

08.31.25

## Genesis

### Chapter 13 - God's Patient Oversight When Kindness Isn't (vs. 5-13)

**Genesis 13:5-13:** Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together. And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. Now the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land. So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers. Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me; if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left." Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere—this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah—like the garden of the LORD, like the land

of Egypt as you go to Zoar. So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other. Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD.

Well, it's a good reminder that we're all going to in some way come in contact with disagreeable people, dissonance, division, strife. Where does that come from? Well, I actually think that most of the time we're the ones that make it happen. And as we're going to look at this particular passage, I just want to remind you that Scripture, as it begins to reveal different individuals in the Old Testament, is not trying to give us paragons of perfection. Scripture has given us a paragon of faith, but not of perfection, and what we're going to see is that God desires to have a relationship with those who seek for Him or those who would embrace His desire to be with them. As we've been looking through the Book of

Genesis, we've seen truly the graciousness of God, not only in creation, but in His forgiveness, in His willingness to start over with mankind and how rebellious man is and how gracious God is.

One of the verses that we oftentimes reflect upon is found in Isaiah 30:18 and it reminds us that God longs to be gracious to us.

If you've ever read through the Psalm, you can't help but almost get stuck on Psalm 136 as it starts off, "The Lord is good."

(Psalm 136:1) "Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, For His lovingkindness is everlasting."

That whole chapter will say that in every single verse. What it's telling us, of course, is that God is a very loving God and He desires to have a relationship with us; all the way through, whether it be at the very beginning or as we've come now to Abraham, with Abraham now turning to God. As Hebrews so clearly puts it, we must first believe that God is, and that He's a rewarder of those who will diligently seek Him. So, where is Abraham in this? Well, I believe that Abraham actually believes that God is

who He says He is, and that God is the source of blessing. If you actually think that there are other sources of blessing, you won't turn to God, but if you believe that God is the only source of blessing, He's the one you'll turn to. This is exactly what Abraham does within the passage and at the very beginning of the calling. In many respects, just as a reminder, I believe God cultivates our life for us to long after Him.

As you look at Genesis 11, at the end, we see almost the beginning introduction to Abram, and in that introduction, what we see is a man that has lost his brother and somebody that has to deal with disappointment. That's kind of a cultivation. When you have to deal with those kinds of things, loss and disappointment in your life, that causes you to look other places and that's God saying, "Here I am. Turn to Me." And it's shortly after that when God calls Abraham in Chapter 12, when we begin to see that God says, "We're going to do great things; We have great things for you." I just want to remind you, as you go into Chapter 12 in particular, it says,

(Genesis 12:1) “Now the LORD said to Abram,  
“Go forth from your country,  
And from your relatives  
And from your father’s house,  
To the land which I will show you;

(Genesis 12:2) And I will make you a great nation...”

This is clearly a unilateral act by God. God's the one that's going to make it happen.

“... And I will bless you,  
And make your name great;  
And so you shall be a blessing;

(Genesis 12:3) And I will bless those who bless you,  
And the one who curses you I will curse.  
And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

He's basically telling Abram, “It's going to happen. I'm going to bless you, and you are going to be a blessing.” It's that journey that sometimes gets a little rough.

James says in James 3, “we all stumble in many ways,” and certainly we have that imperfection in us as we go through. So, what we're going to see as we look at Abram

in particular, once again, he's not a paragon of perfection, but an example of faith as he begins to turn towards God. Now, what we will see as well is his stumbling along the way, and what's interesting to me as I have read and we looked in particular at the end of Chapter 12, as Abraham begins to take matters in his own hands, which really, if you think about it, it's only natural. You have a difficulty, you have a problem, you have a famine, you have something happen in your life, and self-preservation, it's just natural to begin to think, "What do I need to do to get out of this? What do I need to do to evade this? How can I deal with this?" And we think clearly, pragmatically and practically, and in many aspects, God's going to teach Abram to turn to Him for everything. This is what we call walking by faith. It is a continuum. It's a continual thing that we do. So, it's not just obeying God when He calls you out, it's obeying God in every single thing that He says, even to the very detail of what He says. We think of, maybe we get the general thought, and we go, "I am obeying." Kind of reminds me of Saul, where God says, "Did you kill everything? Did you wipe out everything like I told you to?" "Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah." "So, what's the

bleating of the sheep that I hear? Why do I hear these noises?” “Well, almost.” I think we have a tendency to think in terms of “almost”. “We're almost there.” And God says, “It's not faith until it's all faith; until you put all of your trust in Me” and God's going to walk Abram through this process.

