

Discussion October 3 and 4:

1. Read Genesis 17-18.

Re-read our definition for Grace:

Grace can be seen as God's movement towards the sinner-saint; action that manifests as unmerited kindness towards the sinner-saint.

(*Remember* Kindness plays out more specifically than favor; kindness is specific blessings pertaining to the individual and the specific season they're in.)

Keeping this definition in mind, are you seeing any instances of Grace that you hadn't seen before?

2. Write Genesis 17.1 here:

How does God identify Himself in this verse?

Read Genesis 28.3, 43.14, and 48.3; how does God identify Himself in these verses?

What does God require of Abram in Genesis 17.1?

Has God required this of Abram yet?

Why do you think God is this Abram now?

3. Write Genesis 12.2 here:

Write Genesis 17.4-5 here:

Which part of Genesis 12.2 is God fulfilling with Genesis 17.4-5?

4. What promise does God make Abram in Genesis 17.16?

How does He “seal” that promise? (*Hint: Genesis 17.15)

How does Abram respond to this display of favor (Genesis 17.17)?

Has there ever been a time that the Lord has shown such favor to you that you have responded similarly (fall on face=humility that causes a physical response or laughter=uncontainable joy)?

5. What does Abram ask God in Genesis 17.18?

What is God’s response in Genesis 17.19?

If you're being honest, how does this make you feel?

6. Write Genesis 17.21 here:

Write Genesis 18.10 here:

What is Sarah's response in Genesis to this promise and its timing in Genesis 18.12?

What does the Lord ask Abram in Genesis 18.13-14?

What is Sarah's response to being questioned about her doubt?

Why do you think Sarah responded this way?

7. Write Psalm 25.14 here:

What is the Lord doing in Genesis 18.17-19?

8. Write Romans 3.5-6 here:

What is happening in Genesis 18.23-32?

Why do you think Abraham didn't stop at "50 people" or "45 people"? Why do you think he kept petitioning all the way to "10 people"?

If you're being honest, are you similar to Abraham and intercede for the welfare of the wicked or are you eager to see their destruction?

9. Incorporate Psalm 119.132 into your prayer time this week:

Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is your way with those who love your name.

October 3 and 4, 2023: God's Grace to Abraham and Sarah, 17-18

I. Events that have Impacted Abram thus far:

A. The Lord called Abram out of his country and his family to a land that he would show him.

B. Lot was a persistent source of trouble for Abram:

-Genesis 13.2-7: Strife erupts when Abram and Lot's possessions become too great for them to dwell together.

-Genesis 14.11-16: Abram, along with 318 of his associates, engage 4 Mesopotamian overlords to retrieve Lot, who was abducted as part of looted peoples and possessions.

C. Abram conceives Ishmael by Sarai's Egyptian servant, Hagar:

-Genesis 16.2-4: Sarai suggests to Abram that they obtain children through Hagar and Abram acquiesces.

17.1 *When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, 2 that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly." 3 Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him,*

i. Abram's communions with the Lord have been rare but extraordinary and they are loaded with Grace.

Genesis 12.1-4:

1 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." **4** So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

Genesis 13.14-17:

14 The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, 15 for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your

offspring forever. 16 I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. 17 Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you.

Genesis 15:4-5 and 13-21:

4 And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." 5 And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

13 Then the Lord said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. 14 But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. 15 As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. 16 And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." 17 When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. 18 On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, 19 the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, 20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, 21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites."

ii. It's been reckoned that Abram is about 86 when the Lord makes that covenant with him in Genesis 15.

"When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram..."

13 years of normal, mundane fellowship with God.

When we see the Lord delay in Scripture it's almost always so His glory can be magnified.

John 11:1-6, 14-15, 17, 21-27, 38-44:

1 Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. 3 So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." 4 But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God

may be glorified through it.” 5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was... 14 Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus has died, 15 and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”... 17 Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days... 21 Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.” 23 Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” 24 Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” 25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” 27 She said to him, “Yes, Lord: I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”... 38 Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. 39 Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.” 40 Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” 41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.” 43 When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.” 44 The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

“It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”

“and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe.”

A delay is because He’s doing something magnificent...something greater beyond the here and now.

“Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.”

Jesus amassed glory for the Godhead by doing this and He secured Salvation for countless followers and onlookers.

God delays Abram for about 13 years...for the same reason—so His glory would be that much more magnified when He did at last deliver on the promise of that long awaited son.

