

# A Tale of Two Men

## Genesis 12:20-13:18

### September 14, 2011

#### 1. God is faithful even when we are not (Genesis 12:20-13:4)

- a) Abram came out of Egypt better than he went in (Genesis 12:20)
- b) When we have a lapse in faith, we should go back to the place where we first departed from God (Genesis 13:1-4)
- c) **Key Lesson: The victorious Christian life is a life of new beginnings.**

#### 2. Handle your conflicts with wisdom and grace (Genesis 13:5-9)

- a. “Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together. And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram’s livestock and the herdsmen of Lot’s livestock.” (13:5-7a)
- b. Lessons
  - i. We may have riches as long as riches don’t have us.
  - ii. Wealth can be both a blessing and a curse.
- c. “Now the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land.” (13:7b)
  - i. Abram and lot were having their conflict in full view of unbelievers
  - ii. Christian conduct can adversely impact our testimony
- d. Genesis 13:8-9: “Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers.<sup>2</sup> Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me; if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left.”

- e. In these two verses, we learn a great deal about how to appropriately handle conflict.
  - i. Believers should take the initiative to resolve conflict
  - ii. Believers should show tenderness and restraint in the conflict resolution process
  - iii. Believers should learn how to wait on God

### **3. We need to learn how to view life from an eternal perspective**

- a. Genesis 13:10-13. “Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere—this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah—like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar. So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other. Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD.”
- b. In Lot’s actions we can see the downward spiral of sin. (James 1:14-14)
  - i. Lot chose himself over the concerns of others
  - ii. Lot chose his occupation over his family
    - 1. He had flocks and herds but he did not have an altar
  - iii. Lot chose the here and now over the hereafter.

### **4. We need to express confidence in God’s promises (Genesis 13:14-18)**

- a. “Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered.” (Genesis 13:14-16)

- b.** God spoke to Abram after he made the decision to obey. The thing that stood in his way was disobedience. God removed that barrier by separating him from Lot.
- i.** God wants to bless us, but He wants us to choose to obey Him.
  - ii.** We must stop trading the blessings of God for the scraps of the world.
- c.** God promised to give the land to Abram and his descendents forever (13:15)
- d.** God promised that Abram's heir would be his own seed (offspring) (13:15-16)
- e.** God promise that Abram's offspring would be too numerous to count. (13:16)
- f.** In the end, Lot who sought this world lost it, and Abram who was willing to give up anything for the honor of God found it. Providentially, Abram had not lost a thing. The rolling grasslands greedily seized by Lot were still his, every stick and stone. The promises of God were not thwarted by the unselfishness of Abram and the materialism of Lot. God's arithmetic is not like ours. According to us if we subtract one from one we have nothing. But, according to God, if we subtract one from one, we still have everything. Jesus said, "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life" (Matt 19:29). That is God's arithmetic. Have faith in the sovereignty of God. He will be faithful to every one of His promises