

08.17.25

Genesis

Chapter 12 - God Chooses for Blessing

Protected, Corrected, but Not Condemned (vs. 17-20)

Genesis 12:17-20: But the LORD struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. Then Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? "Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife, take her and go." Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they escorted him away, with his wife and all that belonged to him.

There is truly a call on Abraham. The Lord called him. You go into Hebrews 11:8, and it says,

"By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed (God)..."

We begin to see the picture of what faith is about. Faith is about obedience. It's about doing what God tells you to do. But it's more than that. It's believing that God loves you. It is a fundamental message all the way through. It is what causes us to put our trust in God. Why would you trust God? Because I believe. What do you believe? That He loves me, He wants best for me, and that's why we obey the Gospel. It is a point to be noted, as you look at 2 Thessalonians 1:8, it makes reference specifically to the fact that you need to obey the gospel. I think we don't necessarily think of the gospel as something that we need to obey, but God is saying, "I tell you, you need to believe that I love you." And by faith, because we trust Him, because we actually believe He does love us, we receive that love. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the power to become children of God, even those who believe on His name." (John 1:12) And we become part of the family. What a wonderful thing that is to become a part of the family of God, to be transformed, and it doesn't end there. God then takes us on the journey, in which He begins to transform us into the image of His Son, and we begin the journey of a relationship with God.

It's one of the great benefits of faith. When you walk by faith, God rewards you with a relationship with Him and the peace and the blessing it affords in your life. Scripture says that you actually have to believe that God does love you.

When you look at Hebrews 11, it is the faith chapter, and it begins to say that without faith it's impossible to please God. You must first believe that He is, and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him. There is a call that beckons us, in which we hear the grace of God. We hear of the love of God, and it draws us. We see the love of God. As Christians, we have an advantage that Abraham didn't. We see the love of Christ on the cross. Which God spared not His own Son but freely gave Him up for us all. We realize that with Him He would freely give us all things, because if He spared not His own Son, why wouldn't He? So, we realize something that even Abraham couldn't see. Nevertheless, Abraham comes to realization that God is believable, and God says, "I want you to leave your country. I want you to leave your people. I want you to go into a country that you have

never seen before, and I want you to follow Me.” And Scripture tells us Abraham believed. Now, the journey begins, and in the journey, what God is doing is He is drawing us closer to Him. It's like you have a child and then as the child grows, your desire is the relationship grows with the child. When that child is first born, he doesn't know you from Adam. But somehow, he begins to trust you because you feed him and because you do other things to help him out, and after a while, the child begins to realize, “This is somebody I think I can trust.” And they start hanging around you, and when you hold out your hand, they grab hold of your hand, and you begin to watch out for them and take care of all the things that might be dangerous to them. Well, you begin to walk with your parents. Well, the same thing begins to happen as this passage begins to talk to us about walking by faith. And we know that Abraham is that paragon or picture of faith, as Romans 4 clearly defines for us that it was Abraham that was a father of our faith and we actually become children of Abraham if we walk by faith, so says Galatians 3. It is an interesting journey because the thought is that if in fact we're going to be walking by faith,

and good things are going to happen, and bad things will never happen, and it really is probably in many respects just the opposite. There're going to be difficult times that come into our life, but those difficult times are for the purpose of drawing us closer to the One that we hold His hand. In other words, if in fact everything was always easy, you probably wouldn't even feel the need to hold the hand, but it is the difficult times that draw us closer to God. So, what we begin to do is go on a journey with Abraham, and in the journey, one of the first things that begins to happen is that God brings a famine. Now, we know that a famine just didn't happen, if God is sovereign. We also know that according to, and we're going to be looking at it a little bit later on, in Psalm 105, that God actually brings the famine. But it is in God bringing the famine that causes the test and begins to examine the heart. We, from our perspective, perhaps hear the call of God, and we adhere to the call of God, we follow, but then difficult times come. It's interesting, as Christ is talking about the different soils. In particular, in Mark 4, one of the soils, He talks about the fact that he had no firm root and begins to establish the fact that faith has to

have some firm root, something that is solid. So, what causes that? What causes that is oftentimes the difficulties in our life God is cultivating. A faith, a relationship in our lives. Do you want peace? Do you want confidence in your life? Do you want the blessings of God? Well, without faith, it's impossible to receive the blessings of God.

