

# BEEN THERE, DONE THAT

## Learning from Those Who Walked Before Us

### WARNING FROM THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM

Genesis 12:10-20

INTRODUCTION: Seeking the Lord's admonition and instruction for our own lives, we began to look at the life of Abraham last Sunday morning.

The Scriptures speak much of Abraham. His faith to believe and obey God is repeatedly held up to us as an example. The New Testament quotes Genesis 15:6 a half dozen times, demonstrating that our righteousness comes by way of grace through faith and not of works. Of Abraham, Genesis says,

**Genesis 15:6 NKJV "And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness."**

Abraham was a man who was saved by faith, looking forward to God's provision of the One who would be a blessing to every family on the earth by defeating sin and banishing death. Although Abraham, looking forward in time, could only see the Lord Jesus in shadow, yet he believed; and God saved Abraham as a result, and Abraham was made righteous in God's sight.

And folks, we are still saved the same way, although we are blessed to live in a day when we can look back on the historical Jesus, whose life, miracles, substitutionary death on the cross, and glorious resurrection from the dead is well documented. Yet still it is by faith alone that we appropriate the grace of God in our own lives and are saved. Lost friend, this part of the sermon is for you! Put faith in Jesus Christ!

The life of Abraham encourages our faith!

But Abraham was a man, and all men and women have sinned.

One of the testimonies of the reliability of the Scriptures is that the sins and flaws in the lives of the Bible's heroes are not covered up. This transparency not only tells us the Bible is true, it shows us these people of faith were real men and women just like you and me, with similar struggles and temptations and even failures of falling into sin.

Of those we have already studied, the sin and weakness in the lives of Adam, Eve, Cain, and Noah are all openly exposed in Holy Scripture.

And the same is true of Abraham. He was a man of great faith and ultimately a man of great faithfulness as well, yet there were times of failure and sin. The Bible tells us about these times so that we will be warned. This is a warning to Christians, men and

women who have trusted Christ, follow Christ, love Christ. Abraham did, yet he made a great mistake.

The first such time recorded for Abraham is told to us in Genesis 12:10-20

**Genesis 12:10 NKJV** Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land.

Here was Abraham's first mistake.

- When God tells us what to do, we should do it. Abraham did.
- We should keep doing it until God says stop.
  - Abraham let the famine drive him, rather than trusting the Lord.
  - Seemed like a little thing, a simple thing, the natural thing.
  - But it meant Abraham had to quit doing God's thing!
  - That was a mistake with consequences he could not have envisioned.
- What are the things God has told us to do and in faith we have obeyed.
  - Make your own list.
  - I will just give you a sample in my own life, but your list will not be the same as mine.
    - God's called me to preach.
    - God led me to commit to the inerrancy and sufficiency of His Word.
    - God led me to vow to be an Acts 1:8 Christian and Pastor.
  - **Whatever causes us to cease doing what God has told us to do – that is our Egypt!**
    - Egypt may be a hurricane.
    - Egypt may be a pandemic.
    - Egypt may be a crisis.
    - Egypt may be a disappointment.
    - Egypt may be a new attraction.
    - Egypt may be an entertainment.

- Whatever causes us to cease doing what God has told us to do – that is our Egypt!

Go back, think of your list of areas where you heard from God and said yes.

So, Abraham left the land where he went by faith, following the Lord, and went to Egypt.

What happened?

Genesis 12:11–13 NKJV 11 And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, “Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance. 12 Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, ‘This is his wife’; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. 13 Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you.”

Even before they crossed the border into Egypt, Abraham began to compromise and persuaded his wife Sarai to compromise the truth with him.

Now Abraham could have defended his plan.

- What he was saying was a half-truth. Sarai was his half-sister. They had the same father but different mothers.
- Folks, a half-truth is a whole lie.
- Abraham could have said, in fact he did say, “My life depends on this!”
- Friend listen, when we choose to go into something that we have to lie to get out of, we should not have gone there in the first place.
- **If you are into something that is making or encouraging you to lie, it is Egypt.**
- **Get out!**

Genesis 12:14-16 NKJV 14 So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful. 15 The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh’s house. 16 He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

- Abraham must have thought that his little white lie had been a good plan.
- He was safe. Sarai seemed safe although he didn’t hear much from her.
- He was prospering. The Pharaoh was treating him good and Abraham was growing wealthy.

