

Fishin' for Ambition

The Gospel According to Abraham, Pt. 2

We're looking at the life of Abraham in the book of Genesis. Abraham is a model of what it means to be a Christian because he lives his life on the basis of a call. And last week we saw Abram was called by God to go to Canaan and wait there for God to bless him. Now, it's always good from time to time to revisit foundational principles of faith. You see this all throughout church history. Humankind has an amazing ability to make Christianity about all kinds of things that it's not. And so every now and again we have to go back to ground zero.

For instance, in this cultural moment, everybody wants to put people – or churches or organizations – somewhere on the liberal to conservative spectrum. You know, you have the left here and the right there and everything in the middle. And everybody wants so very much to put everything somewhere on spectrum. We want to know where you really stand on things and where you fit. There are debates about whether your preferred beer is “woke” or “fascist”!

Now, in this moment, we certainly have our political categories *de jour*. But overall this is not new in human history. We have an almost ingrained need to categorize people. We need to know which camp you

are in so we know what your identity is in relation to our identify. So at the one end, you might say, of the human culture spectrum, the most traditional societies, the most conservative societies, your identity is fixed by your duty in your social and family role. Many of you are either from those kinds of cultures or your parents were, and you know what I'm talking about.

What makes you a good person is if you *fulfill your duty*...as a father or as a mother or as a husband, as a wife, as a son or a daughter. You're a good person if you take up your duty and you fulfill it well. And so in a sense, duty defines you. Your social role defines you. That's who you are. At the other end of the spectrum, at the most liberal, at the most secular, at the most individualistic end of the spectrum - in other words, Austin! - you define yourself.

You decide who you are. You look at your own desires, and you say, “This is who I am, and this is what I need to do to be happy.” So, you see, at the sort of conservative end, it's *duty* that defines you, and your role in the family and the society defines you. At the liberal end of the spectrum, it's *you* who defines *yourself*. You construct your own identity, and you determine who you are.

Now, where is Christianity in there? Where is the Christian on that spectrum? And of course, your answer is influenced by your place on the spectrum. And I understand there are cultural religions that are “Christian” by name, but I’m talking about Bible-based, Jesus-following Christians. And in liberal societies, these Christians are disdained as uptight people who have all these rigid duties. You’ll likely be familiar with that view.

But I have to tell you, I have been in very totalitarian, traditionally conservative cultures and nations, and in those places they think these same Christians are incredibly liberal. I mean, you have to realize when the church finds itself in a capitalistic, individualistic society it is prophetically calling people not to live for themselves. But when the church finds itself in a totalitarian or a communist or just a dictatorship it’s always calling the government to stop trampling on the individual freedom.

Where is Christianity? People on one end think it’s over here, and people on this end think it’s over there, but it’s not on the spectrum *because* the Bible says, Christianity says, what defines you is the call of God. God has called you. God has gifted you. God is speaking to you. There’s a *call* that comes to you.

And on the one hand, as we’re going to see, that means you don’t really fit into traditional society. The call of God makes you *leave* your family, makes you think *outside* the box of your culture. But on the other hand, the call of God means you are *not* your own. You do *not* construct your own identity. Where is the call of God as the main factor in your identity, the main thing that shapes your life? Where is that on the liberal-to-conservative spectrum? It’s not there. It’s not on the spectrum. It’s somewhere else.

And that’s the reason why the church and Christianity are always seen as dangerous in *every* culture they’re in. It’s weird. It’s odd. It doesn’t fit. It’s not predictable. And that’s why we’re looking at Abraham, because of *all* the people in the Bible who we know much about - I mean, you have David and Moses and so on - Abraham is the one for whom the call keeps showing up. We’re going to see it in our passage for today.

If you were here last week, you saw the call at the beginning of chapter 12. It’s what brings Abram away from his family, away from his culture, away from his tribe, into Canaan. But this morning we’re going to see the call comes again in chapter 13. In fact, in chapters 12 to 25, in the life of Abraham, this call from God comes back to him *twelve* times.

It's, in a way, the same call, but it always has something new to it. It always has more detail or more insight, or certain aspects are emphasized. Sometimes the *challenge* part of the call is emphasized - what *he* has to do. Sometimes the *promise* part of the call is emphasized - what *God* is going to do - which is what we have this morning.

