

GENESIS 18:23-33 “ABRAHAM INTERCEDES FOR SODOM”

8/12/17 Sat Morn Prayer – Phil Twente, ptwente@gmail.com

“Pass Me Not O Gentle Savior – Frances J. Crosby – sung by Joslin Grove Choral Society

1. Pass me not, O gentle Savior, Hear my humble cry; While on others Thou art calling, Do not pass me by.

Refrain: Savior, Savior, Hear my humble cry, While on others Thou art calling, Do not pass me by.

2. Thou the spring of all my comfort, More than life to me, Whom have I on earth beside Thee, Whom in Heav'n but Thee.
(Refrain – 2X)

Abraham Intercedes for Sodom - Communion with God is kept up by the word and by prayer. In the word God speaks to us; in prayer we speak to him. Abraham asks an important question: will God destroy the righteous with the wicked? Abraham had such love for Lot, in spite of the man's worldliness and unbelief. Note that **Abraham was not pleading the grace of God, but the justice of God: how could God destroy the righteous with the wicked? Persistently and tenderly Abraham interceded on behalf of Sodom.**

Questions: • Does prayer begin with God or with man?

- Are your prayers really just bringing your plans before God and asking Him to bless them?
- **Do you sense God enlisting your partnership with Him in prayer to accomplish what He wants to do**, to have done?
- Can you say that **God frequently enlists you as His partner**, resulting in your praying for that?
- Are your prayers always based on a promise, or a warning, or a conviction of God's will?

Gen 18:22-33 Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD.

We see the two **men** are actually the angels who visited Sodom in Gen. 19:1-38. The third “man” in the party is actually the **LORD** Himself.

[23] And Abraham came near and said,

Abraham **came near** to the LORD. Effective intercession is **a matter of drawing near to God** so we can pray with *His* heart.

“Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? [24] Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it? [25] Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

Would You also slay the righteous with the wicked? In discussing this question, Abraham “reminded” the LORD of His own nature and principles, “*shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*” Abraham thought that God, as a righteous **Judge** could not punish the innocent the same way as the guilty.

- **Prayer is effective because it prays knowing who God is, and how God works** in a particular situation. Effective prayer doesn't see itself as a passive spectator in what God does, **but acts as if it must “remind” God in prayer.**
- We might find it remarkable Abraham even *cared* about the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. He might have just prayed “LORD, get my nephew Lot out of there first,” but he didn't. **Abraham's heart was full of sorrow and compassion, even for the wicked of Sodom and Gomorrah.**

[26] So the LORD said, “If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.”

God said this because Abraham asked. **When Abraham drew near to the LORD and prayed according to God's revealed nature and will, God agreed.** The LORD said that He would spare the city if there were 50 righteous there.

[27] Then Abraham answered and said, “Indeed now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: [28] Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for lack of five?”

Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous: Now the principle is established - God will not destroy the righteous with the wicked - now it is just a matter of numbers. How many righteous people will God spare the city for?

- How low Abraham lay in his self-estimate! They who know most of God do not presume on their knowledge, but esteem themselves the least of saints.

- **Abraham's intercession was effective because it was *specific*.** He talked about specific numbers with God, not in broad, general terms. **Often our prayers are ineffective because we really don't ask the LORD to *do* anything. Instead we often just toss wishes up to heaven.**

So He said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy it." [29] And he spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose there should be forty found there?" So He said, "I will not do it for the sake of forty." [30] Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak:

Abraham continued his intercession with a "bold humility." He was not proud or arrogant before the LORD, but he still continued to ask.

- Abraham's humility was demonstrated in that nowhere in his prayer did he ask "Why?" or did he demand that God explain Himself and His actions.

Suppose thirty should be found there?" So He said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." [31] And he said, "Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose twenty should be found there?" So He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty." [32] Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?"

Suppose ten should be found there? Abraham was a skilled negotiator and he prevailed upon God to lower the number of righteous required to spare the city. First by units of five, then by units of ten, until the number settled at ten.

- It is impossible to miss the persistence of Abraham in intercession. Why didn't he give it up at 40 or 50 and say simply "it's in the LORD's hands" or "the LORD will do what the LORD will do"? **Because an intercessor must feel, at the moment of prayer, that the eternal destiny of men depends on his prayer.**
- This is the kind of heart God wanted to draw out of Abraham - **a heart that cared so much for people made in the image of God that he worked hard to intercede on behalf of a city that deserved judgment.** This was the heart a great leader of a great and mighty nation needed to have.
- Remember, there is a sense in which all this negotiation was fruitless. There were not ten righteous people in the city, only four. The cities were destroyed. **Yet God specifically revealed the fate of these cities to Abraham to draw out of him an intercessor's heart of love,** so even before the time of Jesus Abraham could be *conformed into the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29) who is Himself an intercessor (Heb. 7:25).*
- Abraham ventures to repeat his intervention six times, every time diminishing the number of the righteous whom he supposes to be in it.

And He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten." [33] So the LORD went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.

We wonder if Abraham should not have continued the negotiations because there were only four righteous in the city. Would God have spared the city for four if Abraham had asked? Perhaps Abraham felt Lot would surely have brought six people beyond his own family to God in his time in Sodom.

SUMMARY:

- Is your prayer life a reflection of God's enlisting you as a partner with Him?
- Abraham recognized the mercy of God. He is basing his request on the knowledge of God's nature.
- He knows God would never destroy the righteous with the wicked. Now he goes further and asks God to spare the wicked for the sake of a few righteous. Note how specific Abraham was in his prayers.
- Do you claim His promises as a central part of your prayers?
- Do we have an intercessor's heart of love as Abraham did?
- Abraham's prayer was answered: ***Gen 19:29*** *And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt.*

Pray Today For: Our Church, Nationally/locally; Our Nation: Our leaders; Police officers/military. Supreme Ct. Justices: John Roberts, Jr., Anthony Kennedy, Clarence Thomas, Ruth Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer, Samuel Alito, Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and Neil Gorsuch; President & V.P.: Donald & Melania Trump; Mike & Karen Pence. General James Kelly. The Cabinet and all advisors. Appointee - Christopher Wray, F.B.I.

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