

Reflection



- Showing love
- Giving hope
- Bringing peace

The Church of St John & St Leonard

Genesis 13: 5-17

Wednesday 10th June 2020

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 quarrelling arose between Abram's herders and Lot's. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.

So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarrelling between you and me, or between your herders and mine, for we are close relatives. 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."

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

The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. 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. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you."

On Sunday we left Abram, Sarai and Abram's nephew, Lot, on their journey to the Negev. Their journey continued through various places until they reached Bethel where we find them in our reading today. During their travels Abram had acquired a considerable amount of livestock, silver and gold; and Lot also had plenty of livestock. As they come to look for a place to settle, a conundrum unfolds: how can these two men who both have considerable amounts of livestock share the land? We don't know for certain whether this was causing problems between Abram and Lot, but we do know that quarrelling had broken out between their herders which was not making for a very pleasant environment. Abram is determined to end the quarrelling and find a peaceful resolution.

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Was this Abram's natural reaction to tension? Not if chapter 12 is anything to go by. At the end of chapter 12 we see Abram dealing with potential conflict in a less honourable way. But, Bible commentator Hamilton points out that the thing that has changed between the end of chapter 12 and our passage for today is that Abram has "called on the name of the Lord" (Genesis 12:4). That encounter with God has transformed Abram's attitude and the way he responds to situations which are difficult. I wonder how we respond when we face situations which are challenging, particularly situations which would result in a disagreement with someone we care about? Are we quick to react or do we take time to call on the name of the Lord. To pour out our hurt, our fear, our sense of injustice to God and allow him to begin to transform our attitude and thus how we deal with the situation? It's not an easy thing to do – especially when we *know* that we are in the right! But as God's people, committed to being transformed by God, Abram provides a different way of dealing with conflict.

In this passage we see the way that God is transforming Abram more and more into His likeness and we also see again Abram's faith in God. Determined to settle the potential conflict amicably, in verse 9 we read that Abram gave Lot first choice as to which part of the land he wanted to inhabit. Abram was willing to sacrifice what had been promised to him – trusting that God would provide for his needs. Lot looks at the land and chooses the side that is lush and well-watered. It is unlikely that Lot would have been aware of the morality of the Sodomites; his decision is likely to have been a practical one as he sees the lush, well-watered fields, perfect for raising his livestock. And so, the two men part ways each to their respective lands and God speaks to Abram once again – reassuring Abram of the promises he had made to him.

A situation which began with quarrelling and a potentially huge fall out is transformed into a reaffirmation of the promises and blessings of God as Abram waits and calls on the name of the Lord, allowing God to transform him and his relationships with those around him.

What incredible blessings are available for us who trust in the Lord and follow him as our King!

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