It keeps coming. It's the thing that distinctively shapes you. Who are you called to be? What are you called to do? It's multi-faceted, but we're going to be looking at this each week actually. We can't get to the bottom of this subject in one sermon or two sermons. That's why we're spending several weeks looking at the life of Abraham.

So let's just jump into our text for today. **Genesis 13:2–17**, *“Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold. 3 From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier 4 and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the LORD. 5 Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. 6 But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together.*

7 And quarreling arose between Abram's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time. 8 So Abram said to Lot, “Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers. 9 Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left.”

10 Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) 11 So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company: 12 Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom.

13 Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD. 14 The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, “Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. 15 All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. 16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. 17 Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.”

Now, this particular chapter in the life of Abraham tells us about three ambitious men. And when we come to understand the ambitions of these three men, we'll understand the call of God better - what it means to live according to the call of God. We have the ambition of Lot. We then have the ambition of Abram. Then we have the ambition of...somebody else. If you've been around here long, don't spoil it for the newbies!

Number one, let's look at The Ambition of Lot. V. 5-7, *“Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together. And quarreling arose between Abram's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot.”*

Lot was Abram's nephew, and Lot had set out with Abram. And we notice something here, which is when nomadic people get wealthy, their bank accounts don't get bigger. What happens, of course, is they get more and more livestock. By the way, this is a much less *convenient* way to get rich, but your livestock, your herds, and your tents grew. You had to hire more people to watch them and so on.

And as Abram and Lot began to grow, they came to the place, it says in verse 6, where they came to realize their financial growth had maxed out at the land God called Abram to live on - the arid land of Canaan. That the two of them could not both get richer by staying together in the place where God had called Abram to go.

Now Abram gives Lot a choice, and we're going to get back to the fact that this is a rather remarkable thing that Abram does. But for the moment, we're just looking at Lot and what he does. And Abram puts a choice before Lot, and he says, “Lot, you can go to the left or the right.” Now, if you go to that part of Canaan, there's a mountain where the land drops 3,000 feet down to the plain where the Jordan River comes down into what we now call the Dead Sea.

And we're told in v. 10, that Lot looked “...*and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered...*” Even today, that area of Israel is green, and it's fertile. It's watered. In fact, it was also irrigated back then. So Lot said, “That's where I'm going to go,” because it was the only place where he could continue to get richer – increase his portfolio of livestock.

Now, the text says the people in that region were very wicked and always sinning – that’s going to cause Lot great difficulty in his life – but he didn’t know that. Didn’t take time to find out, because Lot was kind of shallow, just went by what looked good to his eye. So he picked the good land with the evil inhabitants because he says, “Here’s the one place I can go to get wealthy.” And that’s what he chooses.

He is an ambitious man. We can see why he is ambitious. Money and financial prosperity are more important to him than two things. First of all, it’s more important to him than sticking with the promise of God – because Sodom lay outside the region where God had called Abram to go, outside of Canaan. Some of that fertile land was still in Canaan, but he was going to pass over clear into Sodom country.

Now admittedly, God’s promise looks silly. God says to Abram, “I want you to leave civilization. I want you to leave the possibility of living in really fertile places. I want you to go to this middle-of-nowhere, primitive place called Canaan. And I want you to sit there and wait, and I’ll bless you *eventually*.”

Lot is the last member of his family to go with Abram on this crazy mission and now he has finally bailed out, because he says, “Look, you know, I was with Abram. I love Uncle Abe. He is a great guy and all this. But you know, when it comes right down to it, listen, business is

business.” So he puts financial growth, material gain, ahead of his relationship to the promise of God.

Now, in itself, is it wrong to want to make money? Is it wrong to want to just grow financially? And the answer is, it’s not, but verse 10 tells us there’s more going on here. This is very interesting. Look at it again, (v.10) it says, “*Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered like the garden of the Lord...*”

Now the commentators will tell you that this is not just a little rhetorical flourish. The garden of the Lord is the garden of Eden. Not that it was the same *physical* place, but he’s saying it was “like Eden”. And what the text is saying is, when Lot looked, he didn’t just see a way to get rich, a way to make more money. But there was something spiritual going on, and he was saying, “Now, finally...it’s like the garden of the Lord.” What’s going on here?

