

Genesis 13:9-18

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Preacher: Pastor Jared Bromka

[0 : 00] Ephesians 5, 8 and 9 says, For you are sometimes darkness, but now are you light in the Lord. Walk as children of the light. The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.

If you're walking in the light, you will walk in goodness, righteousness, and truth. That's what comes from your life. That's what flows from your life. And there are relationships and people that what flows from their life is not goodness and righteousness and truth.

And the Lord will say, hey, it's time to separate from that because I want you to separate unto me because I want you to separate unto this promise. Matthew 7, 13 and 14 tells us, Enter you in at the straight gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction.

And many there be which go therein. Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way which leads to life. Few there be that find it. That means there's few that find that gate. If you're going through that gate, it's only going to be a few, guys.

It's only going to be a few people that walk that way. You know? We're not a church of 7,000.

There's a few of us right now going this way. There's a few of us saying, I want to separate from that, and I want to separate unto this.

[1 : 16] I want to be separated unto what it says in Acts. It continues steadfastly in the Apostles' Doctrine, in the Fellowship, in the Breaking of Bread. They're in the Word. They're in fellowship.

They're in prayer. And they're in each other's lives. That is not what Lot wanted. Lot wanted something a whole lot fancier and shinier than that.

So Abram has this solution, and I think his heart is finally at a place where he's like, I'm not leaving unless the Lord tells me to leave. So if there's a problem and the only solution is separation, well, I'm not going anywhere.

I'm going to stay here. So Lot, what do you want to do? The land is before you. Which is interesting because you wish Lot would have gone, he would have looked out because it says he lifted up his eyes in verse 10.

He lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan. And you wish that it said next. And he said, I'm going to stay with you. I don't need this stuff, but I need you.

[2 : 16] I need this relationship. We're brothers. We're friends. We're people of the promise. I'm with you because of your God, Abram, not because of what your God is doing in your life.

But instead, our buddy Lot, he lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered. Lot does three things, right? In verse 10, he lifted up his eyes.

He looked. In verse 11, he chose. Then Lot chose him. Lot consulted himself and chose. Then chapter 12, I'm sorry, chapter.

Verse 12, and Lot pitched his tent towards. Lot then settled in a direction towards the things of the world. What are we to never do?

Never, ever choose by sight. Ever, ever, ever, ever choose by sight. 2 Corinthians 5, 7. For we walk by faith, not by sight.

[3 : 17] We said many times, faith has to have an object. So we walk not by our own effort and ability to believe, but we walk by our trust in God who's given us the promise.

God has promised I'll never leave you or forsake you. I can walk according to that promise. God has promised that faithful is he who calls you who also will do it. I have the promise that whatever God has said he's going to do in my life, he will do.

I have that promise, and I walk according to it. Not by sight, which many times will tell me, God's not working in your life. Bro, God's not working in your life. You're a mess. So you need to do something.

You need to get out of this place and go somewhere much more profitable, somewhere much more fruitful, somewhere where there's things that are happening. But if God's placed us somewhere, we have the promise that God will fulfill his word.

I like this scripture. Talked back in Isaiah. Isaiah 11, verse 2 to 3. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, speaking of the Messiah. The spirit of wisdom and understanding.

[4 : 22] You see this now happening in Abram's life as he's in this place of communion, in the land of promise. The spirit of counsel and might. The spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord.

And he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears. You see Abram responding this way. New Testament counterpart to that scripture.

2 Corinthians 4.18. The things which are seen are eternal.

The things which are seen are temporal. The things which are not seen are eternal. Lot's looking at the things which are seen, which will pass away, which are temporal. Abram chose humility.

and he's going to receive a greater promise because of that. But at this point, what does it say Lot does? He lifts up his eyes and he looks to the plain of Jordan and he saw that it was well watered everywhere.

[5 : 27] This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. The word Sodom means burning.

The word Gomorrah means submersion. The word Zoar means insignificance. Lot with his eyes has just chosen a place of burning, submersive insignificance.

Choosing by sight, by walking by sight, instead of by faith. It looks great. It looks wonderful. Lot's going to find it's going to destroy his family, it's going to destroy his wife, and it's going to lead to this place of complete irrelevance and insignificance.

Walking by sight instead of by faith. That's why we say never, ever choose to walk by sight. When God gives a promise, hold on to that, no matter what anything else looks like.