Delays are also Gracious because many times the delay is a display of kindness specific to the season you're in.

iii. After 13 years the Lord appears to Abram and says:
"I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless,

God Almighty: Hebrew, *El Shaddai*-almighty, most powerful

John 14.15:
If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

Abram had to know God in an intimate and personal way before he could walk with God like this and be blameless.

iv. Abram responds to all of this by falling on his face; it's a posture of humility for the Grace that he's been shown as well as adoration for the God who is enough.

17.4 *"Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. 5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. 6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you.*

i. Abram means "exalted father" or "high father."

Abraham means "father of a multitude."

Naming Abraham the father of a multitude is a Gracious honor—this is a permanent record of the Lord's will and pleasure for Abraham's life.

17.7 *And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. 8 And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." 9 And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. 10 This is my covenant, which*

you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. 11 You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. 12 He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, 13 both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. 14 Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

i. Ratifying that YHWH will be their God...that God Graciously gathered a people unto Himself through Abraham and will give them a land to dwell in.

17.15 *And God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. 16 I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.” 17 Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, “Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?” 18 And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before you!” 19 God said, “No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. 20 As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. 21 But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year.” 22 When he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham.*

i. The Lord changes Sarai’s name to Sarah (princess of multitudes) and tells Abraham the promised son will come from her.

ii. God’s promise to Abram for a son has come in degrees:

-*I will make of you a great nation, Genesis 12.2*

-*I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, Genesis 13.16*

-*Your very own son shall be your heir, Genesis 15.4*

-*Number the stars, if you are able to number them...So shall your offspring be, Genesis 15. 5*

iii. Abraham’s response is a laughter of joy, which prompts Isaac’s name which means “one who laughs” or “one who rejoices.”

iv. Abraham then intercedes for Ishmael.

Ephesians 3.20:

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us.

Hebrews 4.16:

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Psalms 145.9:

The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.

17.23 *Then Abraham took Ishmael his son and all those born in his house or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day, as God had said to him. 24 Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 25 And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 26 That very day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised. 27 And all the men of his house, those born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.*

i. Abraham's faith is at last impacting his actions.

18.1 *And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. 2 He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth 3 and said, "O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. 4 Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, 5 while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." 6 And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quick! Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes." 7 And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly. 8 Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate.*

i. Abraham and Sarah host the preincarnate Christ along with 2 other visitors.

This divine visit has 2 purposes:

- To assess Sodom and Gomorrah and
- To encourage Sarah

18.9 They said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?” And he said, “She is in the tent.”
10 The Lord said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. **11** Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. **12** So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?” **13** The Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’ **14** Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son.” **15** But Sarah denied it, saying, “I did not laugh,” for she was afraid. He said, “No, but you did laugh.”

i. Discussion is had between the men about the promised son but care is taken that Sarah can overhear the conversation.

Genesis 11.30: *Now Sarai was barren; she had no child.*

The Lord now shows unmerited favor on Sarah by disclosing that He will open her womb so that she too can participate in bringing about God’s chosen people and the Messiah.

Sarah laughs to herself. This isn’t a joyous laugh like Abraham’s. This is a derisive laugh that’s bred from doubt.

The Lord presses on Sarah’s doubt and unbelief, and sadly, she responds with yet another sin when she denies her laughter and doubt.

Just like Abraham, Sarah was chosen based on no merit of her own so none of her actions could undo God’s will and pleasure for her life.

2 Timothy 2.13:

If we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.

18.16 Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way. **17** The Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, **18** seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? **19** 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.” **20** Then the Lord said, “Because the outcry

against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, 21 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.” 22 So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord.

i. The Lord takes Abraham into His counsel regarding His plans for Sodom.

The Lord was bringing a great and mighty nation out of Abraham and Abraham was going to be responsible for communicating the revelation of God to that nation.

There were hundreds of souls living amongst Abraham and Sarah and God wanted them to understand this about Himself, but more than that a nation would need to understand this about their God as this was passed down generation to generation.

18.23 *Then Abraham drew near and said, “Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? 24 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? 25 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?” 26 And the Lord said, “If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake.” 27 Abraham answered and said, “Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. 28 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.” 29 Again he spoke to him and said, “Suppose forty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of forty I will not do it.” 30 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.” 31 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.” 32 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.” 33 And the Lord went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.*

i. Abraham hated the sin of Sodom but his intercession here proves that he loved the people of Sodom and wanted to see them turn to God.