Well, it’s all explained beautiful in the new Barbie movie. I bet you didn’t see that analogy coming in church! Our family went to see it this week and I really liked it. It’s very entertaining, but it’s also very provocative intellectually. Everyone is arguing about what it means. In fact, I read blistering critiques of the film from both ends of that political spectrum as I was talking about – which makes me think it may be ok.

But in the film, the Barbies live in a utopian Barbie World where the matriarchy has replaced the patriarchy. Barbie is not defined by her relationship to a man, in fact it's the Ken's who are the bimbos in this world – their only identify is found in their nebulous relationships as “the boyfriend”. No, Barbie doesn't need a man to have an identify. What she needs...is material possessions – the pinker the better - and political and vocational agency.

But the antagonist of the film, Margot Robbie's “Stereotype Barbie”, is beginning to sense some cracks in the utopia. At one point she interrupts a dance party to make all of her peers uncomfortable, by blurting out, “Do you guys ever thing about dying?” She's having a existential crisis. “Who am I? I mean, I've moved past having to have a boyfriend in order to identify myself, which is progress. But is having a pink dream house and a seat on the Supreme Court, really that secure an identity in a reality where death exists?”

The movie offers a brilliant contrast between Barbie World and – our – Regular World. And I found it to be very subversive commentary on human identity. We don't know who we are. We don't know what we're worth. We don't know what we're made for. No matter our material or relational achievements, we have deep spiritual insecurity.

And all of this is tied to v.10, “the garden of the Lord.” You see, at the beginning of Genesis, in the garden of Eden, in the garden of the Lord, we knew who we were. We knew we had value. We knew what we were worth, because in the garden of the Lord, we were walking with God. But we've *lost* that. And the human condition is we do not know who we are, we do not know what we're worth, and we're trying to get back into the garden.

We're trying to say, “If I had *that*...if I was married to *him* or to *her*...if I had this kind of career...if I made this kind of money, *then* my life would be a garden again. Then things would be all right. Then that inner emptiness and that inner desert would be gone.” There's more going on than money. There's more going on than our career. There's more going on than having a child. There's more going on than being in love. There's more going on!

And Lot, therefore, is actually just doing what we're all doing. He doesn't just want to get rich. He has set his heart on riches and his hope on riches in such a way that shows us he spiritually turned this into the thing he believed was going to finally complete him...but it won't. And if we could trace out the rest of Lot's life, we would see why. If you go on - and I'm not going to go on, we'll leave Lot's story here – but you learn more about him in chapters 14 and 18 and 19.

We're not going to go there, but suffice it to say it's not that hard to understand that when you get married, saying, "Finally! The garden of the Lord. *Now* my life will be a garden. *Now* I'll know who I am. *Now* I know I'm lovable..." If you go into marriage that way, if you go into parenting that way, if you go into your career that way...it's like taking a three-ton truck and putting it onto a one-ton bridge. It's going to collapse!

It's putting three tons of spiritual expectation on a finite thing. It's going to crack. It *does* crack. You can even see it here in the relations between the Lot faction and the Abram faction. The quarreling, see? The anger. The grumpiness. The irritation. Because Lot is an ambitious man. He has set his heart on riches. He is driven now. He'll trample on even Uncle Abram and his followers. Lot has looked *spiritually* at success and money. He has looked at it, and he says, "Ah. It's like the garden of the Lord."

That's an exaggeration! That's hyperbolic language. It's not *actually* Eden, we know that. But it is spiritually significant, because it not only tells us what we *all* do with *something*, but it shows us *why* we do it: because we're alienated from the garden. We're trying to get back into the garden. We're trying to find a way.

But don't you see how ridiculous it is? He wants the garden of the Lord without the Lord! How can you have the garden of the Lord without the Lord? How can you have that kind of satisfaction, how can you have that kind of contentment, and how can you have that kind of sense of success without Him? You can't. So first we learn about the ambition of Lot.

Now secondly, we learn about The Ambition of Abram. And the ambition of Abram is utterly different. Now I told you I was going to say something about this. What Abram does here sounds more reasonable to us and more - I mean, it sounds like common sense - but it's not. Abram lived in an absolutely patriarchal society in which seniority and age were everything. *He* was the head of the clan. He was the uncle. Lot was just a nephew.

