

Announcements...

Good morning Arising Church!

Last Wednesday, during foundations, we said Lot sat at the gate of the city while his family was in chaos,  
Abraham was at the door while his family was in order.

**LOT** Genesis 19:1 (NIV)

19 The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground.

**ABRAHAM** Genesis 18:1 (NIV)

18 The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day.

Both verses are at the beginning of each chapter. The contrast is clearly visible and obvious and fully intentional by the author.

- Because of Abraham's proximity to his house his family was in order.
- Because of Lot's LACK of proximity to his house his family was in chaos.
- Abraham was chosen because he would teach his kids (Gen. 18:19)
- Lot was away from his family with everyone else doing way too much and that's why his family fell apart...

I was convicted by this. I should be careful in how much I am away from my home...anybody else feel like this?

BEN TESTIMONY: Recently, I have been battling thoughts that my life would turn out like Lot's. Jody is 5 days away from giving birth to our eighth child and we are about to begin school with 6 of them...(we timed that well...) and fears have started to grow in me that I do not have enough time to help her and not enough time to spend with the kids.

Even growing up this is something that my Dad did...and now I am repeating it...He devoted himself to the church, helping people, leading bible studies, and studying the

word. Getting time with him was hard to get. This would cause me to get very angry with him.

I could see myself repeating this. Trying to minister in the gate while my family is crumbling and in chaos...

Am I the only one? I know I am not the only one...

NICK TESTIMONY: No Pastor Ben, I too have had those fears...I know what it's like to watch my family become attached to one person after the next only to watch many leave. I have wondered if the people that i have brought into my home were bringing sin and worldliness in at a level my children had never known...would they become corrupted by it.

I have wondered if the attention i had to give to each person, to each couple, and to each family was taking away from my wife and my kids so that they would ultimately resent me and the ministry for having to share me so much. I have worried as i walked out the door to another meeting, as I left my wife behind if i was ruining them and would ultimately be disgraced as my family fell apart, disqualifying me from ministry and ruining my witness.

Can anyone relate to this?

This is what it can feel like:



We imagine it like this. I have to hold them in perfect balance. When we give time and energy to one, the other is neglected and suffers. Has anyone else ever felt this?

The conclusion seems to be  
ABRAHAM BY HIS HOUSE = GOOD  
LOT BY THE GATE = BAD

# **ABRAHAM NEAR HIS HOME = GOOD LOT AT THE CITY GATE = BAD**

**We have news for you.....**

**THIS IS NOT THE RIGHT CONCLUSION!!!!!!**

THE TRUTH IS when you look in the word...**RIGHTEOUS MEN ARE FOUND AT THE GATE:**  
**CASE IN POINT!!!**

**Prov 31:23**

- Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.....
  - This is from the famous passage about a woman of excellent character, meaning that this mans house was very well in order.

**Ruth 4:1-11**

- "Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz spoke was passing by, so he said, 'Turn aside, friend, sit down here.' And he turned aside and sat down."
  - Boaz conducted the legal transaction to redeem Ruth at the city gate in the presence of the elders, signifying the gate's role in legal matters.

**Job 29:7-8 (NIV):**

- 7 "When I went to the gate of the city and took my seat in the public square, 8 the young men saw me and stepped aside, and the old men rose to their feet;



- Job, a highly respected man in the community who is called righteous by God, speaks of the times when he took his seat in the public square.

So righteous men clearly are found at the gate...

Clearly we came to the wrong conclusion that Lot's family was in chaos because he was out doing ministry and that Abraham's family was doing so well because he was just at home all the time.

What then are we supposed to take away from Abraham and Lot concerning their families?

Let's take ANOTHER LOOK AT ABRAHAM

Read the SLIDE

## Abraham's Journey

- Obeying God led them into a famine
- Following her husband led her into other men's chambers
- Abraham took all the helpful men (318) to go rescue Lot...all the men were gone for days
- Brought strangers home, led to an impromptu feast
- Obeying God led to potentially killing only son

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- **Obeying God led to potentially killing only son**

So it was a lot less about Abraham just being home all the time and a lot more about trust...a lot more about submission and right order within the family...it was a lot more about Abraham trusting God and everyone in the household trusting the leading of the father.

