

Genesis 18:16-33

Intro: Jamie Keil friendship

- I. Abraham Is Treated Like A Friend of God (16-21)
- II. Abraham Behaves Like a Friend of God (22-35)
- III. Abraham is Called A Friend of God (Misc. & N.T.)

I. Abraham Is Treated Like A Friend of God

Vs. 16 *"Then the men rose up from there and looked down toward Sodom; and Abraham was walking with them to send them off."*

- First half of Ch. 18 God privileged Abraham & Sarah with visit
- Abraham urgently prepared a meal, Sarah quickly whipped up some bread
- Abraham quickly had a choice calf slaughtered for a meal.

In Reality, God & His messengers probably don't need to eat, yet He honors this practice with Abraham.

Vs. 16-18 Looked over at Sodom - time to tend to the business they had come for.

- This is not to imply God's plans are random and His visit to Abraham & Sarah was unplanned.
- Rather, their visit was a part of a larger agenda which included Sodom and Gomorrah.

Vs. 17-19 *"Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed. For I have chosen him in order that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice in order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him."*

2 Reasons God Chooses to Privilege Abraham w/ His Plans

1. Because God Will Make Abraham Great, Abraham Deserves to Be Privy to God's Plans

- We might read this as *"I'm not going to keep My plans from Abraham because I have already determined that he is worthy of this information."*
- **Vs. 18** Most translations say **"since"**. NET says **"After all"**
- In light of who God has already declared Abraham to be, God will share His plans for these cities

2. Because God Expects Righteousness, Abraham Must Witness the Consequences of Unrighteousness

- **Vs. 19** God says in order for Me to fulfill what I have promised about Abraham, it is imperative that Abraham command his children and his household in the ways of righteousness.
- Understanding what is unrighteous has a large part in understanding what is righteous.
- This destruction will not happen in a vacuum leaving them wondering. They will know why.

God Declares That He Must Go Down & Judge The Wickedness of These Cities

Vs. 20-21 *"And the Lord said, the outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave. I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know."*

Similar Examples of God "Coming Down"

- Genesis 3:8 God walking in the Garden & called to Adam & Eve. God already knew their sin.
- Genesis 4 Abel's blood was crying out to God from the ground. God already knew Cain's sin.
- Genesis 6:13 God privileged Noah with a preview to His plans to judge the Earth.
- Genesis 11:5-7 Tower of Babel. "Come let us go down there & see this situation of mankind."

Vs. 21 Says something interesting at the end.

God says, *"I want to go down to the city and see with my own eyes if the outcry of sin that I have heard is accurate. **If not, I will know.**"*

NET describes this little comment like this:

"Even the Lord, who is well aware of the human capacity to sin, finds it hard to believe that anyone could be as bad as the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah suggests".

Read Isaiah 3:9-11

- What the Lord witnessed when he goes down into the City of Sodom is REALLY not good.
- Any opportunity of hope and repentance quickly flies out the door.
- The outcry of their sin and iniquity is a very real thing.

The First Thing We See Is That God Treats Abraham Like A Friend By Including Him in His Plans

- This is first and foremost rooted in WHO God called Abraham to be.
- God privileged Abraham of Sodom & Gomorrah because God raised Abraham to a status of friend.
- God doesn't need Abraham's friendship, but He chooses to establish this friendship.
- God doesn't need our love, but He chooses to love us so that we might love Him in return.
- **I John says: "*We love because He first loved us.*"**
- God Knew Abraham Could Be Trusted As His Friend
- We will see Abraham's response to this information in the next verses.

II. Abraham Responds Like a Friend of God Vs. 22-35

Read 22-35

- **Vs 23** *"Abraham came near to God"*
- God had Moses record this for a reason.
 - Abraham, upon learning God's intentions, moves in and draws near to the Lord Himself.
 - We get a distinct image of permission and acceptance by God.
 - This is not unholy, irreverent, or misplaced confidence by Abraham.
 - This is the behavior of a friend

Abraham Clearly Understands The Holiness of God

- **Vs. 27** *"I have dared to speak to the Creator of the Universe even though I am unworthy."*
- **Vs. 30, 31, 32** *"I have ventured to speak to the Lord, please do not be angry with me...."*

Abraham Expresses His Concern for God's Plan

- **Vs 23-25**
 - *"God, would you actually destroy righteous people in your judgment of the wicked?"*
 - At first onset, this appears like Abraham is most concerned about humanity.

Abraham's Primary Concern Is For the Character of God

- **Vs. 25** Reveals Abraham's Real Motives.
 - *"Far be it from You God to do such a thing. You are a just God and you always deal justly."*
 - You deal with the righteous in a just way and you deal with the unrighteous in a just way.
 - This is how a friend of God responds. Far be it from You Lord to do such a thing!!

Abraham Operates Here As A Type of Christ

- We often refer to the Christ-like motif that is found in the O.T.
- **David** serves as a Type of Christ. **Kinsman Redeemer** in Ruth saves as a Type of Christ.
- **Moses** serves as a Type of Christ. **Jehoshaphat** in Chronicles.....to be read shortly..

