

Genesis 20-21 – 7 November 2019

“God’s Grace Exceeds Our Sin”

Introduction

Chapter 12 begins with Abraham making a great commitment to God by leaving Ur of the Chaldees and coming into the land of Canaan.

Chapter 12-14 – then shows us Abram, the peacemaker, his resilience, his loyalty and integrity.

Chapter 15-17 is the primary Biblical text showing us that Belief + Nothing = Righteousness

Chapter 18-19 – Ab prayed for / had influence on Lot

Tonight, we’ll see 4 Ways that God’s grace exceeds our sin

Chapter 20:1-6 presents the 1st Way that God's grace exceeds our sin: It limits our sin

Read 20:1

1. As the Bedouins today, Abe was a wanderer.
2. Lot wanted a city, Abe wandered.
3. Read Heb 11:9-10
4. Gerar is an area of the Philistines

Read 20:2

1. This is Abe's 2nd time doing this
2. 1st time was in Egypt with Pharaoh

Read 20:3-5

1. Sometimes God allows sin & sometimes not.
2. Abe's (sexual) failure with Hagar was allowed resulting in added blessing for Hagar.
3. Abe's (sexual) failure with Abimelech & Sarah wasn't allowed resulting in protections for the promised seed.

Read 20:6

1. People ask:
 - a. Why does God allow sin?
 - b. Why does God allow suffering?
2. Maybe we need to realize how much sin and suffering God is limiting or not allowing.
3. What is the worst sin ever was...a paper cut?
4. (Talk about the Free Will Argument)
5. Our sin is so bad that if it's not limited, everyone on earth would be dead.
 - a. Read Matt 24:21-22
6. We shouldn't be mad at God for allowing sin (and love), we should praise him for limiting my foolish mistakes with their consequences.

Chapter 20:7-13 presents the 2nd Way that God's grace exceeds our sin: It forgives repeat sin

Read 20:7-10

1. Here called a prophet, Abe is known as the Father of Faith.
 - a. Bible gives him as our example!
2. This is realistic to give this type of example.
3. So comforting to know that Abe had lapses of faith just like we do.
4. REMEMBER that this is *repeat* sin for Abe.
 - a. Sometimes God allows us to take the test 2 or 3 times, how gracious.
 - b. Repeated sin doesn't mean it's hopeless, it means that you're weak and need to be strengthened.
 - c. Peter – “When you're restored strengthen your brothers”.

Now look at Abe's 3 excuses for his repeat sin in chapter 20:11-13

1. Read Vs 11
 - a. As related to God
 - b. The result of our situations doesn't depend on if "they" fear God, but on if "I" fear God.
2. Read Vs 12
 - a. As related to himself
 - b. If you only tell half of the truth, even if that part is true, you're being deceiving.
3. Read Vs 13
 - a. As related to others
 - b. I had a previous agreement with others that I couldn't break.
 - c. If the agreement was sinful, break it!
4. Don't make excuses for repeat sin, just turn from it!

Chapter 20:14-18 presents the 3rd Way that God's grace exceeds our sin: It blesses us even in the very sinful times.

Read 20:14-18

1. Abimelech has more respect for God here than Abraham does
2. How sad when the world makes the church look like moral fools.
3. So Abimelech is restored but Abe is blessed in a big way!
 - a. The best time to shed grace on someone is in the moments when they most think that they don't deserve it.
 - b. "What thank have ye" from Luke 6

Now, as we open chapter 21, we finally see the fulfillment of the promised child to come, Isaac.

Read 21:1-8

1. Thru all the sin and taking matters into their own hands, the promised child has finally come!!
2. God may not perform His promises as quickly as we want Him to, but He DOES do it.
3. Turn to Rom 4:16-25

Chapter 21:9-21 presents the 4th Way that God's grace exceeds our sin: It offers a new beginning.

Read 21:9-11

1. This was hard for Abe, it was his son.

Read 21:12-14

1. Ishmael was around 16 yr old and would be considered of age.
2. Vs 12 – “For in Isaac shall thy seed be called”

- a. The story of Ezra 9-10 while coming back into the land.
 - i. Married wives and had children
 - ii. The Lord commanded to put them away.
 - iii. Two ways to look at this
 - 1. This isn't forsaking Ishmael or the heathen children.
 - 2. This is protecting the Godly lineage to come!

Read 21:15-16

- 1. Both Abe and Hagar had every reason to believe that God would preserve Ishmael on this journey.
 - a. Hagar – Read Gen 16:11-12
 - b. Abraham – Read Gen 17:20
- 2. But they would need to exercise faith.

Read 21:17-21

1. Ishmael became the father of the Arabs
2. Ishmael became a picture of “The Law”, Isaac became a picture of “Grace”.
 - a. Read Gal 3:16
 - b. Turn to Gal 4:21-31
3. The Law is only there until grace and be embraced.
 - a. The Law = schoolmaster leading to Christ.

Abraham makes covenant with Abimelech (vs 22-34)

Read 21:22-23

1. Most likely another Abimelech (it was a title)
2. Abimelech recognized God’s blessing on Abe

Read 21:24-25

1. Abe takes the opportunity to bring up this well.
2. Notice Abe didn’t complain about this before, he just let it go.

Read 21:26-34

1. And thus the story of Ishmael being separated from the promised seed to come Isaac.

Conclusion –

Today we've looked at 4 Ways that God's grace exceeds our sin

1. **It limits our sin**
 - a. Don't focus on the sin that's being allowed, but praise God that He limit our sin and its consequences.
2. **It forgives repeat sin**
 - a. Praise God that even our example of faith Abraham was subject to lapses like us.
3. **It blesses us even in the very sinful times**
 - a. This is the most effective time to see grace
4. **It offers a new beginning**
 - a. Don't dwell on the consequences of your sin, but praise God that every day can be a new start.