One of the passages that we've read time and time again, found in Jeremiah 17:5, reads this way,

“... “Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind
And makes flesh his strength...””

But He goes on and says,

(Jeremiah 17:7) “Blessed is the man who trusts in the
LORD
And whose trust is the LORD.”

It's very clear where we get our blessings from. It is from trusting the Lord. So, this walk by faith is really the door to the blessings that God has promised us. As He clearly states to Abraham, “I'm going to bless you and I'm going to make you a blessing.” How does that happen? Well, it

begins with a famine, it begins with not having certain things, and what's wonderful about all of this is that if you go back to the fundamental, and that is God loves you, it pulls you through these times because the initial thought when something bad happens is, "What'd I do wrong?" And fundamentally, God is saying, "Nothing. We're working to get you closer." And it is in this process that God begins to work.

There is an interesting passage in Lamentations 3, and we don't necessarily have to turn there, but as it starts off in verse 25 and following, it reads this way,

(Lamentations 3:25) "The LORD is good to those who wait for Him,
To the person who seeks Him."

And then, he goes on and he explains,

(Lamentations 3:26) "It is good that he waits silently
For the salvation of the LORD."

Another way of putting that would be "without complaining".

(Lamentations 3:27) “It is good for a man that he should bear the yoke in his youth.”

That's an interesting statement. What he's talking about is that we make some really bad blunders, and sometimes we're old and we're still making those bad blunders. It's the blunders of our youth, but we're still making them. But the fundamental point of this is it's good for a man to work through the consequences of his capricious decisions that he had made. It's good for him to do that. It'd be like a father sitting down with his son going, “Son, you're going to have to work through this one.” “Come on, Dad. Bail me out.” “No, this is good for you. This is good for you to work through this.”

It goes on and says this, that fundamentally, and if I were just to synopsise, that man needs to swallow his pride and take correction like a man. And there are times that God is going to work in our lives and clearly, because He loves us.

Isaiah 28:23-29 refers to the fact that God works in such a way that He knows exactly what to do in each of our lives.

So, whether it's a cumin or whether it's wheat or whatever, He's cultivating, and He knows not to beat one so hard and He knows not to step on another so hard. He knows what He's doing, and He is the great cultivator. He is the great farmer, so to speak.

The wonderful passage in Psalm 103 tells us that God doesn't give us what we deserve. He is like a father who was compassionate with us and is literally training and disciplining us. The psalmist goes on to say at the end of Psalm 139, "You need to search me and try me and see if there be any wicked way in me." In other words, "I don't even trust myself in this." But God is doing a work and He's not doing it to be mean."

In fact, one of the statements that's made in Lamentations 3 is, "The Lord does not afflict willingly." It goes on and says, "He's not trying to deprive you of what is fair and He's not going to crush you, but He is going to bring things into your lives that would draw you closer to Him." So, the journey begins.

At the very beginning of this scenario of calling out Abraham as you look at the end of Chapter 11, some

things happen that are difficult in his life, and it's really part of the process of God working in our lives and causing us to release the things of the world and to embrace the things that are really important. As you look at the end of Chapter 11 of Genesis, you realize that Abraham had a loss of a family member, a brother that was close to him. We read over it, but it was significant. It moves the family in different ways. The other thing that he has to deal with is the pain of being deprived of that which he longed for the most, and that was a child. He had to deal with this particular issue. He's now 75. God's called him out. He still doesn't have a child. He knows that it's impossible for his wife to have one. So, he is working through these feelings. You'd say, "Well, that's enough for anybody. Just hold off on this." Then God brings the famine. So, it is in bringing the famine that God begins to reveal certain things in Abraham's life. Now, remember, the blessing was not only that God was going to bless him, but that He was going to make him a blessing, and that's quite a trip. It's just like once again, you're raising a child; the goal isn't necessarily just for the child to grow up, and to have all the things that are necessary for him to grow

