord's hands, he would have to just wait to see how it would turn out.

Abraham said he was just dust and ashes, knowing that compared to God and being in the position to ask of the Lord, he had not real standing in this situation, a creature before his creator but Abraham was picked by God to be the father of a great nation, the chosen people of God.

There wasn't anything in the people of Israel that God should have chosen them to be the people of God. They hadn't done anything spectacular to be the line from which God Himself would come to the world to save, not only His people but save the whole world. No, it was all God and as Abraham went down the numbers, he was acknowledging it was God's job to judge and to remove people from the face of the earth if HE thought it was needed.

We tend to look at this passage and what comes after as a gauge to what is going on in our day and time. We look around us today and see how prevalent homosexuality, the woke movement that pits one people against another all based on their particular amount of melanin in their skin or support of those who have a certain amount. So many want to live their lives as if God doesn't really care and as long as it makes me happy, at the moment, it must be good for me.

It is no different than it has always been. It started with our first parents, they thought by taking from that tree, they would fulfill something for themselves, give them something that the Lord who created them might just have forgotten to give them, something that would make life better. The trouble is, that same thought has gone through everyone since they lived. Sin is that thing that we think, is going to make things better for us, even though we have the Lord telling us it will not, even if it may seem like it, as we take that tasty bite.

We all have fallen into that trap but we are now wondering how bad it is going to have to get before God sends three men into our camp? Things are bad, but how bad will it have to be before the Lord causes a change in our lives? We not only think of how the Lord should deal with us but what about this nation that the Lord has blessed so much over almost 250 years of its existence.

Have you ever wondered if those cities would have had someone years earlier, looking to the Lord begin to pray and ask the Lord what they could do? We wonder what it was like when Lot first set down his roots there. What did he see wrong with what was going on there? Did he just bury his head in the sand or did he speak up even if it meant that he was just labeled an outsider who didn't have a voice in the city.

There is so much we don't know about the day to day in the lives of those we read about. We have to take what we have been given and apply it to today. What is going on in your lives? Where is sin, either in you or in others raising its ugly head? Now that you recognize it in others, what do you think the Lord wants you to do about it? Do you confront it with a dose of humbleness or have you tried the subtle route for awhile and it is not working but now you are looking to ratchet it up a little?

If you care about yourself or especially others, you want to do all you can to bring up the fact that this life is short and to look only at yourself, gauging your goodness on your own works is not how things work. They need to learn that all have fallen short of the glory of God. They and we are all sinners in need of rescue. Note, I said rescue. They can't save themselves even if they think that they can do good enough, they think surely they are better at this thing than a majority of others out there. They just look round how bad others are, but not looking to self and how they are part of the problem.

Abraham knew it was bad out there but wanted to rescue those who still believed as he knew sometimes believers can die in their belief. He didn't want them to die. He sucked it up and went to the Lord, dickering with Him as to how He might let those cities stand. He started with 50 as a good group to start a believers group to go out to others with the Word.

10 left still would have homes and jobs and businesses where they could still influence the city even if that would be a tall order for anyone but less than that, how could it ever happen?

We have more than that. We have more than 10 here today. we have more than 50 here so how are we going to proceed? I guess we could start by talking to Jesus about it all. He knows who we are thinking about and what they are thinking about. The Holy Spirit can set things up for us so that they are ready to listen or to be moved to the next stage where they are closer to the day of harvest or closer to the day they will have to face Jesus, face to face to learn of their fate for their unbelief.

Ours is not to think that we are alone in this. No, the Lord provides opportunities for us and others to tell His story of salvation for all who know they are sinners. They need to know that first or the Gospel means nothing. If they don't know they are sinners then they are going to live either thinking they are good enough not to need a Savior or they are doing just fine and everyone knows the Lord loves people and what isn't there to love in their smiling face?

Somehow you are going to have to get through to them that they aren't good enough, none of us are. No, all, like those in those cities deserve to die. We all DESERVE to be taken out of this life and not destined to heaven but hell. There is no grading on a curve.

Once they know that they aren't good enough then and only then they need to hear of a way out of their horrible destination. That, as you know can only be had by the Son, born of a woman who came from Abraham and the line of his grandson, Judah.

Like the one guy told me before he died only being a Christian for a short time, "I don't know much about the Bible". I don't know if he knew this account of Abraham and the Lord today's lesson or not but what I do know, it didn't stop him from telling another older guy about his faith in Jesus to where he too looked to the Lord before he died.

Do you care about others in your life? How much? Are you willing to go to the Lord for those that are on the bad side of life? What would you do, if you knew that in the next week they were going to be taken out by God?

You don't know when they will die or when you will. Many will say they don't want to know when they will die but we need to realize that that question should be on our hearts and minds every day as we look at those people in the eye, are they believers or are they headed to hell, fire and brimstone like those two cities found themselves dealing with in the next couple of days.

Jesus knew how long He was going to be on this earth. He dealt with so many as He showed who He was with word and action. He provided the classes for us in and through His Word. We have been learning, for most of us our whole lives. We are still here so what is stopping us from letting others know, before it is too late that we care about them, so much that we will take time to get to know them, tell them of how the evil in the world doesn't just exist out there but in here as well. Once we get that across then we have the answer, and it is found in Jesus alone.

What they do with that? It is not up to you. Yes, you can love them the way the Lord does, all the way to the grave. They may listen and that would be great, but they may not listen or think they don't need Jesus. Will the acknowledgement of their sin bring them around or will it just get them to thinking that it is their life, that is the way it is, so I guess I will just have to deal with whatever comes my way.

The thing of it is, they don't have to stay the way they are. They can be made better by the Holy Spirit because of Jesus. They can be made better to enjoy this life even better, even if there may be challenges. It will be a life of overcoming this world, which is a great lift for this life and especially for the life to come.