Verse 11 says, Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east, and they separated themselves, the one from the other. And Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent towards Sodom.

[6 : 42] Abram dwelled in Canaan. Abram has now fulfilled what God called him to. Genesis chapter 12, verse 1. Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee, and I will make of thee a great nation.

Bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing. The Lord came to Abram and said, Abram, I'm going to bless you. Period. I'm going to bless your life. Abram said, Okay.

And God said, Now walk in the light of that promise. This is the way I want you to walk, so you can stay in the light of that promise. Abraham has taken, or Abram's taken, how many years is it?

I have no idea. Between when God called him from Ur of the Chaldees, and he goes up to Haran with Terah, Terah dies, he goes with Lot into Canaan, he goes from Canaan down to Egypt, he gets kicked out of Egypt, and he's back in Canaan, and he's separating from Lot.

I don't know how many years that is. One, two, three, four, ten, twelve? I don't know. The number of years. And he has finally fulfilled the word that God has spoken to him.

[7 : 45] How gracious God is. He bears long with our infirmities, doesn't he? Well, the word Canaan means lowland. So he's staying in this place, which doesn't look too hot.

Lot's looking and going, ooh, that's beautiful. I'm going to go there. And Abram's staying in Canaan. He's staying in a place that means lowland. God's purposes appear much less significant before obedience.

Before obedience, it's like, well, I'm here. Lot got to go and experience all that. He's over there whooping it up, you know, living in a land that's like the Garden of Eden.

It's beautiful. It's fun. It's alive. And I'm in Canaan with the Canaanite and the Perizzite. I don't even know what a Perizzite is, except you don't want to get them. So, but it seems so insignificant, didn't it?

But after obedience, look what happens. Abram obeys in faith, responds in faith to the promise. He separates out from Lot. And the Lord said unto Abram, in verse 14, after that Lot was separated from him, lift up now your eyes.

[8 : 56] Lot had lifted up his eyes at his own initiative. And the Lord saying to Abram, Abram, you lift up your eyes. I want to show you something. Lift up now your eyes and look from the place where thou art, northward, southward, eastward, and westward, for all the land which thou seest, to be what I give it, and to thy seed forever.

And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. The place of the Lord's choosing looks very different from what Abram would have chosen for himself.

He chose Egypt, remember? I can't stay here. I'm going to Egypt. But it is from the place of the Lord's choosing that Abram has shown the purpose of God's choosing. It's the place of the Lord's choosing.

When we stay in the place of the Lord's choosing, we then get to see the purpose of God's choosing. When Abram chose for himself that I'm going to go into Egypt, he wasn't seeing anything except his own plans and his own ideas.

We kind of skipped it, but if we go back to verse 13, it says, But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly, or beyond measurable capacity.

[10 : 08] The capacity of their wickedness was beyond measuring. It was so bad. That is where Lot has gone. It kind of gives us a little picture, I believe, into Lot and into his character.

We're going to find out much more about Lot as we continue on. When he's dwelling in Sodom, when the angels come to rescue him, we're going to see his character. But I think between here and this section of Scripture and what we know about him, we can kind of piece together a little bit about him.

So Lot lacked a lot, didn't he? Lot lacked personal responsibility. He wasn't, he let Abram just decide for him. Instead of taking responsibility for himself, he was happy to let Abram be the one to make the decisions.

Lot lacked character. What is character? Character is who I am. It's being someone. It's having definition. Lot had no character whatsoever. Lot lacked spiritual sensitivity.

He only saw with the eyes. He did not understand the promise of God. Lot lacked a moral compass. I mean, the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked. And he's like, yeah, kids, let's go live there.

[11 : 18] It's going to be good. He lacked initiative. When there was a problem, there was strife. If Abram didn't do anything, Lot wasn't doing anything. He was just chilling. Whatever.

He lacked direction. He lifted up his eyes. He looked. I don't know where I'm going. I don't know what I'm doing. Where should I go? He lacked loyalty. Man, he'd been with Abram, you know, since they left Ur of the Chaldees.

Abram has taken care of him. We're going to find out Abram's going to come and save his bacon later. He's going to come and he's going to pull him literally out of the fire and rescue him.

And then even when God comes to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, it's because of Abram's intercession that Lot survives that. Lot lacked loyalty. He didn't know who it was, who his true friends were.

And Lot lacked faith in the promise. Oh, Abram, you're God. Yeah, okay, whatever. I mean, we got some cool stuff from Egypt, but now we're back in this land. It can't bear us. We can't both stay here.