up with. Your hope is that the child will grow up to actually help somebody else, to care for somebody else, to think of somebody else other than himself, and to be a benefit to other people. So, God is going to make him a blessing. That's not an easy trip, and it's not going to be easy and that's why it has to start with going without again in another way, and in a very real way, in a very telling way, in a way that really causes you to think we've got to do something today. It is the famine. As we come into this, we realize that people stumble, they fall, and in many respects, it's probably one of the most encouraging things that you can read in Scripture. When you see those great paragons fall just like you, it is God saying, "I don't love you because you're perfect. I love you because you came, and we're going to work this thing out." So, as you go into the passage, you begin to realize that there is a falling that is involved within the text, and it's important to remember, this journey is not as much about survival as it is about maturation. God's maturing him into the person that He needs to be, and God's promise has been made. His calling and gifts are irrevocable. He's not going to stop being a son. He's not going to stop being His child.

But from the moment that you're conceived, you begin growing, and God's going to make that happen. In fact, God, Who began a good work, is going to finish this. So, you're on a journey. Fasten your seat belts. We begin to walk in the same way that Abraham walks, and in that growth, you're going to need to be stretched. You're going to need to be challenged, you're going to need to grow things like integrity and faithfulness and compassion. I mean, these things have to be grown.

So, as we come into this passage, famine will come into the land. He's going to suffer hunger, but God will not allow him to be hungry. This is a very interesting point, as you look in Deuteronomy, He tells the children of Israel, "I let you be hungry." But God did not allow them to go hungry. The psalmist will say, "I've seen the righteous and God will take care of them. He would not allow them to suffer hunger. He would not allow them to go without." So, we know there are going to be times that you're going to say, "I'm hungry." And there are going to be times that you're going to be tested. Well, who are you going to turn to in that hunger? But God will not allow you to go

hungry. So, as you go into the passage, we see God caring for him and what's comforting to me in this too, is that you will stumble. The righteous man falls seven times but gets back up. You're going to stumble, but God will not allow you to utterly fall, and that's one of the great truths that we're going to see in this passage, and I would say, brings great solace and great comfort to me as we come to this.

Scripture tells us that there was a famine in the land, in the process of the famine, we know as we looked at last week, the story, Abraham falters, he is deceptive. He tries to work through the problem by himself by going down to Egypt. Everything that he's doing is, we would say, wrong by its very nature. We don't see him pulling off to the side saying, "You know what? I just need to talk to God about this." He just goes headlong into Egypt. It makes sense. It makes perfect sense. It seems to be something extremely logical, and so there he is. In the process of him stumbling and doing the wrong thing, God then moves in, and it is a magnificent picture of how God works in our lives. I think that once again, we as believers oftentimes think in the

terms, even though we're children of God, God's still going to hit us with a bolt of lightning. I mean, we just think naturally of that, but Scripture just keeps bringing us back to, "But you're His child, but you're His child." So, would He do that? So, all the way through, God has to remind us of this, and He takes us back to the calling, "Didn't I say I would bless you? Didn't I say I would make you a blessing?" Do you hear anything in that phrase, in that commitment, in that covenant that says, "You're going to get it"? If there is anything that says you're going to get it, it's going to be a "good" get it. It's not going to be bad. So, all the way through, we see this.

What's extremely telling in this passage in this narrative, as you look in Genesis 12:17, is that we would just naturally think Abraham did something bad, the Lord struck Abraham, but that's not the way it reads.

It reads this way,

(Genesis 12:17) "But the LORD struck Pharaoh..."

Now, we know that the great fear of Abraham was that the Pharaoh, the people in Egypt, would see his wife, and they would gravitate towards her because she was so

beautiful, and they'd want to take her for his own and they would kill him in order to do that. Abraham's bent on protecting himself in self-preservation and in this pursuit. In fact, it's very clear, it says in verse 13,

(Genesis 12:13) "Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you."

"I mean, I need to survive here, and we need to watch out for me." And it's very clear that this is about Abraham.

