

Conflict in the Midst of Blessings

Genesis 13: 8-9; 14-18

Most are likely familiar with the lives of Lot and Abram, (Abraham). God had called Abram from the land of Ur of the Chaldees to follow Him unto a land He would show him, the land of Canaan. In the life of Abram and Lot we see a wonderful picture of the grace of God, bringing lost sinners out of a land of spiritual bondage into an abundant land of salvation.

The journey from Ur to Canaan also pictures the journey of life we all travel. As these men made their way toward Canaan God blessed them abundantly as they traveled. They became rich with herds and great wealth. But, as we will see in our text, blessings from the Lord don't always result in contentment. As Abram and Lot traveled, contention and strife began to grow. These men were blessed beyond measure and yet there was trouble.

I am sure we all can relate to what we find in the text. There are many today who have been blessed abundantly and yet there is strife and discord with others. We are a blessed people and yet we have our troubles. Abram was a man who was quick to recognize this problem and he dealt with it in a way that pleased the Lord. If we are to achieve all that God desires of us and make the most of the blessings we have received, we must learn the [lessons](#) that are revealed in this passage of Scripture. We must learn to deal with the conflicts and adversities we all face. I want to consider the thought: [Conflict in the Midst of Blessings](#).

I. A Developing Crisis – The crisis Abram and Lot faced was not something that happened over night. This was a crisis that developed over time. We find that:

A. Resources were Limited (2, 5-6) – As I said, these men had been blessed abundantly of God. As they journeyed together their herds and wealth continued to grow. Eventually they reached a point where the land simply could not support all that each man possessed. This led to a conflict concerning whose cattle would graze where and which herds were allowed to water first or at which well. This began to create a major problem.

- I know that we are a small congregation, and at times it seems our resources are limited. But, could I remind you that we serve a God who is not bankrupt. He is more than able to meet our needs. We just need the faith to follow Him, believing that He will supply.
- The point I would like to make here is that we must be considerate of the ministry of the church as a whole. We cannot develop a mindset that only those things we think are

necessary are worthy of support. God has blessed us and He is expanding our ministry. We cannot assume that only our desires are worthy of God's blessings. It is all about Him!

B. Resentment was Looming (7a) – *And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle:* As the herds and herdsmen of Abram and Lot continued to dwell together, tensions began to rise. It wasn't long until great *strife* developed between them. Strife means "*controversy, to dispute, or quarrel; a term that was later used in reference to a legal controversy.*" Rather than being content with their blessings, strife began to surface.

- Resentment is dangerous among God's people. Often we find situations very similar to what is described in the text. It really isn't about a particular need; it is simply resentment toward others. Some have a problem accepting the fact that God may be willing to bless something other than what they are involved in or promoting. Churches seem to develop cliques that are very narrow minded in their acceptance or appreciation of others.
- There is no place for resentment among the body of Christ. We are all in this thing together. I can't do it all and neither can you. We need to learn to let others do those things God has called them to do and support them rather than resenting them. Service unto the Lord is not a competition. We are not here to see who can shine the brightest. We are here to serve the Lord together in unity and love!

C. Residents were Looking (7b) – *and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.* Here we find that Abram and Lot were not alone in Canaan. The Canaanites and Perizzites also dwelt in the land. If Abram lived no differently than the rest of the world, what kind of witness would that be? This crisis had to be resolved. It would eventually have a negative impact on Abram's witness as well as those around him. If he and Lot allowed this crisis to continue, the world would view them and their God no differently than other people or gods.

- Do you realize the world is watching us? They know more about us and this church than you realize. I am tired of the accusations of the world concerning the church. We are different! There has been a change in those who are saved. We need to let the world know that living for the Lord is worthwhile. Each of us has a reputation to uphold and protect. How can we expect to win the lost to Christ when we allow resentment and strife to dwell among us?

