

Abraham Part 2

The Road Not Taken

Genesis 13

Memory Verses: Genesis 13:8-9

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

We all struggle don't we, when we come to a fork in the road, to know which way to go? And not necessarily literal road, but choices. You could choose what's behind door 1 or what's behind door 2. You could choose to go to this college or that college, you could choose to buy this car or that car, you could choose to work at this job or that job. You could buy this house or that house. You see, every single day we are faced with one of two or three choices and you must choose which road you will walk down. Sometimes these are trivial decisions that mean very little, and sometimes these are life defining decisions that mean a great deal.

We can learn a lot from the Bible when it comes to making

choices. **Proverbs 14:12** tells us that there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. **Matthew 7:13-14** speaks of two paths. The path of the narrow gate which is less traveled and the path of the broad gate which is heavily traveled. The narrow path leads to life, the broad path to death. In this case the Bible makes it's case, the road less traveled is probably the better one. Regardless of which path you choose, remember **Proverbs 16:9**; the heart of man plans is way, but the Lord establishes his steps.

Last week we saw Abraham on the path of faith veer onto the path of fear. This week we will once again see Abraham faced with a choice of faith; will he take the broad path or the path less traveled? When faced with a difficult choice will he prove faithful or fearful. And when his nephew Lot is given some of the same choices how will he fare? Let's begin where we left off last week in **Genesis 13:1-5**.

You will notice that Abraham has left Egypt with Lot and is back on track with where God wanted him. You will also notice that Abraham has been blessed by God, even in the land of Egypt. Abraham returns to Bethel to worship God. This is all good. We are seeing that when one leans into the promises of God, God proves himself faithful and true. But notice verse 5. Lot, who has traveled with Abraham from Ur to Haran to Canaan to Egypt, and now back to Canaan is also wealthy with a lot of possessions and that sets the stage for a confrontation of the two.

Through the story of Abraham and Lot we will be challenged to **choose the road of faith, which is often the road less traveled.**

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to see this morning is that... **Abraham chose relationship over real estate**. Look with me at **Genesis 13:6-8**. In the land where Abraham and Lot had settled, the land around Bethel and Ai, there was not enough vegetation and water to feed both of their herds. This shows us that yes, their herds were very large. But it also shows us that, though the land was plentiful, either Abraham or Lot was unwilling to spread out further. You know like when you are looking for a parking place at Walmart and instead of parking further out where there are plenty of spots you drive around for thirty minutes waiting for a better spot. I think we can deduce from the rest of the passage that it wasn't Abraham who was unwilling to spread out. Here we begin to see a little about the character of both of these men. We can assume that Abraham was willing to share the land and spread out further, while Lot was consistently encroaching upon his uncle's land. Where lot is selfish and self-centered, Abraham is selfless and kind.

And so here we see Abraham make his first choice. He becomes a peacemaker and offers Lot any portion of land in all of Canaan. Remember, the promise of the land is to Abraham, not Lot. In God's eyes, the whole of

Canaan is to be Abraham's to do with as he chooses. Lot is simply along for the ride. And yet, to make peace and keep a good relationship with Lot, Abraham offers Lot any of the land that he wants. When it comes down to whether Abraham cares more about real estate or relationships he clearly chooses the latter. He's not going to let his nephews herd go hungry or thirsty. He's not going to send his nephew back to Haran. No, he's going to provide for his nephew. And, he's going to provide for him even though he's got some personality issues. When it came to family relations, Abraham chooses the better route, the road less traveled.

And this is where we can also learn a valuable lesson. The things that God gives you are not just for you to enjoy. **God blesses you with what you have so that you can be a blessing to others.** Especially those of your own family. **1 Timothy 5:8** reminds us that if we don't take care of our family we are worse than unbelievers. **It's sorry when parents choose bigger and better toys for themselves while they fail to provide the needs of their kids. It's sorry when children shuffle their aging parents off into some nursing home so they don't have to hassle with them anymore. It's sorry when brothers and sisters fail to help out family members who have lost their jobs or are going through a rough time because they are too selfish to give from their coffers. And I know there are always exceptions to this. We don't want to be enablers of lazy and irresponsible people. Nor do we want to neglect our immediate family for extended family. I get that, but we must understand the principle here; the Bible teaches that other than God, there is no higher priority than our own family.** Abraham recognized this. He made Lot a priority and decided to sacrifice some of his God-given property to him. Abraham knew the importance of relationships over real estate. He knew the importance of faith over family strife. **Choose the road of faith, which is often the road less traveled.**