And for Abram to sit down in front of Lot and give *Lot* the choice and give *Lot* the call is amazing. And here's why. Abram had three things, and he couldn't keep them all. He had a relationship to Lot, he had a relationship to God, and he had a relationship to his money - his financial growth. And he realized he couldn't keep all three. He actually had three available choices.

The first choice is Lot and Abram could have gone somewhere *together*. They could have left Canaan and gone some place where there was sufficient fertility and grazing land that they could have *both* grown financially. Got that? See, option one was, “Let’s move out of Canaan together. That way we have our relationship with each other intact, our relationship with our money intact...Oh, but of course now we’re not trusting in the promise of God. God told me to stay here.” So that’s one option.

The second option is Abram says, “I am the big dog. I am quite literally the Patriarch. You are the kid. So *I’m* taking the one place in this whole area where you can still grow rich. You take the leftover,” in which case he would have kept his relationship with God technically because he would not have left the land necessarily. And he would have kept his relationship with his money. Oh, but Lot, of course, would have been deeply alienated. Obviously, he is an ambitious man. He would have been embittered, and the relationship with Lot would have splintered.

Or he could do what he did, which was to say, “Lot, where do you want to go? If you go there, I’ll go here. If you go here, I’ll go there.” And what we have in this case is Abram of course knowing what Lot is going choose. So now Abram has kept his relationship with God, and kept a good relationship with Lot, but he has put himself in financial jeopardy. So here’s money, God, family. And money comes third.

The ambition of Abram is to love God with all his heart, soul, and strength, and to love his neighbor - in this case, Lot - as himself. God, family, money. One, two, three. And by the way, this is an amazing decision. First of all, it’s a wise decision. Did you notice the little reference to Canaanites and Perizzites? Abram is smart enough to realize if he and Lot become alienated from each other, they’re going to die.

Lot, of course, is so ambitious that he is actually doing things - the quarreling and all that - that are really jeopardizing their relationship. They’re surrounded by hostile tribes. If they don’t keep together - and we can see this in Genesis 14 – they will be destroyed. It happens in the very next chapter; Lot and Abram together enter into a military alliance so they can survive. Abram realized it was *wise* to keep a good relationship with Lot and not get alienated.

Secondly, Abram’s decision was not just wise, but it was outside the box. It was culturally subversive. The idea of the older man giving the younger man this kind of choice was just so creative and so unusual and shows such freedom from cultural convention. But most of all, Abram isn’t worried. He is not worried about his money. He is not worried about his financial and his physical support. He is just living a completely unanxious life. He is not scared. He is not afraid.

He is doing the right thing by God, doing the right thing by his family, and then leaving the results in God's hands – which is called “faith”. Now where did he get this kind of poise? Where did he get this kind of wisdom? From the *call*. Let me tell you two things we learn in Abram's life here that tell us all about this call. Two more things about the call. The call of God is what? What's the essence of what it means to be called?

To answer the call of God, does that mean, “Before I was called, I had sex with everybody, and now I'm being sexually controlled”? Does it mean, “Before I heard the call, I just spent all my money on myself, and now I give a lot of money away to the poor and to charity”? Well, I do want you to know that if you become a Christian, you know, things will kind of move along those lines. You ought to know that.

However, that's *by no means* the essence of what it means to hear the call of God, not to pick up another set of rules. Hebrews 11, had these little summaries of the lives of a lot of these Old Testament figures. **Hebrews 11:8–10**, says this about what Abram is doing here. “*By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went...By faith he made his home in the Promised Land like a stranger in a foreign country...For he was looking forward to **the city with foundations**, whose architect and builder is God.*”

Now let me tell you what the essence of the call of God is. Here's what it means to become a Christian. To answer the call of God is to **change your foundations**. It's to change your foundation! “What do you mean? What's your spiritual foundation?” Look, Rocky Balboa was demonstrating this long before Barbie. The night before his big fight with Apollo Creed he explains to his girlfriend – “Yo Adrienne” – that he knows he can't beat the champ. That's not even in his mind.

All he wants to do is still be on his feet when the final bell rings. To “go the distance”. Why? Why does Rocky want to go the distance? “Because then I'm gonna know for the first time in my life, see, that I weren't just another bum from the neighborhood.” The wisdom of the universe in boxers and Barbie dolls!

