

Turn in your Bible to Genesis Chapter 20. May I say that Matthew and I both are glad to be out of Chapters 18 and 19. But, those chapters are in Scripture, and it needs to be taught! I believe we have learned a lot, no pun intended, about God and our obedience to the Lord. We have seen the mercy, love of God and also his justice that is served to an obstinate, prideful heart that refuses to repent and surrender our lives to the one who has all power, all authority over all the universe. We have once again been reminded of the authority of God's Word and that it contains all truth and directs us to the fact that disobedience to God's Word is sin.

Because of sin there is a constant battle that goes on within the spiritual realm of this universe. I named tonight's teaching, The Battle Within, because of that constant battle. Ephesians 6 verse 12 tells us what, bible scholars, ***"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."***

Each person, saved, think I'm saved, and the unsaved, is in this battle!

***The unsaved***, the lost, Satan is battling with them to keep them blind. Pastor Kevin alluded to this verse two Sundays ago.

### ***2 Corinthians 4:3-4***

***<sup>3</sup> And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those that are perishing. <sup>4</sup> In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.***

Satan will use, you're a good person! Pride! Fear! What will people think? I am going to have to give this up or that up! Whatever fear that is keeping you back from repenting, whatever else you are clinging to that is keeping you from surrendering your life to Jesus. It is not worth spending eternity in Hell!

***The think I'm saved***. Satan will whisper, you're okay. You walked the aisle, you were baptized, you don't live like you are follower of Jesus, but don't worry about that. You're living more like the world, spouting the mantra's of today instead of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus. Don't worry!!

***The saved***. Satan is seeking to tempt us, discourage us, to discredit our witness, to keep us off balance.

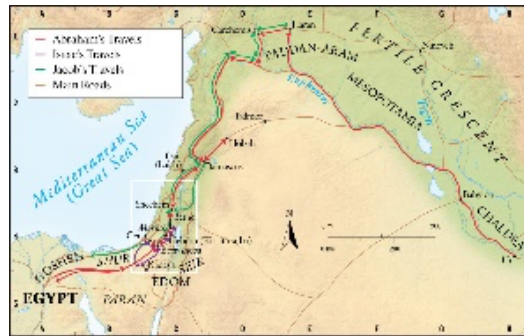
***Revelation 12:10*** describes Satan as the accuser of the brethren day and night before God. Isn't that what he does to us? You? A follower of Jesus? Ha! Look at what you use to do! That's the point! What I use to do, Satan! What I use to do! ***Satan is described as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8)***. In James 5 verse 7 we read that we are to ***"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."*** Revealing to us what? Satan is going to come after us!

Though we are saved does that mean we will never sin? Nope! We will sin! There are times we may become apathetic! There are times that we will exhibit fear more than faith. Just like what we are about to see here with Abraham. Let's read a few of our verses for tonight. Genesis Chapter 20 verses 1 and 2.

### ***Genesis 20:1-2***

***<sup>1</sup> From there Abraham journeyed toward the territory of the Negeb and lived between Kadesh and Shur; and he sojourned in Gerar. <sup>2</sup> And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.***

First, why is Abraham moving? We don't know particularly. It could be to move away from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. It could be God told him to move. We just don't know definitely. What we begin to see though is the relationship that Abraham begins to have with the other nations, or cities around him. Look at this map and let's see where he ended up.



Abraham leaves Mamre and heads south. If you can see where all the different colored lines converge is where Abraham and his family end up in Gerar. The verses tell us that he lived between Kadesh and Shur and sojourns means, he traveled and ended up in Gerar. And what does Abraham do when he arrives in Gerar! Lies!

Does the thought of, "Did you not learn anything from the first time you did this Abraham?" Some of you may be saying, "The first time?" Maybe not! Remember when there was a famine in the land of Canaan and Abraham heads south again but ended up in Egypt. He tells the Pharaoh that Sarah is his sister and what a mess that made for Abraham. Now, we are going to see some similarities but there are a few things that are different as well.