As you come into Chapter 12 and you kind of come to the end as he deals with the whole thing of famine, he goes into Egypt, and we know that there's nothing that said that God goes, “Hey, I have a good idea for you. Why don't you go into Egypt?” Because once again, that going into Egypt is me trying to work out a strategy to deal with the problems that I have and that's what he does. So, in so doing, he finds himself in a very touchy situation in which his wife could be perhaps the focus of the Pharaoh, as well as many of the princes in that land. So, his thought is once again, practically speaking, “I'll just say that she's my sister then he won't kill me.” And then he actually turns to Sarah, and says, “Why don't we do this?” You can see him planning, “And I won't be killed. You'll still have a

husband, but ok, maybe we won't look married, but at least we'll still be married, and I'll be alive." And as you know the story that we went through last week, it's very clear that God begins to stir in the heart of Pharaoh, "You're not going to touch that woman. She's Mine." And it's very unique to me, it's the Pharaoh in the passage that actually rebukes Abram. Now, what you have is one that is not necessarily a believer, one that is not following God, one that doesn't have the morals of following God, yet he's correcting the one guy that's following the one true God. What's interesting to me about this is that God isn't necessarily dropping the hammer. In fact, we know that he actually leaves the land with more than he ever had. But God is, through different venues, training, and God will use people in your lives that are oftentimes not believers to correct you to do the right thing and it's not God hitting you with a 2x4, but it's God reminding you, "You're My kid. You need to display the integrity; as 1 Peter will say all through that book, you need to keep your behavior excellent in the midst of the nations. I've called you to be a blessing. That's not going to work if in fact you're compromising in the way that you live. So, I'm



going to make your name great.” Well, that's a thing of integrity. That's a thing of character. So, God is working in all of these things and it's going to take oftentimes correction by people that you would never think should be correcting you, but it's that humble heart that receives that.

So, now we come into Chapter 13 and as we come into Chapter 13, Abram realizes he needs to go back into the land. We were talking about this last week, in particular, that here he goes back into the land, and the question is, I mean, you have to ask yourself, “What happened to the famine?” But it's an interesting picture of God saying, “Had you just stayed, I would have taken care of the famine. And that's what I wanted you to do. I wanted you to put your trust in Me.” Now, I know people will read these passages and the tendency is to want to kind of bolster Abram, “Oh, Abram's a great guy.” Yeah, he's a wonderful guy. He trusted in God, he loved God, but he was not a perfect guy. It's those imperfections that draw us even closer to understanding what God is doing, that God is using things in our lives, and clearly we're not

perfect beings. But what He's asking is, "Do you have a heart?" You know, that wonderful passage in Chronicles, "The eyes of the Lord are searching to and fro, looking for a heart that's wholly His." Do you have a heart that is searching and wanting to put your trust in God? In Abram's setting in particular, are you willing to be different? Are you willing to stand out? Are you willing to come out and be different? That really is the beginning, if you think about it, of our faith, and one of the reasons why we're called "saints," which seems to convey that wonderful picture of being separate, being distinct, not like the world. So, are you willing to come out from among them and be separate? Are you willing to be different? Are you willing to be not like the world? And are you willing to see God as a source of blessing rather than you or your imagination or man, or perhaps the Nile River? What are you seeing as a source of your blessing? What are you seeing as that which will take care of you? Well, if we're all transparent with ourselves, we would have to say that initially we would say, "Yeah, God's a source of blessing." I mean, we even sing the song, *"Praise God from whom all blessings flow,"* and James 1