Mosaic Examples That Parallel Abraham's Dialogue With God

Exodus 32:9-14 Moses shows great concern for God's reputation among the nations

Numbers 14:11-23 Notice that Moses' concern is what the nations will conclude.

Exodus 33:11 God spoke to Moses face to face as a man speaks to his friend.

Abraham's Intercession Not A Plea for Sodom - It's A Plea for God's Just Character & Reputation

Abraham is pleading as a friend of God, not as a friend of Sodom.

Abraham is not asking God to spare Sodom & its unrighteousness

Rather, don't destroy the righteous with the unrighteous.

The Second Thing We See From This Passage Is How Abraham Responds or Behaves Like A Friend

- Our closest friends show a genuine concern for us and our reputations?
- Our closest friends show concern for our witness for God?
- They are concerned about how we look in the eyes of the world, the eyes of fellow believers, and how our actions and words line up with scripture?

Our Most Cherished Friendships Are The Ones Which Are Reciprocal & We Know The Other Person's Dedication to Us.

III. Abraham Is Called a Friend of God

- **II Chronicles 20:5-7** Jehoshaphat refers to Abraham as *"God's friend forever"*
 - If I'm correct in my understanding, this comes from the root word for love.
 - Abraham was one loved by God forever.
- **Isaiah 41:8-10** Here God reminds Israel of His loyalty and covenant to Abraham.
 - Here, we have God articulating to Isaiah *"Abraham is MY friend"*
- **James 2:21-23** James tells us Abraham's belief and trust in God was the root of God calling him friend.
 - As a friend Abraham believed God
 - As a friend Abraham obeyed God
 - As a friend Abraham was declared righteous by God
 - As a friend, Abraham's actions worked in tandem with faith to reveal his friendship with God.

God Shifted The Details Of Abraham's Plea - Not His Plan Vs. 24-33

- I don't believe we can conclude that God's mind was changed.
- Rather, God allowed this dialogue with His friend in order that His friend's heart would be changed.
- Abraham's motive for God's just judgement did not not change. The details changed.
- Abraham now understands that Sodom is so wicked there might not even be 10 people in the entire City who have any regard for the Lord whatsoever.

God's Plan to Judge Sodom & Gomorrah For Their Wickedness Never Changed

- God changed Abraham's prayer & Abraham's heart to align with God's will.

Is This Not What Jesus Promised to His Disciples & By Extension Promised To Us?

John 15:12-17

- **Vs. 15** *"I now call you friends because I share my will with you...."*
 - Is this not how the Lord spoke of Abraham? I will share what I am doing because he is my friend
- **Vs. 16a** *"You did not choose Me, but I chose you,..."*
 - Abraham was chosen by God from out of all the nations of the world.
- **Vs. 16b** *"....and I appointed you to go bear fruit."*
 - God called Abraham to command his children to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness"
- **Vs. 16c** *".....whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give it to you."*
 - Abraham pleaded with God first in a manner consistent with God's character.
 - Secondly, in a manner consistent with God's will.

We Don't Just Ask For Anything We Want - We Ask For That Which Is Consistent with God's Will

John 14:13-15

- The purpose of the Son's actions is to glorify God the Father
 - So if we're not asking something that is ultimately God's plan and glorifies Him, He will change our will and our prayer to align with His.

We Don't Get To Ask Anything & Slap The "In Jesus' Name Bumper Sticker" On Our Prayer

- We are to develop an intimacy with God that allows Him to transform our prayers to match His will.
- We are to be led in our prayers by the Holy Spirit who will communicate God's will to us.
- We are to spend quality time with God as His friend so that we know what pleases Him.

Illustration: Prayer for Mom on Friday Night - Sunday Passing

Spurgeon said this:

"Friendship creates a measure of equality between the persons concerned. I say that not absolute equality is at all necessary to friendship, for a great king may have a firm friend in one of the least of his subjects; but the tendency is towards an equalizing of the two friends; the one comes down gladly, and the other rises up in sympathy. Friendship begets fellowship, and this bridges over the dividing gulf."

Proverbs 18:24 "There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."

Jesus said *"there is no greater love than this, that a man would lay down his life for his friends."*

God laid down His life so we could be called friends of God.

God laid down His life so we could be given His Holy Spirit to help us discern His will.

God laid down His life so we could receive an eternal inheritance like He promised to Abraham.

- **Do we take this friendship for granted as though nothing is required of us?**
 - We aren't friends with others when its constantly a one way relationship drain.
 - How do we think God feel when we treat Him the same?
- **How do we expect to pray prayers that are consistent with His will if we never spend time communing with the Lord?**
 - We can't know what our friends like and desire without spending time with them.
 - How do we expect to know God's will without spending time with Him?
- **Do we mistakenly think too highly of ourselves....as though we are equal with God?**
 - Abraham knew his place and humbled himself to plea with God.
 - Do we fail to come humbly before God recognizing that our self righteousness on our best day is like filthy rags to the Lord?

God Has Called Us Friends Because He Laid Down His Life For Us.

Our Responsibility Now Is to Respond As Abraham Did As God's Friend