**READ THE SLIDE:**

## Lot's Journey

- **Walked by sight, led his family into worldly comfort**
- **He was doubleminded about leaving, then so was his wife**
- **He surrounded himself with the sexually immoral, and his daughters became like the culture**
- **Lacked seriousness in relationships (son in laws)**

Ben Hefner

So what was it that caused Lot's family to be in chaos if it wasn't that he was just at the gate?



- Lead not in faith but by sight. His leadership and direction for his family was based on what seemed good in his own eyes as opposed to God directed.
- He was doubleminded and hesitated about whether to go and his wife, while leaving, turned back and was destroyed.
- Lack of convictions led to compromising situations that surrounded his family by wickedness.
- His stance of righteousness and seriousness about the kingdom of God/the commands of God led the men that were around him (son-in-laws) to consider him a joke.

It wasn't that he was busy about the Lord's business, there was chaos because he was a doubleminded man who lived by what he saw and felt. He was afraid and surrounded by sin, his wife was afraid, his daughters were sinful and his son in laws of course did not respect him. This had nothing to do with him living of faith obeying what God called him to.

The conclusion we are arriving at from studying **Abraham's life** is not that you need to protect your wife and kids from the effects of more ministry in your life...it's that you must obey God above all else and bring your family with you!

- His wife was put at risk as he walked by faith (he trusted, so she trusted)
- His son was about to be sacrificed (he trusted, so his son trusted)
  - His son was blessed because of it

- His servants went to war because he went to war
- His servants served in Gen 18 because he served
- All of Abraham's household followed his lead as he followed God

So the ACTUAL problem is that Lot didn't lead his family with faith. His FOCUS should have been bringing his family into his ministry calling. Bringing them along with him as he obeyed God. This is what Abraham did.

### **Numbers 14:3 (NIV)**

3 Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? **Our wives and children will be taken as plunder.** Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?"

### **Numbers 14:26–33 (NIV)**

26 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: 27 "How long will this wicked community grumble against me? I have heard the complaints of these grumbling Israelites. 28 So tell them, 'As surely as I live, declares the LORD, I will do to you the very thing I heard you say: 29 In this wilderness your bodies will fall—every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. 30 Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. 31 **As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected.** 32 But as for you, your bodies will fall in this wilderness. 33 Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the wilderness.

God gave the community a directive. Go into the promised land. It was clear. They saw giants and many reasons to be afraid in the land. And so they said we can't do what God has called us to do because of the effect it will have on our wives and children.

Men can you not hear even our present day struggle in this?

Worried about the effect that doing what God has assigned to us will have on our wives and children. It's too much for them...they need a break...can we find a different way...would it be okay if we just went back home...

God is furious with this attitude. He actually says in v.12 " I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them, but I will make you into a nation greater and stronger than they."

He is ready to destroy these people because of this mindset. Men you must end this cowardice, ungodly, pusillanimous approach toward obedience when you “fear for your wives and kids”. The desire of God was to bring these men along with their wives and children into all that He had planned for them.

But instead because of their cowardice and compromise he said, the children that you feared for will be the ones to go in, but you will stay stuck right where you are.

God cannot partner with this mentality. He can't console them or tell them it will be ok and then let them go into the land, because he knows this is in their hearts. It has just been exposed.

The word says, in verse 22, “none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice,”

- It says this is the tenth time that they have tested the Lord in this way!
- Men, God is patient with us to give us time to get the unbelief out of our hearts and help the unbelief in our family.
- But there will come a time when he will say, they will not obey my voice and he will move on to someone who will hear the voice of the Lord and obey.





