

Sojourning in Egypt

Genesis 12: 10-20

We opened our study on the life of Abraham with a challenging and encouraging passage that revealed the great faith and commitment he possessed for the Lord. As we will discover though, his faith would soon be tested, and his response would create lasting problems for generations to come.

Abraham was a man of profound faith, enjoying great fellowship with the Lord. However, he was just a man. He dealt with the same struggles and doubts we all do. I suppose that is why we relate so well to men like Abraham, David, Peter, and many others in Scripture.

God never encourages or supports disobedience. Unfortunately we all have seasons when we miss the mark and stray from the path God intended us to travel. We can and do make mistakes. As we do, we must seek to learn from them and move forward with the Lord. I hope we can learn from the mistakes Abraham made and make adjustments to avoid similar mistakes. As we consider the [seasons](#) of this journey, I want to discuss: [Sojourning in Egypt](#).

I. A Season of Difficulty (10-13) – Abraham eventually found himself in a difficult season of life. He was following the Lord and yet difficulty had come. We too face seasons of difficulty. How we respond to these seasons can have lasting effects. Consider:

A. The Famine (10) – [And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.](#) As Abraham dwelt in the land where God led him, a very severe famine arose in the land. We don't know how long he had endured this difficulty, but it caused him to make a decision he would later regret. He had left the land of his birth to follow God, and yet he made a decision to leave without consulting the Lord.

- We too are often guilty of making hasty decisions regarding our current situation. These decisions may not involve a physical move, but they always involve a move of some kind. In our times of difficulty we will either move closer to God or choose a path that leads us away from him. Egypt is always a picture or type of the world and the flesh. If we aren't careful, like Abraham, we will choose a path that leads us into the lure and lust of the world.

B. The Fear (11-12) – [And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: \[12\] Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but](#)

[they will save thee alive](#). Abraham had made the decision to go to Egypt, but he was uncomfortable with the decision. In fact, he was gripped with fear. He was afraid the Egyptians would kill him in order to have his wife. Such concerns should have prompted Abraham to reevaluate his plans, but he pressed on.

- Abraham dealt with fear because he was acting in disobedience to the will of God. We all have anxiety at times, especially when we are stepping out in faith to follow the Lord. This fear is much different than the anxiety associated with faith. We have all been guilty at times, but it is always a foolish move to act contrary to the leading of the Spirit.

C. The Fallacy (13) – [Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee](#). In order to alleviate his fear, Abraham concocted a lie and encouraged Sarah to tell the same lie. When questioned about their relationship, they were going to tell everyone that she was his sister. Abraham was willing to jeopardize the safety of his wife in order to continue his path of disobedience. His determination to sojourn in Egypt, while knowing the dangers associated with it, had caused him to make irrational decisions.

- There are a couple truths we need to glean from this. First of all, God is never pleased when we lie. There is no such thing as a justified lie or a “little white lie.” Secondly, our sin and disobedience rarely affects us alone. Most of the time our sin will have implications in the lives of others, especially those closest to us.

II. A Season of Deception (14-17) – Here we find the tangled web continued to grow as Abraham traveled deeper into Egypt. Departing from the Lord will always have consequences. Abraham now entered a season of deception. Notice:

A. The Problem (14) – [And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair.](#) ^[15] [The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house](#). As they began to encounter Egyptians on this rebellious journey, Abraham’s worst fears became reality. Sarah was immediately noticed by the Egyptians and they were interested in her. She was taken to Pharaoh’s house. Although they had devised a plan on how to deal with the situation, this would create great difficulty for Abraham.

- We cannot travel a path contrary to God’s will and expect our journey to go smoothly. I am certain the Lord had given Abraham insight to the dangers of Egypt and yet he chose to make the trip. Don’t be surprised when your fears become reality if you are walking in disobedience. I have

enough adversity while trying to walk with the Lord; I certainly don't want to purposely seek out more difficulty through willful disobedience.