will clearly emphasize the fact that every good and perfect gift comes from above. So, why would I turn to anybody other than God? But we do, and that's the point that we're going to see, that we continue to do this. And though God is patient, I think of even with the time of the flood, God had sent somebody, if you've ever read the Book of Jude, by the name of Enoch. Go back in the Old Testament and you see him listed in there as God had actually taken him up. You read in the Book of Jude that God had actually used him to proclaim a warning to those, even before Noah comes on the scene. So, then Noah comes on the scene and now for another 120 years there is the testimony of warning to the people. So, God is clearly patient and even after that God desires to continue to save humanity in this ark, and it is His patience that instead of just demolishing the Tower of Babel, what He does is He just confuses the languages. So, you see the hand of God and the love of God and the grace of God in all of this.

I'm reminded of the passage in Psalm 103. Don't you love that Psalm? It's such a great Psalm.

It says this,

(Psalm 103:10) “He has not dealt with us according to our sins,

Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.”

He goes on to say,

(Psalm 103:13) “Just as a father has compassion on his children, ...”

(Psalm 103:14) “For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust.”

But nevertheless, as Hebrews 12:6, would clearly put it,

“FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES...”

And you could literally put in the word there, “trains”. He will train. Now, obviously, according to Psalm 103, He doesn't give us what we deserve. That would be punishment. But what He does do is He trains us and in all of this, what we see is the training of God, and it's the graciousness of God.

I think of Acts 17:30 where it says that He literally overlooked the times of ignorance, and this is one of the things that kind of stands out to me in all of this narrative,

as we look at in particular at the life of Abram, is that you don't necessarily hear God's scolding him. You don't see great bolts of lightning coming at him, but what you see is God rebuking him. He's saying, "You don't want to do that." And yet, as you look at the beginning of Chapter 13, he comes out of each with more stuff than he ever had, and you go, "It's almost like God blessed him for doing the wrong thing." But here again, the point is that God is leaving this example that virtually says, "I'm not mad at you. I'm training you." And it really is in the love of God that He begins to work in our life and train us. We all stumble in many ways. God knows that, and He knows that we're but dust, but He encourages the faint-hearted, and He encourages the weak. I just want to say this, that there is a clear difference between unwilling and unwitting weakness and rebelliousness. I think that's one of the reasons why the psalmist says, and it was actually quoted earlier in Psalm 19:13, "Lord keep me from presumptuous sins." What he's actually saying is, "Keep me from being rebellious against You. I don't want to be rebellious." Now, he also states within the text that there are hidden faults that he doesn't see. "So, keep me from

being rebellious.” Clearly, he wants that. “But Lord, reveal hidden faults that I seem to suppress.”

In fact, the way that it's put in Psalm 139 is that “I need You to reveal and literally extract evil ways in me, destructive ways in me. See if there be any hurtful way in me.”

Well, as you come to the end of Genesis 12, there's clearly a hurtful way because Abram's more concerned for his life than he is for his wife's. I mean, he literally is throwing his wife under the bus and he's saying, “We're going to sacrifice you so I can live.” And that's just the opposite, really, of God's calling for us, especially as men. So, he is demonstrating a kind of treachery by not putting his trust in God, and I would say this, every time you and I put our faith in anything other than God, it's not only a treachery towards God, but it will also ultimately be treacherous towards other people.

So, now as you come into Chapter 13, we see great blessing, and it seems as if now we're back on track. He actually goes back to the same altar in which he had first began to communicate with God in the sense of giving

him an offering, and he calls upon the name of the Lord at this time, again. So, we kind of feel like we're getting back on track. However, the lessons not over, and this is what's interesting, that in all of this, God is not oppressing. He's revealing, and it's very subtle. So, I know that oftentimes as we'll go on and read at the beginning of verse 5, we begin to read this verse 13, we go, "Wasn't Abram a wonderful, generous, very kind and altruistic individual?" And I would say yes, but he did it wrong. Now, this is the point. As Proverbs says that we have a tendency to actually think that we're doing something right, but we could be wrong in what we're doing. "There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof is death." So, it's not that Abram's rebellious. It's not that he wants to do the wrong thing, but he is, what? Well, he's weak. He doesn't see things. There are hidden faults, and God is going to begin to reveal these things, and they'll become crystal clear. I know that there are times the Lord speaks to me through His word, and He says, "You know, you did the wrong thing there." And I go, "Ok, that's pretty clear." There are other times where I might be reading the passage and I'm just not getting it. So, He lets

me go through an experience, and at the end of the experience, I go, “You know what, I think I did the wrong thing.” But I actually have to go through the experience. Well, this is Abram in this particular setting.