(Genesis 12:17) "But the LORD struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife."

That's interesting. I just want to emphasize this, it would be erroneous for you and me to come to the conclusion that Pharaoh was an innocent bystander, and that "I'm just a wonderful guy. I would never do anything wrong." If God strikes Pharaoh, it is for a good reason, and we know that they have a tendency, and of course, one of the things that God warned Israel about with kings is they're going to take your kids, they're going to do whatever they want. So, they have a sense of entitlement already, "I can take whatever I want. I'm the Pharaoh. I can do whatever

I want.” And God is fundamentally saying, “No, you can't, and especially this one. You can't touch my kid.” And it's an interesting picture. So, the whole scenario, though Abram did wrong in going down to Egypt and deceiving and lying and putting his wife in jeopardy, God was still going to protect him above all.

There's a passage in Psalm that in some ways records this. It's one of the great things about Psalms, so many things that actually happen are recorded in Psalm and kind of take us on a personal note.

So, if you look with me in Psalm 105:8, it reads this way, (Psalm 105:8) “He has remembered His covenant forever...”

Another way of putting it would be, God will never forget His covenant.

“... The word which He commanded to a thousand generations,

(Psalm 105:9) The covenant which He made with Abraham, And His oath to Isaac.

(Psalm 105:10) Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, To Israel as an everlasting covenant,

(Psalm 105:11) Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan As the portion of your inheritance."

Of course, now Abraham, at this point is going, "But I need to take care of myself in order for this to happen." And God says, "No. I said it. It's going to happen."

(Psalm 105:12) "When they were only a few men in number, Very few, and strangers in it.

(Psalm 105:13) And they wandered about from nation to nation, From one kingdom to another people.

(Psalm 105:14) He permitted no man to oppress them, And He reproved kings for their sakes:

(Psalm 105:15) "Do not touch My anointed ones, And do My prophets no harm.""

Very clear, "I'm protecting those that are mine." And God is going to discipline His people, that is giving the picture of training. But to those that are wicked, well, you really can't train the wicked, and it's one of the things that this passage is showing a difference in.

The wicked, the way that Proverbs puts it in Proverbs 10:13,

“... a rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding.”

In other words, you have to strike him, and that's the word that is used for the Pharaoh.

(Genesis 12:17) “But the LORD struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues...”

You say, “Why so harsh?” Well, I would say that because he's fundamentally incorrigible. You couldn't sit down and reason with him. It's sort of like sitting down with a sociopath and saying, “Let's reason this thing out,” or a psychopath and saying, “Let's talk about this. Let's talk this out.” And however long you want to talk it out, it's not going to happen because they're bent on doing evil. So, what you're going to see is that the wicked will just get struck. Remember the story of Esther, and you have Haman? Why doesn't God say, “Well, come on, Haman, let's love the Jews”? No, the very next thing is he has to be hung, and you see the same thing with the king of Assyria. And as you go on, you begin to see that God has to deal with them this way, because the only thing that

they understand is that sense of force. It gets their attention. If you were to appeal to their conscience, that wouldn't get their attention. But if you appeal to their livelihood, or perhaps their life, oh, now you've got their attention. So, God was getting their attention as you go in the passage, and He gets Pharaoh's attention and his house, and how does He do that?

(Genesis 12:17) “But the LORD struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram’s wife.

(Genesis 12:18) Then Pharaoh called Abram and said...”

And this is a great passage, because what we're seeing is God using Pharaoh to discipline or to train Abram. Have you ever had somebody correct you and it wasn't even a believer, and yet you'd have to say, “They're right”? Maybe it was a policeman that pulled you over or something, but you'd have to say, “You're right. You're right. I did wrong.” And God will oftentimes use very strange sources, sometimes it's our own children that can see things a lot clearer than we do at a particular moment. God will speak to us in ways and in places that we would never invent or devise in our own way of

thinking, but God is talking to us and He's reasoning with us.

