

# Abraham: The Father of the Faithful

## Lesson 3: Letting Go: Abram and Lot Part Ways -- Genesis 13

Abram comes up out of Egypt a wealthy and a chastened man. The famine is over, the lie is behind him, and the first thing the text tells us is where he goes. Not to a new venture, not to chase more wealth, but back. Back to the Negeb, back to Bethel, back to the very place where he had built an altar at the beginning, and there he calls again on the name of the LORD. After the detour into Egypt and the failure that came with it, Abram returns to the altar like a man coming home. Before there is any new chapter of faith, there is a quiet act of restoration.

But prosperity brings its own problems. Abram is rich in livestock, silver, and gold, and his nephew Lot has done well too. Soon there is not enough land to hold them both, and the herdsmen start to quarrel over water and grazing. The tension thickens. Two relatives, both blessed, are about to be torn apart by their own success. And it falls to Abram, the elder, the one with the promise, the one who by every right and custom should choose first, to decide what to do.

What he does next is breathtaking. "Let there be no strife between you and me," Abram says, "for we are kinsmen. Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left, I will go to the right; if you take the right, I will go to the left." The man who held every advantage simply hands the choice to his younger nephew. He does not grasp. He does not pull rank. He lets go. And Lot, lifting up his eyes and seeing the well-watered Jordan valley, green as the garden of the LORD, takes the best of it for himself and journeys toward a city named Sodom.

Here is the strange arithmetic of faith. Lot grabbed the best land and ended up pitching his tent toward the most wicked city on earth. Abram surrendered his rights and kept nothing but a promise, and the moment Lot was gone, God spoke: "Lift up your eyes and look. All the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever." The man who let go was given everything. This chapter asks whether you believe that God can be trusted with what you release, or whether you are still convinced that the only way to come out ahead is to grab first and grab the most.

**Group Discussion:** Abram had the right to choose first, yet he willingly gave that right away and let Lot take the best of the land. Why is it so hard for most of us to let go of our rights, even small ones, in order to keep peace and trust God with the outcome? What does a person have to believe about God in order to be that generous?

**Personal Reflection:** Think of a relationship that is currently strained, or a situation where you are insisting on your rights or your way. What would it look like for you to do what Abram did, to let go of the advantage and trust God to take care of you? What fear is holding you back from that kind of open hand?

## **Study Questions**

1. After returning from Egypt, Abram went back to Bethel, “to the place where his tent had been at the beginning,” to the altar he had made there, and “called upon the name of the LORD” (vv. 3–4). Coming right after his failure in Egypt, what does this deliberate return to the altar reveal about repentance, restoration, and where a faltering faith finds its footing again?
2. Abram’s instinct after a failure was to go back to the place of worship and start again with God. Where in your life do you need to “return to the altar,” to come back to the practices and place of worship you have drifted from? What has pulled you away, and what would returning look like this week?
3. When strife arose, Abram, as the elder with the covenant promise, had every right to choose first, yet he gave the choice to Lot (vv. 8–9). What does this striking generosity reveal about the kind of faith that can afford to let go of its rights, and how does trusting God’s promise free a person to be generous?
4. Abram could release his rights because he trusted God to provide. Where are you currently grasping your rights, your turn, or your way, perhaps in a relationship that has grown tense over exactly such insistence? What would it cost you to open your hand, and what does your grip reveal about your trust?
5. Lot “lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere” and chose it by what it looked like, even as he moved toward wicked Sodom (vv. 10–13). What does Lot’s decision teach us about the danger of choosing by appearance and short-term advantage rather than by faith and spiritual discernment?
6. Lot chose what looked best without weighing where it would lead. What decision are you making, or have you made, mainly on the basis of appearance, comfort, or short-term gain, without seriously asking where it is taking you spiritually? How might you bring faith and discernment back into that choice?
7. The moment Lot departed, the LORD spoke to Abram and reaffirmed and even expanded the promise: all the land, offspring like the dust of the earth, given forever (vv. 14–17). What does it reveal about God’s character and economy that the man who surrendered the best land was the one who received everything?
8. We often fear that letting go means losing out, that if we do not grab for ourselves, no one will provide for us. Where is that fear operating in your life right now? How does God’s response to Abram’s open hand challenge the belief that you have to grasp in order to come out ahead?
9. This chapter sets two ways of living side by side: Abram, who walked by faith in an unseen promise and let go of visible advantage, and Lot, who walked by sight, chose the visible best, and drifted toward Sodom (with ruin waiting in Genesis 19). How does Scripture call us to “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7), and why do the choices we make by mere appearance so often set a trajectory whose end we do not foresee?

10. Look back across the whole chapter. You have seen a man return to the altar, surrender his rights, refuse to grasp, and receive far more than he gave up, while his nephew grabbed the best and started down a road toward ruin. Name one specific way Jesus is forming you through this part of Abram's story. Where is He calling you to let go, to walk by faith rather than sight, and to trust Him with the outcome this week?

### **Now or Later**

Reflect on these passages: 2 Corinthians 5:7, we walk by faith and not by sight; Genesis 19:1–29, where Lot's choice to settle near Sodom finally leads; 2 Peter 2:7–8, righteous Lot, tormented day after day by the wickedness around him; Matthew 6:33, seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you; Philippians 2:3–4, count others more significant than yourselves and look to their interests