[12 : 18] And so, I'm going to have to go. And this is the character of Lot. And what's Lot's character? Lot's character is one that's fully entrenched in trying to find gratification now, in this world.

How can I figure out how I can use God's people and God's promise now, to fulfill my life now? Where Abram's whole life is going to be living for a future promise.

And it's going to tell us later in the New Testament, he never even got to see the fulfillment of it. But living in the light of God's promise, unfulfilled in your life, but living in the light of that promise, is much better than living in the darkness of this world.

And that was our friend, Lot. Now, Scripture will tell us he was a righteous man. He was a righteous man. He knew the Lord. There was some part of him that accepted that promise, but he did not walk in the light of it.

He did not walk by faith. But Abram now, he receives this amazing further revelation after he separates out. And again, this is just another checkpoint in Abram's life that yes, could he have gotten there a lot sooner?

[13 : 23] He sure could have. If when God said, leave Ur of the Chaldees and leave your family, just pack up Sarai and the cat and headed out to the land of promise, he could have got there and he could have been walking in all the promises of God.

He could have been seeing this further fulfillment. But he dragged his feet. But as soon as we get to the place God has for us, God will be faithful to speak. Not like we gather together for fellowship. You know, when we're there, God will speak.

The church I used to go to, they would have a Saturday night prayer meeting. And I used to go pretty frequently when the girls were little. I'd take them with me, put books on the floor, and let them play with those.

And, you know, they would hang out there. We'd be at the prayer meeting. I remember saying to my friend once, I feel so hypocritical because I don't pray about these things any other time. Then when I'm at the prayer meeting, you know, when we're at prayer, it's like, oh, start praying about things. I feel like a hypocrite because I'm like just there praying, but then I don't other times. He's like, no. He's like, you're just giving God opportunity. When you show up, he's like, you're just giving God opportunity, you know, to give you those things to pray for.

[14 : 26] Okay, I can live with that. That's good. And I think the Lord's always ready because when we draw near to God, he draws near to us. So if I draw near to him alone or in fellowship, then I give God opportunity to speak into my life.

And Abram is giving God more and more opportunity in his life. And so God tells him that all the land which you see, to thee will I give it thy seed forever. Lot looked.

He lifted up his eyes and looked towards the plain of Jordan. He said, I want that. He's not going to get any of it. Not even a small piece. Abram stayed in the land of promise and the place of communion, the altar, and a promise.

And the Lord says, lift up your eyes. And what does he tell him? Hey, northward, southward, eastward, westward, everything. Everything in the promise, all the promises of God are yes and amen in Christ Jesus.

They're all yours, Abram. Lift up your eyes. It's all yours. And I'll make thy seed as the dust of the earth so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.

[15 : 26] And then he says this. Remember, Abram has journeyed. He's had a lot of journeys. Arise, walk through the land and the length of it and the breadth of it for I will give it unto thee.

And so now Abram's told by God, hey, get up and journey. It's time to journey. Is it time to sit still? Or God tells you to sit still? Is it time to get up and journey? But when we journey with God, it's always based upon promise.

God is telling Abram, arise and walk through the land because of the promise. Walk because of promise. We're to walk by promise. We're to walk by faith. When we journey with God, it's always based upon promise.

He says, well, I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar to the Lord. Mamre means strength, fatness, vigor.

and Hebron means association. Where Lot chose him a place of burning, submersion, and insignificance. Abram has now come from the place between Ai and Bethel, where he was dwelling in the place between destruction and the house of God.

[16 : 40] He's now removed to this place of strength, fatness, vigor, association. So Abram's separation, it led to a greater association with his God. Abram's separation allowed him to have a greater association with the God of the promise.

But it wasn't until he was willing to separate from that relationship that the Lord told him, time to go. This one's time to be done. He's got to go. God's word came only after separation.

And the altar came only after God's promise. When he separated out from Lot, God's word came. He said, Abram, lift up your eyes. I have greater promise for you. And after the promise comes the altar.

Then Abram removed his tent and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord. I want to turn over briefly to 2 Corinthians chapter 6.

Read a few verses. We all know these verses, but it's good to see them. We have a promise that also hinges upon separation. God says, Be holy, for I am holy.

[17 : 47] Holiness is just essentially the quality of separation, of being separated unto something. Singular, being holy, to be singular unto something. 2 Corinthians chapter 6, verse 14.