I think of Isaiah 1:18, where He's calling upon His people, and He turns to them, and He says, "Come, let us reason together." And you see God doing that at the very beginning with Adam and Eve as He as He turns to them, He doesn't immediately strike them, so to speak. He turns, and He goes, fundamentally, "Where are you? Who told you that you were naked?" What He wants them to do is start thinking through the process of what they've done. It's no different than talking when He talks with Cain, "Where's your brother?" "Am I my brother's keeper?" "What have you done?" And God begins to cause him to think through the decisions that he's made. God is doing that with Abram in the passage, and it's very poignant when you look at it because you begin to realize that not only is God gracious in doing it this way, but He is very bent on transforming Abram to a point in which he'll be a blessing to others. And you and I aren't going to be a blessing to others until we change. But how wonderful it is to know that God desires to use us, and that we can be

used. As Ephesians 5 tells us that we're to be imitators of God, and we begin to walk in love, just like Christ. But I can tell you we are a very stubborn people, and it takes quite a bit, and I have one great comfort in realizing that Abraham had his difficulty too, that he struggled with some of the same things that I struggled with.

Pharoah called Abram and he asks certain questions.

If you look at the passage,

(Genesis 12:18) “... “What is this you have done to me? ...”

Now, the Lord brought the plague because of Sarai, and I don't know exactly how Pharaoh knew. Maybe God knocked on Pharaoh's door, and said, “I just want to let you know why you have the plague.” I don't know if He did that, but somehow, Pharaoh understands that this whole plague that has struck his whole family is a result of this woman coming in and something is wrong. So, he turns to Abram, and he goes, “What have you done to me?” That's a very interesting question and one I want you to fundamentally look at, because what he's asking is, “Why would you hurt someone like this?” Now, the things

that we do, we initially perhaps think in terms of self-preservation, we think in terms of perhaps giving ourselves an advantage in the circumstance and we just make our decision based on that. But we don't stop to think how it is affecting those around us. We don't think about that. We don't think about the ramifications of our decisions to others; we just think in terms of, "This gets me off the hook." So, what God is beginning to do is cause him to think in terms of caring for somebody other than himself.

So, the passage reads,

(Genesis 12:17) "... "What is this you have done to me? ...

That's a very poignant point.

And then the second question that he asked in the text is,

"... Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?"

A pretty simple question, isn't it? I mean, "Why would you purposely withhold information that could have benefited me?" I mean, to us, it probably seems like, "It's not a big deal. He just didn't tell him."

I think about the Gospel and there are times that God gives us clear opportunities to share the Gospel. I believe there are going to be a moment, perhaps in heaven, where they will be saved still, but they'll turn to us and say, "But why didn't you tell me? Why did you withhold this information from me that could have spared all of this, could have spared the heartaches that I had to go through in order to come? Why did you withhold information from me?" We think of it as an innocuous thing. "So, what? I just withheld a little bit." But God says, "Why would you do that?" God is causing Abram to think through, and as you go through the text, ultimately, you won't hear a response from Abram. You won't hear Abraham going, "Well, I...I...I..." None of that. He just takes it. You feel like you're coming out of that Lamentations 3 text. It's good to just sit silently and take it because God is moving you to a higher plain.

"Why is it that you didn't tell me?"

If you look at the next one, "Why would you be deceptive to me? Why would you lie about things?"

(Genesis 12:19) "Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' ..."

“Why would you be deceptive and put your wife in a precarious place to be used or abused?” I mean, not only is he putting the Pharaoh and his whole family in jeopardy, but his own wife, without any kind of thought towards her feelings towards her husband that would push her out there and use her to protect him. Don't you think it just had a greater emphasis when the Pharaoh asked these questions, that a man that on the whole has no real sense of conscience, would ask these questions that would point to the conscience?

“... Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?

(Genesis 12:19) “Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife...”

“This is not your sister. This is your wife. Start treating her like one.”

“... take her and go.”

(Genesis 12:20) Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they escorted him away, with his wife and all that belonged to him.”