Listen, *everybody* in this room has something you're doing that you're desperate to do or desperate to have so then you'll know you're not a bum. Because we're alienated from the garden, we don't know who we are. We don't know what we're worth. We're not sure our lives mean anything. We're not sure we're lovable.

And everybody has *something*. Whatever it is, there is something you could not face losing. There is some relationship or some event or some activity, something that if you lost it, if it went away, you would say, “I don’t know who I am. I don’t know that I have any reason for life. I have no meaning.” And that’s your foundation. It could be family. It could be career. It could be money, like in the case of Lot.

But here’s what the call of God is. The call of God is not just, “Well, you *were* living like that. *Now* live like this.” The call of God is *change* your foundations. God is saying to Abram, “Leave. Stop finding your security in all these things. Make *my* righteousness your wealth. Make *my* love your identity. Make *my* approval your joy. Make *my* will your mission and purpose in life. Make *my* salvation your story.”

“Then you’ll be liberated! Then you’re *utterly* liberated! You won’t *need* to have this. You won’t need to have this approval. You won’t need to have this status. These things that used to *drive* you and used to jerk you around, now you can live a big life. Make Me your foundation. Change your foundation!”

And it’s because his foundation had changed that Abram has the *wisdom* to give this choice to Lot, that he has the *creativity*, the freedom from cultural convention, that his priorities are all straight.

It’s all because he has changed his foundation. Well you say, “Okay. Foundation into God. Right.” But Abram also shows how *subtle* it is to think you’ve changed your foundation into God, and you haven’t.

Look at the first part of this passage. It’s easy to miss. (V.3) “*From the Negev [Abram] went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier and **where he had first built an altar.***” There Abram went back, settled in, went back to his altar, and called on the name of the Lord. Do you know what the significance of that is? That is a pilgrimage of repentance.

The last half of chapter 12, that I didn’t do a sermon on, tells us about a huge failure. If you were here last week, you remember the last time we saw Abram, he had just come to Canaan because of the call of God. And God said, “Stay here. I’ll give you this land, and I’ll give you a son.” That was 12:7.

In 12:10, we’re told there was a famine in the land, and Abram *immediately*... Instead of trusting God to provide for him on the land, Abram immediately rushed down to Egypt. And when he got to Egypt, he noticed Pharaoh – the king - was attracted to Sarai. And Abram says, “Well, she is not really my wife; she is my sister,” and let Sarai go to the Pharaoh’s harem.

So actually in the last part of chapter 12, we see a complete collapse. We see Abram completely failing the call, completely failing to trust the promise of the land, completely failing to trust the promise of the son, giving his wife up to save his own skin. It's a disaster! So what is happening in verses 2–4?

And the answer is Abram is going right back to where he went wrong. He is going back to ground zero. He is going to the very spot where he went astray. He is going back and starting over, getting back on line. He is *repenting*. He is retracing his steps place to place, deliberately heading for the spot where he last was obeying. He is repenting. Now let me tell you why that's so incredibly important.

The way you know you have really changed your foundation and now you're resting in the grace of God - the call is all about the grace of God! The call comes to you, wakes you up. And when you become a Christian, because *the call* has come and awakened you, you realize it was all of grace. The call of God is to change foundations and rest it in the grace of God. And the only way you know you've really gotten there is by how you handle your own personal failures. That's the acid test.

Now, by the way, if Lot is a warning to the materialistic crowd – don't set your foundation in your achievement – Abraham is a warning to the religious crowd. Because if you've made the commitment, and everybody sees you as a pillar of the church – and then you fail in some way, and you always will – how do you react to that?

I've seen people of incredibly strong faith totally walk away from faith after a crisis. What's going on there? And the answer is, it's about what they were resting in. What was their foundation? What was the thing that made them know they weren't a bum? You see it's possible to say, "My foundation is no longer career. It's no longer relationships. It's Jesus. I'm going to church. I'm sharing my faith. I'm studying the Bible. I am so *completely* committed to him. My foundation is no longer these other things. My foundation is Christ. My foundation is God."