Start there. It says, Be you not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness?

What communion has light with darkness? What concord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has he that believes with an infidel? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? Okay?

We associate that because the first part of that verse, Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. Well, I'm not unequally yoked with an unbeliever. My friend, this relationship that I'm in that is full of unrighteousness, darkness, Belial, infidelity, and idols, they're a believer.

So it's okay. Scripture just says don't be unequally yoked with an unbeliever. Someone who's walking with all the qualities of an unbeliever is just as dangerous to our fellowship and to our lives as those who are unbelievers.

[18 : 59] He says, For you, you are the temple of the living God. As God has said, I will dwell in them and walk in them and I will be their God and they shall be my people.

New covenant, the promise of the covenant, Jeremiah, Ezekiel. It's all on God. God says, I'm going to do this. I will do this. So Paul's saying, well, what's your response then? If God is doing this in you, if the God of the promise is fulfilling his promise in your life, well, then come out.

Come out from among them and be you separate. Give the Lord opportunity. Give the Lord a chance to fulfill the things in your life that he's promised to do. Come out from among them.

Be you separate, says the Lord. Touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you. So there's the promise. God says, I will receive you. I will do this. Our response, come out from among them.

Separate. John 17, 3 says, and this is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. Abram and Lot.

[20 : 02] Two people in the land of promise, two different responses. A moment of separation, of divergence. We look at their lives, we can quickly compare and contrast a few things.

Abram walked according to a promise, yet future. He lived in the light of that and walked according to it. Lot walked according to present fulfillment. What about you? What about me?

My life, path, initiated and influenced by a future promise or am I looking for a present fulfillment? Abram was decisive in his relationships.

Lot was passive in his. Abram knew who he was going to be in that relationship. It was going to be based on promise. Every relationship I have is going to be based on the promise of God and his word. Lot was passive.

Whatever. Abram chose relationship over substance. He's like, hey, this isn't going to work, Lot, but we're brothers. What's the solution? Lot chose the substance. He says, I'm going to go where I've got a lot of stuff or where I can feel comfortable.

[21 : 09] Abram chose humility by faith. Lot chose ambition by sight. Lot looked and said, that's the place for me. I'm going to pitch my tent there. I'm going to dwell in that city.

We're going to find out eventually he's in the gates of it, his ambition. Abram chose humility by faith and it looked like he was just in a low land, a place of insignificance. Abram stood alone at the altar and Lot joined the crowd in a place of great wickedness.

Abram built his altar alone and Abram worshipped his God alone. As we close with our last, that verse, we already referenced this verse, but Matthew 7, verse 13 and 14.

enter you into the straight gate. Two roads are diverging. Two roads, two paths. You enter into the straight gate, the narrow gate.

For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction. And many there be which go thereat. Because straight is the gate and narrow is the way. Many go through the wide one because the way to life is narrow.

[22 : 17] I don't want to be constrained. But look what happens when we walk in the promise of God. He says, east, south, northwest, all yours in God's promise.

We're never constrained in the promise of God. Because straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leads to life and few there be that find it. And Abram walked alone and then he received greater revelation.

For from the place of God's choosing we are shown the purpose of God's choosing. So Father, as we just wind down now, Lord, we just sit before you, we worship you.

Lord, we just thank you for the purposes and plans of God. Thank you for that scripture we read in Corinthians that tells us that you will dwell in us. You will walk in us. You will be our God and we shall be your people. These are the promises that we have. I thank you for the promise, Lord, that your purposes and plans, they never fail.

[23 : 18] There's no possibility of failing when we walk in the promise. Lord, I pray we walk by faith and not by sight. Lord, let us not be like Lot, passive, irresponsible, lazy, content, living for now.

Lord, give us eyes for eternity. That which is not seen is eternal. Lord, I thank you for this man, Abram. I thank you for the journey, Lord. It's a long journey to think by the time he gets to the child of promise and he gets Isaac, how many years have gone by.

But Lord, you're so gracious to bear with his infirmities and his weakness and his shortcomings and his failings. You're there. The promise doesn't fail. And every time Abram would walk in the light of the word of God, the promise of God, and respond to it by faith, you're right there.

There's communion, there's fellowship, there's direction, there's purpose. Lord, a man of faith and of character. And I pray that you would do that in each of us, Lord. Build us up by your word and your spirit.

In Jesus' name, Amen.