So, if you pick up with me in verse 5, there's a subtle reminder right at the beginning of verse 5, and that is we have Lot. Hmm. Where did Lot come from? That's right, it was God's idea to take Lot around with Abram.

If you look at verse 5, it reads this way,

(Genesis 13:5) Now Lot, who went with Abram...”

Now, in that simple phrase, what it seems to be conveying, and it's actually already been conveyed in Chapter 12, that it was almost Lot's idea. He kind of pushed himself on Abram. Now, look, to give Abram credit, he's a very responsible individual, and if something's thrust upon him, he's going to take responsibility for that. That's what he does. That's a good thing, right? Well, it can be. But in this particular setting, we're going to see problems come from being a good guy, and there are times that we actually think, “Well, that's an act of kindness. This is an act of kindness. I'm going to



be kind.” And God goes, “Well, that's not kind.” There is a way which seems kind but actually isn't.

So, it starts off,

“Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents.”

Seems like a lot of stuff.

(Genesis 13:6) “And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together...”

Well, they obviously weren't united as that word seems to convey.

“... for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together.”

Which is telling us that there is clearly dissonance over the fact that “This is mine. This is yours.” And sort of fighting over those kinds of things.

So, the land could not sustain them, and it says this,

(Genesis 13:7) “And there was strife (quarrelling; controversies) between the herdsmen of Abram’s livestock and the herdsmen of Lot’s livestock. Now the

Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land.”

It almost seems like a parenthetical phrase at the end, like, “I just want to let you know who else was living there.” But the passage is actually in some way giving us the characteristics of the area.

The Canaanite was a trader. So, they would constantly be in the realm of trading, bartering, going back and forth. They were pretty much vagabonds. So, when you had them come into the mix too, it just complicated things. Have you ever had a moment of strife together and then you get other people coming in that aren't necessarily on a good plateau either, and they just add to the problems? That would be the Canaanite.

The Perizzite were those that would live in villages, but actually their name refers to the fact that they didn't live in cities. They specifically wanted to camp out in the fields and so they would have villages in the fields. Well, it's the fields that we're having problems with. See, with the flocks. So, we've got complications with the traders coming in, we've got complications with those that are

wanting to live in the same land that you're trying to graze your sheep on. It just complicates everything. I don't know why the passage didn't just say, “And things were getting complicated,” but anyway, that’s how we’ll end that.

It then goes on and says,

(Genesis 13:8) “So Abram said to Lot, “Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers.

(Genesis 13:9) “Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me; if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left.”

(Genesis 13:10) Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere—this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah—like the garden of the LORD...”

Wow. So, this guy had an eye for beauty, right?

“... like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar.

(Genesis 13:11) So Lot chose for himself...”

That's an interesting phrase in and of itself, isn't it?

There's no sense of Lot turned to God and said, "What would You have me do?" Or "How can I be accommodating to my uncle, who's taking care of me and taking me under his wing?"

Nevertheless,

"So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other.

(Genesis 13:12) Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley..."

Which, by the way, is where the Perizzites are. Let me just stop here. So, if your problem was that Abram's flocks were coming into where your flocks were, then wouldn't you not want to be where the Perizzites are, because that's the people that live where your flocks are? But that wasn't the issue, was it? Because there was something else that was drawing him, and it was his selfish desires.

So, the passage goes on and says,

“...settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom.

(Genesis 13:13) Now the men of Sodom were wicked...”

It actually uses the word “*ra*” within the text, which makes reference to in this particular setting, men that were hurtful; men that were vicious individuals. So, you have a hurtful, vicious individual, but the land is pretty. It sure is good real estate. But wow, it's a miserable place to live. So, once again, how are you judging the place that you live? Is it by virtue of the people that live there? Where is your heart being drawn to?

