

# Covenant Intercession

Grace Fellowship | Cory Hughes | Genesis 18:16–33

If you have your Bibles, open them to Genesis chapter 18. We're going to be looking at verses 16 through 33 this morning. Last week, we saw three men come to visit Abraham and Sarah under the oaks of Mamre. Two of those men were angels, and one was Yahweh Himself. And they shared the good news with Abraham and Sarah that by this time next year, Sarah would have a son. We pick up the story now in verse 16.

Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way. The Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has promised him. Then the Lord said, Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to Me. And if not, I will know.

So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord. Then Abraham drew near and said, Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will You then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just? And the Lord said, If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake.

Abraham answered and said, Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will You destroy the whole city for lack of five? And He said, I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there. Again he spoke to Him and said, Suppose forty are found there. He answered, For the sake of forty I will not do it. Then he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there. He answered, I will not do it, if I find thirty there. He said, Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there. He answered, For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it. Then he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there. He answered, For the sake of ten I will not destroy it. And the Lord went His way, when He had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

I want to look at three things from this text this morning. First, I want us to see the intimacy of the covenant. The Lord says, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? This is an

incredible statement. God is choosing to reveal His plans to a man. Why? Because of the covenant relationship He has with Abraham. He calls him His friend. He has chosen him, not just for his own sake, but for the sake of the nations. This intimacy allows Abraham to stand before the Lord and to speak with Him openly.

Secondly, I want us to see the justice of the Judge. Abraham appeals to the character of God. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just? He knows that God is holy and that He must judge sin, but he also knows that God is merciful and that He does not delight in the death of the wicked. The outcry against Sodom was great because the sin was grave. Justice required an investigation and a response. God's judgment is never arbitrary; it is always based on truth and righteousness.

Finally, I want us to see the intercession of the friend. Abraham begins to plead for the city. He starts at fifty and works his way down to ten. He is interceding for a people who are not his own, though he has a relative, Lot, living there. He is bold in his requests, yet he is humble, recognizing that he is but dust and ashes. This is the heart of a covenant friend—one who cares about what God cares about and who is willing to stand in the gap for others.

As we look at this text, we see a shadow of the ultimate intercessor, Jesus Christ. Like Abraham, Jesus stood before the Father and pleaded for us. But He didn't just plead for the righteous; He died for the unrighteous. He took the judgment that we deserved so that we could be spared. He is the perfect friend of God who brings us into an intimate covenant relationship with Him.

Let's pray. Father, we thank Thee for Thy word. We thank Thee for the example of Abraham and for the reminder of Thy great justice and mercy. We pray that Thou wouldst grant us the heart of intercessors, that we would be a people who stand before Thee on behalf of others. And we thank Thee most of all for Jesus, our great intercessor, in whose name we pray, Amen.