There's a frequent passage that we turn to, and let me just say this, on the onset, you're going to be making bad decisions in your life. That's who you are. That's who I am. We make bad decisions and you're going to make bad choices, but God, because He loves you, Hebrews 12, "Who the Lord loves, He disciplines," right? And you could put the word in there and it would not be a stretch because it actually means this, "Who the Lord loves, He trains." So, what God is doing is training you. He's not punishing you. He doesn't give you what you deserve. He's training you so that you'll stop doing this, but more than that, what God is doing is teaching His children to see and feel the need for change. We have a tendency to perhaps do things or not do things because fear is our motivator, "I'm going to be in trouble if I do this." But what God is doing is He's taking us beyond that fear motivation and bringing us to a point in which we actually recognize the hurt that it brings to others in the decisions that we make so that we actually don't want to do evil. That's a different transition, isn't it?

Psalm 37, if you turn there with me, gives this interesting picture of our tendency to actually fret, or maybe even want to be like evil doers or wrongdoers. The passage goes on and says don't wish the same thing; don't wish to be like them. These are people that hurt people. They take advantage of people. These are Pharaohs. That's what they do.

You drop on down to verse 3, it reads this way,

(Psalm 37:3) “Trust in the LORD and do good...”

Now, the emphasis of this passage is going to be actually helping people. Doing good is actually doing that which is beneficial for others, and once again, it gives that interesting picture of being a blessing. You're not just blessed, you're blessed for a reason; to bless others and it really is in the joy of helping others that you find true joy. Jesus will make that statement in John 15.

“Trust in the LORD and do good; Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness.”

We think of cultivating as more a farmer's thing, but actually the word that is used here is more a shepherd

thing. The word is actually another word for shepherd in the Old Testament. So, what he's talking about here in the passage is feed the flock, tend to them, care for them. In other words, how do I cultivate faithfulness? And he's saying you take care of people, you care for people, you feed them, you watch out for them; you think of them instead of yourself. That's what you do, and that's what cultivating faithfulness looks like. We think in terms of, "Ok, I'll just stand here and be faithful." And nobody's helped, and we don't care about anybody else and that's not cultivating faithfulness at all. What's being generated is, once again, you back up in verse 3, at the very beginning,

"Trust in the LORD and do good..."

That's why it says in verse 21,

(Psalm 37:21) "The wicked borrows and does not pay back, But the righteous is gracious and gives."

What is the righteous doing? He's helping people. He's always thinking about helping people. Could you imagine Abram when he first heard about the famine, he just goes, "Well, I'm going to trust in God and I'm going to

protect my wife.” Well, what about you, Abraham? Maybe you could be in jeopardy.” “I'm not even thinking about myself.” Now, it's to be noted that when you get into the next chapter, he doesn't think about himself; He thinks about Lot. What you're seeing is a transformation, and the Lord actually allows all of us to go on the journey with him. Isn't that a great thing, that we get to walk through this?

Here again, our tendency is to be angry when bad things happen or when other guys get things when we don't get what we feel like we deserve. So, we get frustrated.

So, it says in verse 8,

(Psalm 37:8) “Cease from anger and forsake wrath; Do not fret; it leads only to evildoing.”

You'll devise things, you'll go into self-protection and then other people other people will get hurt, because of your decisions to protect yourself. Stop. Don't do that.

(Psalm 37:12) “The wicked plots against the righteous And gnashes at him with his teeth.”

He even goes after the afflicted and the needy. (Verse 14)

(Psalm 37:16) “Better is the little of the righteous Than the abundance of many wicked.

(Psalm 37:17) For the arms of the wicked will be broken, But the LORD sustains the righteous.”

(Psalm 37:19) “They will not be ashamed in the time of evil...”

You could actually put the word “famine” in there. In fact, it does.

“... And in the days of famine they will have abundance.

(Psalm 37:20) But the wicked will perish...”

(Psalm 37:23) “The steps of a man are established by the LORD, And He delights in his way.

(Psalm 37:24) When he falls...”

Not “if” he falls.

“... he will not be hurled headlong...”