- Guys this is what Nik and Judah and Payton and their wives are having to do right now...having to be away from their wives and children for months not knowing when they are going to see them again...would any of you blame them if they said, hey you know what, we have to go back to the states...we tried it in romania and it just didn't work out...our wives and kids were in a real rough spot so we had to turn around and go back...would you blame them?
- **THESE MEN WOULD NEVER STOOP TO THAT!!!!!!! THEY ARE NOT WEAK, COWARDICE PUSILLANIMOUS MEN WHO ABANDON THE CALL OF GOD ON THEIR LIVES BECAUSE IT IS TOO MUCH FOR THEIR WIVES AND KIDS**
- And to be honest men...when i hear the reasons that some of you are staying back from wednesday nights or other studies that are going on or why you just can't commit anymore...tell me it isn't for one of these reasons:
  - You are tired and fear you won't have the energy you need if you go
  - You fear you just don't have the capacity to do one more thing
  - You are afraid if you don't spend time with your family at home negative things will happen to them



- You are afraid of the effect that bringing your family will have on their energy and attitude

You can dress it up and call it something else like “oh this is the only time we have to do this other thing” or “oh we are trying to get our American kids on a new age sleep cycle” but the truth is fear is ruling your decisions

God is calling this church to step up and it is for a reason...I am pushing myself more than i ever have before and it is producing good fruit in so many including my family. Yes, I am tired, yes the grass at my house is not as pretty as it used to be...yes i don't get to some of the little projects around the house...yes i don't get to be on social media and youtube, instagram and tiktok as much but I am becoming more secure as a child of God...i am becoming a more confident husband and father, I am becoming more aware of the will of God for my life and others...so let the kids fall asleep on the chairs at church...let someone else watch the youtube videos, let the little projects fall by the wayside, let the grass grow...we have to take advantage of the time we have been given...

### **1 Corinthians 7:29 (NIV)**

29 What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not;

### **1 Corinthians 7:32–35 (NIV)**

32 I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord. 33 But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—34 and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. 35 I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

- Do you see what Paul is saying here??? TIME IS SHORT! Live lives as if you don't have wives...if he was saying that 2,000 years ago how much more now?
- “Married man is concerned about the affairs of this WORLD...how he can please his wife” **He is connecting a wife's pleasures, her whims, her wishes with affairs of this world!**

- Paul said it, not me...
- BEFORE ALL THE WOMEN get angry...he says the exact same thing about the husband's pleasures, whims, and wishes...They are affairs of this world.
- He calls us to LIVE IN A RIGHT WAY -> an undivided devotion to the LORD.
- Do you have an undivided devotion to the LORD?
- You been placed here in this body - with serious calls on your life - are you doing everything you can to take that call seriously, as if you didn't have a spouse?
- If you didn't have a spouse, what would you be doing differently? **PAUSE and answer that question to yourself right now.** If you answered that question with something that is Godly and for the LORD, then you should be doing those things anyway.

### Conversation

**Husband:** Hey let's go to foundations on wednesday night! (has been working a lot and deep down would like to relax but also wants to pursue the kingdom)

**Wife:** i'm so tired, why don't you just go and i'll stay back with the kids (is looking for pastoring here and needs encouragement that she can do this)

**Husband:** (feels guilty and can relate: (he is also tired) but feels guilty about making his wife do something when she is tired and thinks well maybe the kids can stay back and i can focus at church) "I really want you to come" he says (now he is in a negotiation with his wife about how to lead)

**Wife:** (sensing a lack of leadership) Baby, I've been so busy all day, and I haven't even had a chance to sit down. Tomorrow, we have all this going on, and I'd like to be able to stay back and get this done (she is now giving vision for the family...she might even add one more chance for the husband to lead, like "but if you want me to go I'll go" (this is a great response)

**Husband:** (feeling torn between what to do) ok, why don't you just stay home tonight and get all that done and I'll come home right after

**Wife:** (happy there is direction, but it came from her, not the husband. He abdicated his leadership to his wife)

- This unhealthy fear that we get that ministry is going to destroy our family leads to us feeling guilty and cutting off ministry to appease our wives (this is fear in US MEN leading to passivity!!!)
- Our wives pick up on this fear and they become afraid as well (their fear leads them to want to control and dictate what is done with the family and with the

time so they begin giving us direction and we feel if we give in to this we are “investing in our family”)

- Our children pick up on this dysfunction, wrong order and fear and they begin to throw fits, act out, manipulate and get both parents to abandon what God is trying to lead the family into...it's not their fault they are kids!!! They are just following your lead!!!