- Abraham could justify his lie and departure from the land by saying, “But see how God is blessing me. What I have done must be OK with Him.”
  - Abraham was correct that his blessings came from God.

James 1:17 NKJV Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

- What he didn't realize is that God was blessing him in spite of his sin and not because of it.
- The Scriptures tell us that God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness.
- But as God told Noah, His Spirit does not strive or plead with man forever. There is a time when chastisement comes. Whom the Lord loves, He chastens.

And so we read ...

Genesis 12:17-20 NKJV 17 But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. 18 And Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? 19 Why did you say, 'She is my sister'? I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take her and go your way." 20 So Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had.

- In God's timing the truth came out.
- Pharaoh was angry and sent Abraham, Sarai, and all who were with him away.

We might be tempted to say, “Well, that wasn't so bad. Abraham pretty much got away with it. Sarai wasn't hurt. Abraham got richer. They both had plenty to eat during the famine. Egypt turned out to be a pretty good vacation, and then they went back to God's land.”

But you would not say that if you know the rest of the story.

You see, **the problem is not what they lost while in Egypt, the problem is what they took with them out of Egypt.**

- They took Lot with them out of Egypt.
  - Lot was their nephew, who came with them from Ur.
  - He went with them when they came to Egypt.
  - He left with them when they left Egypt.

- **The problem was that they took Lot out of Egypt, but they never got Egypt out of Lot!**
  - Not long after they returned to the Promised Land, the herdsmen for Abraham and Lot started tussling over pasture land.
  - Kind Uncle Abraham gave Lot his choice of land. Lot selfishly took the best land, which included the territory around Sodom and Gomorrah.
  - It was not long before Lot moved into the wicked city of Sodom.
  - The king of Sodom got caught up in a war and lost. Lot and his family were captured and carried off as hostages.
  - Uncle Abraham had to convert the rest of his family and servants into warriors and go and rescue Lot. This they did with the help and by the grace of God.
  - And Lot moved back into Sodom, a place of great wickedness and perversity.
  - When the Lord decided to destroy Sodom for its wickedness, Abraham pleaded with God, ultimately begging God to spare the city for sake of ten righteous people.
  - But God did not find ten righteous people in Sodom. God sent angels to get Lot, his wife, and two youngest daughters out of Sodom before the Lord destroyed it totally.
  - Lot's wife died during the destruction because she refused to flee as the Lord had warned her.
  - Lot ended up taking refuge in a cave, getting drunk, and having incest with his daughters.
  - Their offspring ended up producing the people who became known as the Moabites and the Ammonites, both of whom later would become bitter antagonists to God's people, Israel.

**All of this because Abraham said, "Let's leave the land where the Lord brought us for a season and go to Egypt where there is food."**

Friends, sadly, when we go to our Egypt, we often take our family with us. Sometimes later we may repent and show little impact from our sojourn there, but sometimes family members show the impact for life. That's the way it was for Lot.

But that is not the only problem that came with Abraham out of Egypt.

- Hagar was an Egyptian hand maiden who started serving Sarai when she was held in the house of Pharaoh.
- **When Abraham and Sarai left Egypt, Hagar came with them.**
  - God had promised Abraham and Sarai a son, even though they were old.
  - When no son came, and as they grew older, they began to doubt if God would do this miracle.
  - Sarai suggested Abraham have a child by Hagar that would be their substitute son. This was a common practice among pagans and would have been acceptable both in Ur where she left and in Egypt as well.
  - Hagar's pregnancy brought discord between her and Sarai and ultimately disrupted the peace of the entire family.
  - The birth of Ishmael did not resolve the conflict, but intensified it.
  - Ultimately, Hagar and Ishmael were sent away.
  - Ishmael became the father of the Midianites who carried Joseph as a slave back to Egypt many years later.
  - The Midianites also were the enemies of Israel centuries later during the days of the judges, and it was a Midianite army that had enslaved God's people in the Promised Land and from whom God delivered Israel through the ministry of Gideon.

**All of this because Abraham said, "Let's leave the land where the Lord brought us for a season and go to Egypt where there is food."**

Folks, we all should be asking right now, "What's my Egypt?"

- With what in this world am I being enticed to stray from those things about which I have made commitments to the Lord?
- What leads me away from my close walk with Jesus?
- What takes me away from reading and studying God's Word?
- What entices me from prayer?
- What diminishes my faithfulness in the church to which God led me?
- What causes me to be away from my small group where God grows me?
- What leads me to neglect the ministry or mission which God gave me?