Though south, at least Gerar was still in the land of Canaan. But the outcome was still the same. Abraham lied saying that Sarah was his sister and Sarah was put in danger. We are still in this timeline of before the son of promise was to be born. Here is Sarah now in the harem of the king of Gerar, Abimelech.

Who was Abimelech? We don't know much about him other than what we have read and will read in the rest of the verses. Abimelech is pagan, he does not have faith in Jehovah God, but he does show some integrity here.

The lie of Abraham has put he and Sarah in quite a predicament, but God steps in. Let's read verses 3 to 7

### ***Genesis 20:3-7***

***<sup>3</sup> But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife." <sup>4</sup> Now Abimelech had not approached her. So he said, "Lord, will you kill an innocent people? <sup>5</sup> Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this." <sup>6</sup> Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that you have done this in the integrity of your heart, and it was I who kept you from sinning against me. Therefore I did not let you touch her. <sup>7</sup> Now then, return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, so that he will pray for you, and you shall live. But if you do not return her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."***

We see here some of the integrity that Abimelech had. Not only did Abraham's lie put Sarah and himself in a predicament but it also put Abimelech in a tough situation to say the least. But God, appeared in a dream to Abimelech and reveals the truth to him. Now, we see through Scripture that God has used pagan kings, pagan people to the point that it had to do with protecting his people.

Hiram, king of Tyre, supplied Solomon with all the cedar and cypress to build the Temple. We learned from the book of Ezra that Cyrus, the Persian king, was used to release the Israelites from Babylonian captivity to go back home and rebuild Jerusalem. Yes! God used pagan kings to bring Israel into judgment because of their sin. The purpose and the goal! To bring them to repentance and turn in obedience back to him. What is the first problem with that scenario? Sin!

God will let us make decisions that cause consequences in our life because we have chosen to not put faith in him and to take matters into our own hands.

God came to Abimelech and told him the severity of the situation he was in. God told him, “You are a dead man for taking Sarah!” Well, that is no different than anyone else that has not repented of their sin and surrendered their life, by faith, to the Lord Jesus. Turn to Ephesians 2.

### ***Ephesians 2:1-3***

***<sup>1</sup> And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience – <sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.***



This path has been laid out and it is going to eventually end up somewhere. In our lost, sinful self our lives are set out on a certain course. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. In our unrepentance, our sin nature, our flesh we are following Satan. At the end of our course in this state there is Hell!

But God! Look at verses 4 and 5 of Ephesians 2.

### ***Ephesians 2:4-5***

***<sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved.***

God came to Abimelech to show him his sin and the depths and the dire strait his sin has put himself in.



God also came to all of mankind to show us our sin and the depths of our sin and it was through his Son, Jesus Christ as he was butchered on the cross of calvary to show us how wicked our sin is.

Our salvation is through repentance and life of obedience, by faith, to the Lord Jesus Christ and his Word.

Think about your life for those that are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. How many times could we say, “But God!” Or “If it had not been for God!” I want to speak specifically to a sinful act or even that you may have

taken a direction in your life that God was not leading you in. The battle rages on in our lives to try to feed that sin nature at times. The battle also rages that we do what we think is the best for our lives.

### ***1 Corinthians 10:12-13***

***<sup>12</sup> Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. <sup>13</sup> No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.***

Look around at these exit signs that are above each door. God provides a way not to commit sin, God provides a way to not go down a path of heartache and pain from a bad decision. We must be in his Word, and we must be praying so we can hear that voice or that check in our spirit from the Holy Spirit!

In the verses we just read, look at what God did for Abimelech! Verse 4 made very clear that Abimelech did not touch Sarah. Abimelech also asks God, if he would kill an innocent man. He, Abraham told me she was his sister. Now here is a twist. She, Sarah, said he was her brother. Out of the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I did this. God said, I know, it was I who kept you from sinning against me. Therefore, I did not let you touch her.