### **Luke 14:16–24 (NIV)**

16 Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests.

17 At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’

18 “But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’

19 “Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’

20 “Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’

21 “The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’

22 “ ‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’

23 “Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. 24 I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’ ”

- The actual issue is not that ministry and family are in conflict. The issue is that we have priorities other than the Lord for both ourselves AND our family.
- Excuses: their excuses are a little outdated, let's modernize them,
  - You are too busy
  - You are too tired
  - You would rather entertain yourself
  - You're afraid of the cost
- “Excuses are curses, and when you have no excuses left, there will be hope for you.” -Spurgeon

We want to read you two more passages.

The next one is from Deuteronomy...the Lord actually explains the purposes of the different trials and testings that you face, as we read this...men think about the difficulties you and your family are facing as you are deciding how deep you want to go into all that God has called you to...

### **Deuteronomy 8:2–7 (NIV)**

2 Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. 3 He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. 4 Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. 5 Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you.

6 Observe the commands of the LORD your God, walking in obedience to him and revering him. 7 For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land—a land with brooks, streams, and deep springs gushing out into the valleys and hills;

He was leading them into a desert...where would they get food? If they quit before trusting, they never would have known manna

What would they wear day after day...if they had been worried about their shoes and clothes wearing out and quit before going, they never would have seen the miraculous provision

Fear stopped the previous generation because they didn't know what would happen to them and their families if they went all the way with the Lord...But the Lord taught their children that He would be faithful on their journey to give them what they need...and He will do the same for you!

GO ALL THE WAY INTO WHAT GOD IS CALLING YOU AND YOUR FAMILY TO...DO NOT WORRY ABOUT THE COST OR WHAT YOU THINK YOU WON'T HAVE!!! GIVE HIM A CHANCE AND TRUST THAT HE WILL PROVIDE!!!

As we read this last passage...we want you to see how the Lord instructed Israel from the beginning. He showed them what daily life was supposed to be centered around. Let these words give you vision for your life.

### **Deuteronomy 6:1–7 (NIV)**

6 These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are **crossing the Jordan to possess**, 2 so that you, your children and their children after them may **fear the LORD your God** as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may **enjoy long life**. 3 Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may **go well with you** and that you may **increase greatly** in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

4 **Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.** 5 **Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.** 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7 **Impress them on your children.** Talk about them **when you sit** at home and **when you walk** along the road, **when you lie down** and **when you get up**.

- When you sit, when you walk, when you lie down, when you get up.
- Do you see how it doesn't say to carve out special times for your family? It says to take your kids with you as you are doing the will of God, as you are crossing the Jordan that He has for you in your life.

God is giving the prescription for how all of this is supposed to work. As much as you can bring your kids with you...use moments that are awkward, hard, sad, uncomfortable, joyous, celebratory...to teach them...relate it all back to the commands in an intentional way.

God made kids inquisitive for a reason...they will ask questions as you talk about the word of God...they will ask why you reacted a certain way when someone was mean or when you got mad. They will observe other men and women in your home and learn Godly traits from them and occasionally yes they may pick up some bad habits but then you use the word to correct them. God didn't design children to need to go to bed at a certain time...He designed them to be inquisitive.

I want to show you what my kids have walked with us through...they are in these photos right along with me throughout the journey of this church.









**I am going to simplify this for you: If you focus on God's will, then your family's needs will be taken care of.**

Stop making decisions for your family based on fear! It ruins the God-given design, and it will flow down so that you lose everything!!!!

#### CIRCLE BACK TO TESTIMONIES - BRING RESOLUTION

We started this message with testimonies...

I shared how I was struggling with real fears of my family not being taken care of and falling to ruin like Lots. These fears are real enemies I have had to put down and lead my family through. The truth is that I have been strengthened by the example of Abraham. Remembering that when the kingdom is put first all things will be provided for. The best part is that when we treat the family of God as our actual family, we are never really alone. The satanic lie is that when we expend ourselves on others, we won't have enough for others.

## NICK RESOLUTION

Seek first the Kingdom and bring your family with you!!!

You can and will and you must rise to lead your family IN FAITH. Faith is not in opposition to your family it is the very thing that will save your family.