Another way of putting it would be “pushed away,” or “discarded by God”. That's good to know, isn't it? See, God has already made a promise to us, “I'm saving you. Did you come? Did you obey the Gospel? Did you

believe?” “Yes.” “You're My child.” The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. “I've made a commitment to you. I'll see you in heaven. I've prepared a place for you. But in the meantime, let's use you. Grow up. Be a help to people. Draw closer to Me. Get to know Me better by doing the things that I do.” We begin to realize that even if he falls, he will not be hurled headlong. Because why? Because there's Somebody that holds his hand. He's been holding his hand all along.

So, the righteousness is one that is not necessarily perfect, but in verse 26,

(Psalm 37:26) “All day long he is gracious and lends, And his descendants are a blessing.”

In other words, there are people that go around helping people. These are God's people, and this is what God looks like.

So, he says,

Psalm 37:27) “Depart from evil and do good, So you will abide forever.”

(Psalm 37:28) For the LORD loves justice...”

He loves merciful acts of doing what is right. “Righteous decisions” is probably what the phrase means there.

“For the LORD loves justice And does not forsake His godly ones...”

Now, once again, the thought oftentimes is, “Well, ‘godly ones,’ that means like perfect people.” No, that's “*ḥāsîd*,” which makes reference to a person that is merciful and a person who is kind and is active in participating in acts of kindness. That's a godly person according to the Hebrew text. So, what does it say? He does not forsake them. So, God is fostering this heart so He can bless him more. I mean, once again, why would you bless somebody that's not being a blessing? But you bless in order to help the person, and it says this in verse 33,

(Psalm 37:33) “The LORD will not leave him in his (the wicked) hand

Or let him be condemned when he is judged.”

The Lord will deliver him. He delivers them from the wicked, He saves them because they take refuge in Him.
(Verse 40)

All the way through, what He's fundamentally saying is, "I'm going to take care of you." When we come to this, there is kind of an ending to this, and I think it's very moving to me. Because in the initial thing, we have a famine and once again, the thought is that ok, things are going awry and once again, we begin to try to work through them and try to deal with them on our own. Our thought is that our way of thinking is better than God's, or maybe God's just asleep in the boat, or maybe He's just not caring. But He does care for you, and the famine was brought there for a reason. It's so you would turn to Him. What's interesting about this whole scenario is it happens within a short time. There's a famine in the land, he goes to Egypt, and soon there, they go after the wife; he does the whole lie thing and then the Pharaoh goes, "You've got to get out of here. The plagues have hit me and my family. You've got to get out of here." So, he pushed them out. Now, my question to you is, where does he go? And the answer is he went right back where he had been. How do we know that? Chapter 13 tells us that he goes right into the Negev and then he goes back to Bethel, where he had first met with God. Now, I'm telling you there was a

famine in the land, but now there's not. Is it possible had he stayed, there would be an alleviation of the famine in the land? Could God do such a thing? The passage has given us this wonderful picture, but as you go into Chapter 13, what you're going to see is a man that begins to care for the people around him. And God begins to cultivate his life to be like a shepherd, and he is the beginning of that sense of a shepherd that we see that will ultimately point to the Christ who will come like a shepherd, will tend to us, and while suffering, He will die on the cross, not for His sins, but for yours and for mine. Now, that's the epitome of not thinking of yourself. This is who God has called us to be like. Be imitators of God and walk in love, just like Christ. He's calling you to do that. He's calling me to do that. We're doing the same walk as Abraham. We're walking by faith, and this is what faith looks like.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and we ask You to change our hearts. Lord, we don't think like You.

Naturally, we think in terms of what appeals to us, what makes us feel good, what causes us to be in our own minds, protected and safe. Nevertheless, we couldn't be any further from the truth. Because as this passage begins to demonstrate for us, safety comes from trusting in You, and we'd be far better off, instead of trying to work things out ourselves, to put our trust in You right from the very start. We'd save ourselves from a whole lot of traveling and a lot of sweating. It is Your goodness that rescues, and we trust in You. But even beyond that, we believe that if we obey You and trust You and live our lives following You, listening to You, instead of listening to ourselves, that You're going to keep us from hurting people. You're going to keep us from doing damage to those around us. You've called us to be a blessing. We don't want to destroy lives.