B. The Provision (16) – *And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.* It would be easy to look at this and assume that Abraham had been rewarded for making the trip to Egypt, but actually there was no real benefit. They had believed his lie, and these were actually gifts from Pharaoh to Abraham. I believe they were given as part of a bride's dowry. Pharaoh intended to take Sarah as his wife. Living in Egypt had provided some material assets, but they were not without cost to Abraham.

- Many fall into this trap. The world offers much that appeals to the eye, and even provides material prosperity at times, but it always comes at a price. Many have neglected their obligations to the Lord and responsibilities to their families in order to pursue their desires. Many are willing to sacrifice the things and people most dear to follow the path of the world and the lusts of the flesh.

C. The Plagues (17) – *And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife.* This is the only time the Lord is mentioned in this passage. He was not consulted about the trip, nor do we find any reference to Abraham praying after he entered Egypt. We must remember, God had a plan to raise up a nation through Abraham and Sarah that would provide the Messiah, our Redeemer and Lord. This rebellion could go on no further. God had to intervene in order to preserve His sovereign plan. Again we see the far reaching effects of sin and rebellion. Pharaoh faced judgment, at least in part, because of Abraham's actions.

- This reveals a sobering truth – God will always deal with unconfessed sin. It may not come immediately, but in His time and according to His will, God will deal with rebellion. He has a sovereign plan that will be carried out. I don't want to be the reason others had to suffer. I don't want to be the reason God had to chastise those around me.

III. A Season of Disgrace (18-20) – Abraham's rebellion eventually caught up with him and it cost more than he realized. Rather than leaving Egypt with honor and respect, he left in disgrace. Notice:

A. The Confrontation (18) – *And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife?* We don't know how, but Pharaoh discovered that Sarah was Abraham's wife. Apparently he knew the plagues had come upon him

because Sarah was in his house. He immediately confronted Abraham about his lies. His sin had found him out and he was forced to face them.

- It may take a while, but we cannot keep our sin hidden. Eventually it will be discovered and we will be confronted with our sin. If we are unwilling to heed the conviction and drawing of the Spirit, often our sin will be exposed publicly. Be sure your sin will find you out.

B. The Complication (19) – *Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way.* Pharaoh was amazed at such deception and carelessness. He had planned to take Sarah as his wife. This would not have been considered had he known she was Abraham's wife. Certainly the plagues influenced his decision, but Pharaoh could not believe Abraham would have willingly put his wife in that situation.

- The longer one remains in Egypt, indulging the flesh, the more complicated the situation becomes. As we dwell in disobedience, we involve others in our rebellion. Often this has implications on their lives as well. It is impossible to fully discern the reach of sin and the devastation it brings.

C. The Separation (20) – *And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.* Fortunately for Abraham, God intervened and delivered him safely from Egypt. While he was able to leave, he left in disgrace. His ability to influence the Egyptians regarding the Lord was diminished. His integrity among them was ruined.

- We must always be mindful of our witness before others. We have a responsibility to bear witness to the saving grace of our Lord. The world expects us to live differently, living with honor and respect. When our actions cause disgrace, it not only affects us; it also affects the world's perception of the church and the Lord we serve. We are not to embrace the ways of the world, seeking to live among the world, but we must present a respectable witness to the world.

Conclusion: It would be easy to read this passage and breathe a sigh of relief. Abraham had messed up and God had delivered him. All seemed well on the surface, but Abraham's decision to sojourn in Egypt would affect human history. In fact, we continue to deal with his decision today. Most agree that among the maidservants Abraham received from the hand of Pharaoh was an Egyptian girl named Hagar. As they grew impatient with the Lord, again they concocted a plan to expedite the process. Hagar was given to Abraham by Sarah. Hagar conceived and bore a son. His name was Ishmael. He became the father of the Arab nations. The violence and terror we face today had its roots in this rebellious journey.

Our sin always has consequences. I am sure Abraham never dreamed this decision would be affecting the world thousands of years later. We do not sin in a bubble. God sees and He knows. Are there areas in your life you need to confess and make right with the Lord? Do you know Him as your personal Savior? Come to Him for the needs you have!