But it's possible, if you look carefully, that your foundation is not really in the *grace* of God. It's in the purity and the quality and the intensity of your *commitment* to God. Which is *still* resting in your performance. It's still resting on something besides God. It's possible to *think* you've heard the call and you haven't, because the call is not a call to become a better person or a more committed person or a more faithful person. It's a call to rest in the grace of God.

And the way you know you've really heard the call, the acid test is not how you handle suffering, or even opposition. Some people are defined by their opponents. The real acid test that you've heard the call of God - as you can see here in Abram - is how you handle your own *failure*. Can you be forgiven? Can you *experience* God's forgiveness? Can you move on, or do you just beat yourself up?

Do you know why? If there is anybody here who you just cannot get past your own failure, you haven't made the change yet. You haven't heard the call. You might be a good person. You might be a moral person. You might be a very religious person. You might think you're a Christian, and maybe you are a Christian, because at this point I'm talking about areas I cannot read. I can't read a person's heart, but I can tell you this. You haven't made the foundational shift God wants you to make.

The call is to give up resting yourself, your foundation, in anything but the utter grace of God, the utter acceptance of God. And because Abram had done that, because of his *failure* in chapter 12, he makes repentance. As a result, he has *deeper* liberation than he did before, a *greater* liberation than he did before!

Do you hear that? Do you see it? That's why he was able to give this choice to Lot. That's why he was able to think outside the box. That's why he was able to make this decision without being anxious. Why? He has given it up. His foundation is something else. That's why he is living this big life.

Now we have to ask this one last question. *How* can God do this? How can God just keep accepting Abram? Look at v. 14. "*The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, 'Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.'*"

Now how can God *do* this? Abram is a failure, and Abram is going to fail again. God certainly knows that. God is never surprised. I mean, the Abram who has failed in chapter 12 is going to fail later on. And yet God is putting him up on a tall mountain, saying, "I will give you all these things." What's the matter with God? Has He no standards? How can God do this? And I'll tell you why. Because there's a third man whose ambition is pointed to by this text.

Can you guess who it is? Of course. **Number three is The Ambition of Jesus.** Centuries later, the *real* Son of Abram was also taken up to the top of a high mountain. And somebody said, “All that you can see I’ll give you if you’ll just worship me.” Sounds parallel, isn’t it? And yet when Satan took Jesus to the top of a mountain and said, “All these things I will give you,” here was the great irony.

The things he was offering Jesus were already Jesus’ by rights. But here’s what the temptation was. He says, “I can give you these things without renunciation, without suffering, without going to the cross, without following God’s way. I can *give* them to you.” And Jesus said, “No. I came to *lose* everything. I came to lose my Father’s face. I came to lose my authority. I came to lose my glory. I came to lose everything.”

And here’s what’s so intriguing about this. *God* takes *Abram* up and says, “These things are *not* yours by right, but I’m going to give them to you.” Satan takes Jesus up and says, “These things *are* yours by right,” but Jesus refuses them! And that’s why. The reason you and I can be taken to the mountaintop along with Abram, and God can say, “I will give you all this,” is because Jesus Christ lost it. You can have it because he lost it.

Or put it another way. Abram points to Jesus, because Abram let go of his wealth so he could keep his relationship with Lot. But Jesus Christ gave up the ultimate wealth so he could have a relationship with us. **2 Corinthians 8:9**, where it says, “*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.*”

What does that mean? Abram points to a greater one than himself. And you’ll never be like Abram *only* by trying. You’ll only be like Abram if you believe in the one to whom Abram points. He left his ultimate wealth so you could *have* the ultimate wealth, and *only* when you know, “Because Jesus died, therefore I have everything I need by the grace of God, the ultimate wealth,” *then* the way you treat money will be different.

You’re not going to be anxious about it. You can be generous with it! You won’t let it destroy your relationships or your family. But you can’t live like Abraham just by *trying* to live like Abraham. You have to *believe* in the work of the one to whom Abraham points, the one who went to a high mountain and *lost* everything he could see...so you can be taken up to a high mountain and *gain* everything you can see. That’s how you do it. Lift up your eyes.

Are you having trouble dealing with failure? Change your foundations into the grace of God. Are you quarreling with people around you, irritated because people are not respecting you or not promoting you? Change your foundation into the grace of God. Are you having trouble just keeping on going and just enduring? Are you just wearing out? Lift up your eyes and see what you have in Christ.

Let's pray...