So, when God shows us and provides us the way of escape, will we adhere to his leading.

God tells Abimelech the solution for the situation he is in. Look at verse 7 again.

### ***Genesis 20:7***

***<sup>7</sup> Now then, return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, so that he will pray for you, and you shall live. But if you do not return her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."***

A couple of things to look at in this one verse. First, the solution! Return Sarah to Abraham Abimelech, saved! We also see that Abraham is called a prophet and that is the first time that anyone in Scripture had been called prophet. What is a prophet? A prophet was a representative of God who would proclaim God's Words, "Thus says the Lord", to the nation of Israel and anyone else within ear shot.

God is showing that Abimelech did not have a relationship with him and was needing Abraham to pray to intercede for Abimelech in his lost condition.

So, Abimelech has the solution before him! Did he have a choice? Obey or not to obey? Sure! Yes! What was the choice? Life or Death!

What did God say to Adam and Eve? Listen, Listen!

### ***Genesis 2:16-17***

***<sup>16</sup> And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup> but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."***

Did they have a choice? Sure! In both cases God spoke directly to Adam and Eve, God spoke directly to Abimelech and they both had the choice to obey or not obey. That choice is presented to everyone in this world as well. God has spoken directly to all mankind through Jesus Christ!

***For God so loved the world the he gave his only Son, that whosoever believe in him should not perish but have eternal life. Life or Death!***

What did Abimelech do? Let's read verses 8 to 13

***Genesis 20:8-13***

***<sup>8</sup> So Abimelech rose early in the morning and called all his servants and told them all these things. And the men were very much afraid. <sup>9</sup> Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? And how have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and my kingdom a great sin? You have done to me things that ought not to be done." <sup>10</sup> And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you see, that you did this thing?" <sup>11</sup> Abraham said, "I did it because I thought, 'There is no fear of God at all in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.' <sup>12</sup> Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. <sup>13</sup> And when God caused me to wander from my father's house, I said to her, 'This is the kindness you must do me: at every place to which we come, say of me, "He is my brother."'"***

Abimelech could have slept in that day. Abimelech could have said, "Well, God, I hear you, but I am not going to repent, I am not going to submit, I am not going to listen! Abimelech, in your pride, then you will die! Not just on this earth, but for all of eternity!

What we just read though is that Abimelech got up early. Praise the Lord he couldn't gather his servants together fast enough to discuss what God has said and what they needed to do. These men could have been and most likely were in the decision for Abimelech to take Sarah. Abimelech then calls for Abraham and he gets a pretty good rebuke from Abimelech. Look at verses 9 and 10 again.

***Genesis 20:9-10***

***<sup>9</sup> Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? And how have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and my kingdom a great sin? You have done to me things that ought not to be done." <sup>10</sup> And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you see, that you did this thing?"***

When we are in open and blatant sin a sign of maturity is able to take a rebuke in love to help get us back on course in obedience to the Lord. I get it, we could go off of all kinds of tangents here with this. ***Judge not less you be judged. Need to show grace!*** This is what Scripture tells us though. ***We are to be holy because God is holy! The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us to deny ungodliness in this present world.*** More on all that in a moment.

Abraham takes the rebuke pretty well. Abraham tells Abimelech he was afraid! I thought there was no fear of God here and you would just kill me for my wife. I was reminded something here that I had totally forgot. Sarah was actually Abraham's half-sister. They had the same father but different mothers. Remember Abraham and his family were pagan's before God called Abraham out to go to the land that he would show them and make a great nation from him. As we have read, this was the plan the whole time as they journeyed from Ur until God told them to stop.

In those verses we saw two kinds of fear.