(Genesis 13:13) “Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD.”

God was offended by them. Now, of all the places to move, that would not be a place I'd want to be. I mean, if God basically said to me, “I'm highly offended by these people.” Would you go, “I think it's a good place to move”? And what we also know is, I don't want to call them La Brea tar pits, but they had tar pits there, and I'm thinking, “Those things are flammable.” And by the way, Sodom actually means “burning”. So, you have a few hints

going on here, if you're in any way astute. Nevertheless, Lot could care less about those things, and he kind of thrusts them aside.

The passage is very unique in the sense that we don't have a verse that says God spoke to Abram and says, "Don't do this," or "I told you so." There's not really a verse, but what happens is it plays out. So, I want you to see the beginning of this and how it plays out and what Abraham does that causes the problem. Once again, we're correcting Abram. Lot's going to kind of go off the side, he's going to do his thing and we're going to have to rescue a Lot a couple of times. But "Why is it we keep having this problem with Lot?" is the question you have to ask yourself and you have to go back to the foundational text.

So, if you go back to Genesis 12:1, let's just read the verse just as simply as we can read it.

It starts off this way,

(Genesis 12:1) "Now the LORD said to Abram,  
"Go forth from your country..."

“Ok, I'm on board so far.”

“... And from your relatives...”

Ok, would Lot be a relative? Ok. I know relatives are all relative, but...

“... “Go forth from your country,  
And from your relatives...””

And just in case you missed the point,

“... And from your father's house...”

“Ok. So, I'm pretty clear on that one. But you know, it just wouldn't seem kind to look at Lot and go, ‘Lot, I'm sorry, you can't go with me.’ That just wouldn't be kind. I mean, he wants to come. So, I'm sure God didn't mean all the relatives. He just meant the ones that weren't needy, but Lot, his father passed away and I kind of feel responsible to my brother. I'm going to take him under my wing.”

Now, he's probably clearly old enough to take care of himself. Nevertheless, that's not the issue. So, Abram is kind of nice within the passage. The fundamental principle at the very beginning of this is that kindness is not kindness when obedience to God is compromised in

any way. There are so many times that I've heard families say, "You know, the kids just wanted to stay home from church on Sunday. We just felt like we were going to do something together," or, I love this one, "The kids found a church that they really wanted to go to." And I'm going, "Ok, so, who's running the family and why are we doing this?" "Well, we really want to be kind parents, and we really want to be thoughtful." But your being thoughtful is not obeying God. You're to train up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. You're the one in charge. You're the one that's going to be leading them into righteousness, and it's not always going to be easy for them. But that's part of training, right? But all under the guise of kindness we begin to think in terms of that and we will actually use the word "ministry". We're "ministering" to people. I'm sure Abram's ministering to Lot. So, the question you have to ask yourself is, by virtue of taking this step on his own, much like going down to Egypt, what begins to happen? Well, God doesn't say anything to him, but it begins to play out. And what begins to play out is they're not getting along with each other. Now, I'm sure initially and on the journey,



everybody was doing pretty fine and that's the way it usually starts off. You know, you open up your house and everybody doing good. "Hey, how long have you been together?" "About an hour." Give it a day. But things begin to reveal themselves after a while. It's a very subtle way that God begins to work, "Abram, did you do everything I told you to do?" "Oh, yeah, yeah, everything." "Everything? Then why are you having trouble with Lot?" "Oh well, it's just a bad day." "Ok, why do you keep having trouble?" And the problem just begins to escalate to the point that Abraham says, "We have to separate." Wow, what an epiphany. You mean separating from Lot is a good idea?

It's amazing how many times you actually see it within the passage. If you look in verse 9, it reads,

(Genesis 13:9) "Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me..."

And if you look in verse 11,

(Genesis 13:11) "... Thus they separated..."