The next thing we need to see is that... **Abraham chose God over greed.** Look with me at **Genesis 13:9**. So Abraham has agreed to give Lot any portion of the land, but how does this look practically. Simple, from where they were they would divide the land from the left and the right. Which ever portion Lot chose, Abraham would take the other. The portion to the right was better than the portion on the left. The portion to the right was the Jordan valley, lush with vegetation, water, cities, and trade routes. The portion to the left was also good, but not as good. This is interesting for a couple of reasons. First, Abraham again does not know which path Lot will choose, and so once again Abraham is a man who doesn't know where he is going. This shows us Abraham's faith in God. It doesn't matter which portion of land Lot chooses, Abraham will be content in having the other half. Which ever plot of land God wants Abraham to have is okay with him. But this is also interesting

because from a financial standing Abraham is giving up a fortune. He is not just giving Lot a place to stay. He is giving him the best place to stay. He is giving Lot way more than he needs. Some would say he is not just being generous but that he is being too generous, too benevolent. If you were in a similar situation what would you do? Would you give your somewhat bratty nephew a better piece of land than you would take for yourself? What is the determining factor in how you would make this decision? Is it faith or fear. Is it godliness or greed? **Our focus on God is often the greatest factor in how we make our decisions.** Here's why Abraham makes the choice he does. Because Abraham doesn't see the way many of us see. Abraham sees with eyes of faith. Abraham is no longer led by the ways of this world, he is led by God's sovereignty. Again, Abraham takes the road less traveled, road of faith, and it made all the difference. Abraham is defined by the road not taken! The road of greed and selfishness was not his path. **Choose the road of faith, which is often the road less traveled.**

The next thing we need to see is that... **Lot chose worldliness over wisdom.** Look with me at **Genesis 13:10-13**. Whereas Abraham has chosen to handle this entire situation by placing his faith in God's hands. It appears that Lot has had a different approach. Where Abraham looked to God with eyes of faith, Lot looked and saw with his own eyes the seemingly perfect Jordan valley. Where Abraham let God choose, Lot chose for himself. Lot literally chose the road more traveled. Sodom was a city sitting right along one of the major trade routes of the Middle East. Caravans would travel the road regularly and in Lot's mind this probably meant more excitement and more opportunities for making money. Fertile land, excitement, entertainment, opportunity, wealth, parties... it was the whole package. Many would even suggest this was a wise decision on Lot's part. Lot certainly thought it was. But looks can be deceiving can't they? You see, **vs13** tells us what was really up. Lot most likely didn't know this at first, but I'm sure he came to realize it soon, that Sodom was a place of wickedness and evil. Lot didn't live in Sodom, for now, just on the outskirts. But he didn't move further away. Eventually he moved within the city walls. So get this, when confronted with the wickedness of the city, he compromised. Yes, they are wicked, but the amenities of the city life were worth the trade off for now. This is bad. Lot is selling his soul and he doesn't even know it. **When we make our decisions based on worldly factors rather than the wisdom of God, we could be selling our souls and not even know it.** **How many people do you know like this. They mean well, they claim to love God, but little by little they compromise their faith to enjoy more of the world's amenities. A family gets more involved in travel sports which takes away from church and before you know it, they aren't even around anymore. Or a family starts having some of their non-christian friends over on Saturdays, and then they start partying a little, and before you know it they are gone.**

Or dad gets a new job that pays a lot more money. They have all this new stuff. But they had to move away from their church and they never really find a new one. Often choosing the more exciting, the more financially beneficial road, doesn't mean it was the best road. In fact, more times than not, it's probably not. Lot chose poorly. **Proverbs 1:7** tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. True wisdom always begins with a faith in God. **Choose the road of faith, which is often the road less traveled.**

Lastly, we must see that... **God chose blessing for belief.** Look with me at **Genesis 13:14-18**. Of course with all roads and choices, God ultimately makes the decision. Here God chooses to bless Abraham even more. Evidently, he is pleased with the way Abraham handled this situation with Lot. God is certainly pleased when we act in faith. God blesses Abraham by expounding upon his original promise in three ways. First, God promises Abraham that he will have countless descendants. Secondly, God tells Abraham that all of the land he can see in every direction will be his. Third, God tells Abraham that it won't just be a temporary possession, but that the land would be his forever. Certainly Abraham is encouraged by this. Though he temporarily lost some of his best land and though his Nephew had made some unwise decisions, God assures Abraham that he chose the right road and that it will all be okay in the end. It reminds me of **Matthew 16:24-26**. Abraham wasn't trying to save his life, but in doing so God saved him. He found real life in living by faith in God. Abraham knew that his soul was not for sale and that there was no room for compromising to gain the world. And yet, God gave him the world.

And look how Abraham finishes this story. By building an altar to God and worshipping Him. God gives, Abraham has more faith, God sees his faith and gives him more, Abraham sees God's goodness and worships him more. **Faith leads to blessing and blessing leads to worship.** Faith is often the road less traveled. Worship is often the road less traveled. Take the road less traveled and it will make all the difference. **Choose the road of faith, which is often the road less traveled.**

Application

You stand at a fork in the road today. Are you going to choose the things of this world or are you going to choose faith in God. You can choose real estate or relationships, you can choose greed or God, you can choose wealth or wisdom, you can choose blessing or cursing... your choice. Our prayer would be that you would choose to place your faith in God and not the things of this world.

You say, how do I place my faith in God and not the world?

Easy, choose to place your faith in Jesus Christ and make him the Lord of your life. Replace more money with more of Jesus. Replace more comfort with more of Jesus. Replace your sinfulness with more of Jesus.

Conclusion

Looking back again at **Matthew 7:13-14**. The narrow gate is Jesus. The narrow path is the path of a Christian. Choose the narrow path, the road less traveled, and it will make all the difference. **Choose the road of faith, which is often the road less traveled**