1. Fear of God
2. Fear of Man

Who was showing the fear of God and who was showing the fear of man? Abimelech was showing more fear, more reverence towards God than Abraham, "THE PROPHET", was showing. Our lack of faith in God and our fear of man can put ourselves and others in a situation to sin as well. Our sin does not only affect us, but it can

also cause others to sin or stumble in their relationship with the Lord or even keep someone from seeing their need of salvation and a relationship with the Lord.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 2:3 these words, ***Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.***

That goes to the verse from Romans 14, ***“It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble.”*** That pertains to anything! You can put, ***It is good not to ..... or anything that causes your brother to stumble.***

This show of fear, did it sound familiar?

We saw this last week when Matthew taught. Lot in his fear left Zoar and ended up in a cave. Fear drove Lot’s daughters to devise a scheme of the utmost perversion.

Fear of our circumstances or fear of man can cause us to make illogical decisions. Matthew said this last week when it pertains that if we will fear God it puts in a situation to be bold and not fear all that is around us.

***The FEAR OF THE LORD produces GODLINESS, which is a “Godward attitude,” or an attitude that desires to PLEASE GOD. This fear leads us to live with God as the SINGULAR CONSTANT in our lives, the uncompromising conviction that His will for our lives doesn’t change or move; everything else in our lives BENDS AROUND THAT TRUTH. This fear is proper and good. It’s WORSHIP.***

Fear, show reverence, trust, put faith in God and we worship! Fear man, not worship!

What happened after Abimelech confronted Abraham. Let’s read verses 14 to 18.

#### ***Genesis 20:14-18***

***<sup>14</sup> Then Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and male servants and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and returned Sarah his wife to him. <sup>15</sup> And Abimelech said, “Behold, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you.” <sup>16</sup> To Sarah he said, “Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver. It is a sign of your innocence in the eyes of all who are with you, and before everyone you are vindicated.”***

***<sup>17</sup> Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, and also healed his wife and female slaves so that they bore children. <sup>18</sup> For the Lord had closed all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.***

Well, Abimelech and Abraham talked, and they worked it out. Another lesson we can learn from this situation. Talk, ask the question, communicate, seek to work things out.

We started out tonight talking about how there is a battle within that we face whether we are not saved or saved. Satan will seek to continue to blind those that are lost to the light of the Gospel. Satan will try to steal our joy, he will come along and seek to knock us off balance. Satan will seek to diminish our witness, putting temptation in front of us and if we are not prepared can sin.

The battle is real! The Apostle Paul, in Romans 7 describes this battle that can go on in our lives very well. Look at these verses.

#### ***Romans 7:15-20***

***<sup>15</sup> For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. <sup>16</sup> Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. <sup>17</sup> So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. <sup>18</sup> For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire***

*to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. <sup>19</sup> For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.*

The law is good that it shows us our sin. There the battle ensues. In our flesh in our sinful nature, we sin but do we loath that sin or do we take pleasure in that sin. The Apostle Paul shows us that though the battle is real we do not have to succumb to the temptations, to the flesh. In verse 24 it reads:

*Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.*

We are a new creation and we do not have to be under the tyranny of sin. This is not done under our own power. It is through Jesus Christ through whom we die to our sinful nature and are made new and we are led by the Holy Spirit into holy living.

1 Corinthians Chapter 9, verses 24-27, the Apostle Paul uses a couple of sports analogies. He talks about runners, he talks about athletes in general, he talks about boxing, and he uses two words that if they are to be successful, they are to do two things. Use self-control and discipline themselves. Those words can be used together because if you discipline yourself then you are using self-control.

We can have victory over our sin. I am not saying we will be perfect but as I read from a book by Paul Washer. Being regenerated through repentance and surrendering to the Lord Jesus does not mean we become:

**Sinless**

**SIN LESS**

How do we discipline ourselves. I go back to Ephesians 6, we put on the armor of God, belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shoes to take the gospel everywhere, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, and sword, the Word of God! Take it out of its sheath and wield it! One thing we leave out sometimes is from verse 18, Prayer.

If we are in Christ, the realization that we are not what we use to be, we were one way but now we are different should motivate us to seek to honor, to please our Savior. I want to close with this short video from the Chosen.