Scripture is letting us know that they did what they were supposed to do, finally. The Scripture tells us to not be unequally yoked with non believers. We go, “Well, I understand that with most of my friends, but there's one friend in particular that I really like. We seem to get along well together.” And just keep hanging in there because the day will come when you go, “You know what, I need to separate.” Now, you may need to go through the process like Abram, but he comes up with the same conclusion as God did, “Leave your family. Leave the household of your father. Come with Me.” Very clear within the passage. Nevertheless, you begin to see how men will probably think in their own reasoning and begin to do what they do out of the desire to look nice.

Scripture says in 1 Corinthians 16 that you're to do all that you do out of love. Now, if you've ever read 1 Corinthians 13, you begin to realize that love will rejoice in the truth, and it does not rejoice in unrighteousness. In other words, it will only do what's right. So, when you're thinking in terms of love, you're thinking in terms of what's best for that person, not necessarily what looks

kind. What looks kind oftentimes is treacherous towards that person. You're bringing them in a realm, and let's just kind of play out this scenario. So, what happens to Lot? Well, I would say, kindness problem #2. Abraham goes, "You have the whole land before you. Choose whatever you want." I can just think in terms of a rebellious kid. A parent says, "I know you're having a fit, so here's what I'm going to do: Choose whatever you want to do, and I'll just let you do whatever you want to do and so you can be happy." So, the kid goes up and of course hits his brother in the face or something because that's what he wants to do. The point of the matter is that you've just opened it up with no boundaries. You've actually gone before the person and your whole goal is not necessarily love, but you're actually motivated by avoidance; you don't want any trouble. "If you just stop screaming, we'll do this." So, you can hear in the voice of Abram, "Just whatever you want to do."

Now, just let's just keep playing it out. What does Lot want to do? Now, look, we're all going to be on board with this phrase, I believe he loved Lot. I just don't believe

he knew how to; that it wasn't by faith. He wasn't trusting in God. He wasn't doing what God told him to do, but he was loving him, we'll use the phrase, any way he knew how, but it was his love. But by virtue of doing it that way he was actually thinking more of himself than he was of Lot. How does the phrase go?

(Genesis 13:7) “And there was strife between the herdsmen...”

Abram says in verse 8, you can hear his voice,

(Genesis 13:8) “... “Please let there be no strife...””

“Whatever it takes. You go anywhere you want to go.”

That's one of the worst things you could say to people sometimes, because literally what you do is you disregard all boundaries, and in disregarding boundaries, it looks really kind; it looks really gracious. “Whatever you want to do. Wherever you want to go.” So, what does Lot do? Well, he chooses the absolute worst place in the universe to live, in Sodom. Because everything that he focuses on is by virtue of what he sees. It's not unlike Eve when she's looking at the tree. I mean, it looked pleasant. It looked beautiful. It looked lovely. “Don't touch it.” That's exactly

what he does, and how do things work out for him? Well, Scripture says very clearly, I just want to let you know he chose the most wicked place on the earth. A place that was extremely offensive to God. Just want to let you know that. Now, we think once again in terms of the graciousness of Abraham, and I believe that his desire was to be gracious. I'm not trying to rob him of that. But was it good for Lot? And if I can just play this out for you and I know a lot of people probably don't see it this way, but if you just read Scripture, I think you'll see this pretty clearly. As it plays out, we know that he gets closer to Sodom. We know that Sodom becomes a part of his household. We know that it corrupts his daughters and clearly corrupts his wife, to where at the time that he has to leave, she will actually become a pillar of salt by virtue of turning back and longing for those things. We know that. But we know that even before that happens, I personally believe, and let me just show it to you, in Chapter 14.

Do you know how Chapter 14 starts off? Well, all of these guys that are coming from the North, Amraphel king of

Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, all these kings, they're from the north. Now, I want you to meditate here. What's in the north? Babylon. Let's put it another way. I'll get more specific. Ur of the Chaldeans and Haran, where his father, as you remember as they were coming from Ur the Chaldeans, comes and stopped. That's still in Babylon. That's still in Mesopotamia. That's where these kings are coming from. So, these kings come down and what has happened is, and I won't go into all the details of the story because we're going to be going to that chapter, but as you go in there, you realize that Sodom had been paying some sort of payment to them, and now they're coming. They stop paying. They say, "We're not going to pay anymore." So, they come down from the north and they go, "Well, well just come and take over." So, they sent their army down and they began to take over. Well, they take Lot with them, remember? They take Lot with them, and Abraham says, "I can't let them take Lot." So, he gets up his 300 and some odd men, and he goes after him, and God miraculously sustains and is with Abram and they win the victory, and he brings him back home.

