

Leaving the World Behind

Genesis 13: 1-4

In our last study we found Abraham leaving the land of Canaan, headed down into Egypt during a time of famine. Although Abraham is recognized as a man of great faith and the friend of God, he too dealt with a season of doubt. This doubt led him away from God and into the world. While this season didn't last too long, it did bring about lasting consequences.

Fortunately Abraham didn't stay in Egypt. Being thrust out of Egypt by Pharaoh, he began his journey back to Canaan. Egypt is always a picture of the world in Scripture. Abraham had left the land of promise and journeyed into the world. Now he is again headed back to Canaan, the land God had called him to inhabit.

Surely we all have made bad decisions and wandered from the Lord. Fortunately for us, we don't have to remain apart from God among the world. Like Abraham, when we find ourselves in Egypt, we need to quickly make our way back to God. I want to discuss the [lessons](#) revealed in our text as we consider: [Leaving the World Behind](#).

I. The Departure of Abraham (1) – [And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south](#). While wandering from the Lord is never good, it is a blessing when we recognize our error and make an effort to return unto the Lord. Consider:

A. The Direction – [And Abram went up out of Egypt](#). While we don't know how long Abraham had intended to stay in Egypt, his time there had come to an end. I am convinced God ordained this situation that compelled Abraham to depart from Egypt and make his way home.

- It is interesting to note that [Abraham went down into Egypt, Gen.12:10](#), and here we find him going up out of Egypt. That description was not put there by accident. One never gains ground or improves their existence by departing from the Lord. Sin and rebellion always lead on a downward spiral. Anytime we recognize our need and make an effort to return unto the Lord, we are making an upward journey.

B. The Resolution – [And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him](#). As Abraham left Egypt, he ensured that everyone and everything came out with him. He determined to leave nothing behind in Egypt. This trip had been ill advised, and he was committed to leaving Egypt in the past.

- This is often where many make a mistake. Unlike Abraham, they see the difficulty and despair associated with dwelling among the world and the lusts of the flesh, but are unwilling to make a commitment to leave the world behind. In fact, many like to dwell somewhere in between, creating a sense of ease to journey into the world and then supposedly return unto the Lord at their leisure. Those who have walked with the Lord for any length of time know this scenario never produces the desired result. We cannot dabble in the world, indulging the flesh, and expect to enjoy the abundance of Canaan at the same time.

C. The Destination (1) – *And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.* As Abraham left Egypt, he had clear direction on where he was headed, with a particular destination. He wasn't interested in merely exiting the geographic boundaries of Egypt; he was committed to returning to Canaan.

- While I have heard many complain of the difficulty in knowing God's will for their lives, a true believer will always know when they are walking with the Lord and when they have wandered from fellowship with Him. We must never seek that middle ground, somewhere between the world and the will of God. We will discover that Abraham returned home, the place where he left the Lord. We must get back to the place where we enjoyed fellowship with the Lord if we are to have any peace within our lives.

II. The Dependence of Abraham (2) – *And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.* There are a couple of aspects that we must consider regarding this statement. Notice:

A. The Resources – Although Abraham had wandered from God, the Lord continued to bless him in spite of his doubt and disobedience. This does not encourage disobedience, but it does reveal God's faithfulness. He had called Abraham to follow Him, promising to provide a great nation through Abraham. God had a sovereign plan, and He took care of Abraham even when Abraham was unable to care for himself.

- Again, this verse does not condone or encourage disobedience. Abraham would deal with the consequences of his choices the rest of his life. However, this does provide encouragement for us. Although we stray and miss the mark at times, our Lord does not abandon us in the journey. He continues to care for us and meet our needs, even when we lack the faith to trust in Him. I am glad His faithfulness is not dependent upon my faithfulness to Him!

B. The Reality – Abraham had much in the way of material wealth – cattle, silver, and gold; but these provisions could not provide the peace and security he needed. Regardless of the wealth he had acquired, he felt the need to return unto the Lord. Abraham remained dependent on the Lord to secure his future and provide the promised son.

- I am thankful for every blessing I have, and yet I am aware that they could never replace the Lord. Regardless of what we obtain in this life, we remain dependent upon the Lord. Our wealth cannot buy peace of mind, physical health, or eternal life. God is so good and gracious to us, but we must never forget our utter dependence on Him!

III. The Devotion of Abraham (3-4) – In these closing verses we discover the committed devotion of Abraham to the Lord. Notice:

A. His Commitment (3a) – *And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel.* Abraham was not content to be safely out of Egypt and away from Pharaoh; he wanted to continue until he reached the place God had led him in the beginning. He refused to stop along the way. He was committed to getting back to the Lord and renewing his fellowship with Him.

- I am aware that we all have various responsibilities and duties. There are things that we must do and activities that demand our time and attention. I fear however that the Lord is often pushed toward the bottom of our list of priorities. It is easy to become so consumed with the demands of life that we fail to consider our Lord or desire to spend quality time with Him. We need the commitment Abraham possessed at this moment in his life. We must be willing to make our relationship with the Lord our priority!

B. His Discernment (3b) – *And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai.* Abraham wisely returned to where he began. He returned to the place between Bethel and Hai, the place he had communed with God. Although Abraham had wandered, he knew where the Lord could be found. He was determined to get back to God.

- What a simple and yet profound truth! We all have been guilty of wandering from the Lord. During those times of separation, when our fellowship is broken, we must realize that our Lord has not moved or changed. He remains the same, yesterday, today, and forever. If you lack fellowship and communion with Christ, return to where you once enjoyed it. Get back to Him and renew your communion today!

C. His Investment (4) – [Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.](#) Abraham returned to the place where he had built an altar of worship unto God and once again called upon His great name in prayer. Abraham had wandered, but he desired to return in order to fellowship with God and worship Him.

- No doubt most of us can relate to what Abraham had experienced. Much too often we wander into Egypt, away from our loving Savior. We need to return to the place of the altar, bowing before Him in genuine praise and worship. We must recognize our need for His continued guidance and offer Him the praise He deserves. He has been faithful to us, even in our moments of disobedience. He is worthy of our praise!

Conclusion: There may be those here today who have wandered from the Lord. You have left the place of worship in search of the pleasures of the world. I hope you have realized that journey is never profitable and always leads to despair. Why not come back to where you left the Lord and renew your commitment to Him? Why not come and give Him the praise He deserves? If you are unsaved, Jesus is calling you to depart from Egypt and enjoy the abundant life available in Him. Come as He leads!