II. A Delicate Choice (8-9) – Something had to be done before this crisis got out of hand. Abram made a delicate choice in handling the situation. He chose:

A. Sensitivity (8) – *And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.* Abram realized there was a problem. He wanted to seek a resolution. He was not determined to have his way or none. Abram was sensitive to the needs and desires of Lot as well. He was sensitive to the direction of the Lord.

- The church could use more sensitivity in our day. Many are not considerate of the needs of others. They are determined to have their way even if it is not in the best interest of the church. They are simply unwilling to compromise their personal desires and demands for anyone.
- We need to develop a sensitive spirit toward the Lord. We need to learn to seek God in everything that we do. Pray about things before you act. Seek God's will and His wisdom about circumstances and preferences.

B. Separation (9a) – *Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me:* Abram made a hard choice. He loved Lot and desired to fellowship with him, but he knew that the situation demanded they separate from each other. They had accumulated so much that they could no longer dwell together without controversy. Separation was the only way.

- Now, don't misunderstand me this morning. I am in no way advocating separation among God's people. We don't need separation; we need to come together in a spirit of unity. However, there are some things that we need to separate ourselves from.
- Separate yourself from the urge to condemn or seek fault in others. Separate yourself from those who only have negative thoughts concerning the church. Separate yourself from the "rumor mill" and the desire to gossip. Do not allow yourself to become a slave of negativity and fault finding. Stop it rather than spread it! If you can't change it, avoid it.

C. Submission (9b) – *if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.* Keep in mind that it was Abram that God had come to in Ur. Lot was a recipient of the blessings of Abram. It would have been easy for Abram to have made his choice and offer Lot what was left, but he didn't. Abram allowed Lot to have first choice of the land. He told Lot to choose and he would be satisfied with what remained.

- Is there not a tremendous lesson for all of us in that? We live in a "me" centered society. It is even that way in the church. Most of us are determined to have our way regardless of what others desire. What happened to serving others? What happened to a desire to see the church grow and prosper, even if it came at a price for us? We need to get to the place that we realize we are here to please the Lord and serve Him, not to satisfy ourselves.

III. A Desirable Change (14-18) – On the surface it may have appeared that Abram had lost due to his choice, but actually he gained much.

A. Abram's Reward (14-16) – His reward was two-fold. Notice:

1. The Provision (14-15) – God told him to look around. As far as his eye could see, that is what God had reserved for him. In giving a little, God gave him much in return.

- God can do the same for us. We may feel as if we are the one doing all the giving, but God can enlarge our coasts by being obedient and seeking Him.

2. The Promise (16) – The blessings Abram would receive would not be limited to his life only. He would be blessed with a family that outnumbered the sands of the sea, and they too would be blessed because of his obedience.

- Do you desire something of value to be left for our children? Do you want Fellowship to remain a place where God is worshipped, lives are changed, and people find help for their souls? If so, seek God and live for Him. We may not always understand all He is doing, but if we will trust Him, future generations will benefit from our faithfulness.

B. Abram's Rest (17) – God allowed Abram to walk over the land. He showed him all that he would receive. No doubt this put his mind at ease. He followed God and he was blessed for that.

- We too can enjoy that rest. God has the power to work in our lives and give us peace to follow Him. Our minds cannot comprehend all that we could receive if we would get our hearts right with the Lord. He has so much that He wants to provide, but many times we hinder that through disobedience.

C. Abram's Resolve (18) – In the previous chapter, Abram had been to Egypt and lied about Sarah being his wife. He had strayed from the Lord. Here he had a decision to make concerning Lot and he chose wisely. Abram immediately erected an altar to worship the Lord. He had not lost a thing; in fact he had gained much, including a new devotion unto the Lord.

Conclusion: Do you desire a closer walk with God? Do you want our church to experience Him in greater ways? If so, are you willing to make that commitment? Are you willing to give of yourself for the cause of Christ? Are there some areas in your life that are not right with the Lord or the church? There is no need for conflict amidst God's blessing.