Now, I want you to think through this. Where would Lot have been had he left him? He would have been back where he belonged. But now that Abraham brings him back to the land, now, he's back in Sodom. All the way through, though, there is a desire to do the right thing for Lot, there are problems that begin to ensue because he didn't obey completely. The text is clearly revealing to us that this is not a presumptuous thing. This is not a rebellious thing on Abram's part. God is revealing things that are that are hidden and the compromises that are so subtle that we don't even see them. But Scripture is wanting you to see the fact that you have to put all of your trust in God, and ultimately Abram will. He'll take his son. He'll put him on the altar, and he'll say, "He's all Yours. Everything is yours. Everything. I'm not going to try to figure this out anymore. I'm not going to try to protect anymore. I'm just going to lay all on the altar to You." And God will bring him to that point. But until he does, what a journey. Isn't it a journey?

You have to look at Christ because all things are really measured by Christ, right? So, what does kindness look

like? And I've often thought about that passage in Matthew 16:23, where Peter says to Jesus, "You're not going to go to the cross." And Jesus turns to him, and He says, "You're being a stumbling block to Me." And he says, "Satan," which is an adversary. "You've become My adversary." Now, that's very interesting because that doesn't sound very kind to me. I mean, this is Peter. He's willing to drop his nets and he's willing to follow Him. But He goes on and says this, "You're not seeking the interest of God, but your own interest." We know that everything that Jesus did was kind. So, one of the greatest acts of kindness is obeying God, if not the greatest act of kindness. Because, as we've oftentimes said, you can't be kinder than God. You can't be more loving than God. God is love. So, by obeying what God says completely, you're really rescuing people. You're not hurting them. You're helping them when you begin to kind of step into the realm, then of course, that's when you do the damage. Matthew 23 talks about Jesus correcting the Pharisees. Look, He's very upfront with them, "You guys are just a bunch of hypocrites." But you think He was being unkind



in that? He was saving them. Now, once again, the thought is “Well, I think maybe I should avoid conflict at all costs.” And I don't think you should be looking for trouble. I mean, Scripture specifically says don't argue with people, don't get into arguments, but there are times where that avoidance is thinking more of yourself than it is of that person. When that begins to happen, then you begin to hurt someone. There are times when we actually begin to tear down all the boundaries and in tearing down all the boundaries, we think that we're being really nice, “It's whatever you want to do.” Instead of saying to people, “You can do this, but this has to be done.”

I think of the passage in Galatians where it talks about, we were called to freedom. Remember that in Galatians 5? We've all been called to freedom. Only, he says, “Do not use your freedom as an opportunity for evil.” That's a boundary. So, you're saying, yeah, freedom. God wants you to have freedom, but don't go hurting people. That's a boundary. You can't do that. And don't go to places that are destructive. Flee youthful lust. We're still in the

freedom of the Spirit but flee youthful lust. Don't go there. And there are times that we, I would say, incorrectly define this whole thing of kindness. So, kindness isn't when in fact obedience to God is compromise, when avoidance of conflict is your main motivation, and when boundaries are totally disregarded. It's not kindness.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Well, Lord, we come before You today and we ask that You work within our hearts, that our desire would be to follow You. Our desire would be to be obedient to You. But more than that, to be wholly Yours, to walk by faith, to completely trust You in all things, to not just say that we trust You and not just do part of what You tell us, but to see the very details of the very thing that you're protecting us from evil in.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed. What we're asking you to do is just examine your heart, or as the psalmist would say, “Acquit me of hidden faults. I mean, search me, try me. See if there be any hurtful way in me.”

I didn't mean to hurt. I didn't mean to do the wrong thing.  
I didn't mean to go the wrong way, but by virtue of not  
listening to You and doing everything You tell me to do, I  
can see how I've hurt.