*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

June 6 – June 11

*Walking with Abraham*

**Monday, June 6 Genesis 13:1-4**

*“So Abram left Egypt”*

In Genesis 12:10, we are told that Abram flees famine by traveling “down to Egypt”, a land outside of the region promised to him by the Lord. As read last week, the results are disastrous. Presenting Sarai as his sister, Abram walks in disobedience to the Lord. In verse 1 of today’s passage, we learn that Abram now travels “north into the Negev” continuing until he reaches Bethel in the heart of the promised land. Here, Abram worships the Lord as he had before. Thus, Abram’s return to the land is simultaneously a return to trusting in the Lord.

Our own lives are marked by detours into Egypt. Walking with the Lord, we find ourselves veering off into strange lands, enticed by the belief that by doing so, we will avoid disaster and famine in all their forms. Abram’s return to the land promised by God is an important reminder that God’s provision is enough to sustain us in all circumstances. When we do wander, God invites us back into the land of his heart where we find all that we need. There, we worship him, and he sustains us by his grace and love.

*Lord, when I wander, call me back to your heart. Amen.*

**Tuesday, June 7 Genesis 13:5-7**

*“So disputes broke out between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot”*

Verses 5-7 introduce an interesting dilemma: On one hand, both Abram and Lot have been blessed by the Lord. He has kept his promises, and their flocks of livestock have grown immensely. On the other hand, this blessing has led to a strain on local resources. The land cannot support both herds, and conflict is arising. The two family members are forced to come to a resolution.

Like Abram and Lot, we live in a world where resources are often stretched thin, and we find ourselves vying for a limited pool of them. We come to believe that we *need* these things in order to live and thrive. Because our society values competition, it is easy to view those around us as obstacles to obtaining those resources. Thus, we justify any course of action that allows us to secure what we believe is rightfully ours. However, all that we have belongs to the Lord and comes from him. God has promised us that he will provide for our needs. We are greater than the lilies of the field! For this reason, we must reject the conflicts and animosity that arise in a world of competition. Trusting in the Lord, we find that he is enough.

*In the face of scarcity, Lord, let me trust in you and seek peace with others. Amen.*

**Wednesday, June 8 Genesis 13:8-9**

*“Let’s not allow this conflict to come between us”*

Abram suggests a resolution to the conflict found in verses 5-7. Rather than allowing the tension between their herdsmen to overflow into division, or possibly violence, Abram suggests that Lot choose the land he desires. The offer is surprising for a couple of reasons. First, Abram is Lot’s elder. Lot ought to defer to him. Second, the Lord has promised the land to Abram, and here, Abram offers it to his nephew. From an outsider’s perspective, it appears that Abram has humiliated himself and lost his position of authority and power.

However, Abram shows that he understands what the Lord expects of him. Rather than allowing the conflict to drive a wedge between himself and Lot, Abram shows regard for their relationship as family. He trusts that the Lord will provide for his needs, and he places his nephew before himself. In doing so, he fulfills an element of the promise God has made to Abram: “All families on earth will be blessed through you” (12:3). As we seek to witness to the Lord, Abram provides us with an example of how humility encourages faithfulness to the Lord.

*When faced with conflict, Lord, let me choose humility that leads to Godliness. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

June 6 – June 11

*Walking with Abraham*

**Thursday, June 9 Genesis 13:10-13**

*“Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom”*

Lot chooses for himself land at the eastern edge of the Jordan Valley. This land is fertile and rich in nutrients “like the garden of the Lord.” From Lot’s perspective, this land will provide him all that he needs to flourish and become wealthy. However, the author includes an ominous foreshadowing: “This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah”. In choosing this land, Lot has nearly left the promised land of Canaan and has settled among people who live lives of sin and corruption- amidst cities that will be destroyed for their sin.

How often are we tempted by opportunities and experiences that appear to solve our problems and meet our needs only to find that they have accomplished the opposite? In Matthew 23, Jesus warns us of such things referring to them as “whitewashed tombs.” They appear beautiful on the outside, but on the inside, they are full of bones. If we are to avoid such pitfalls, we must root ourselves in the grace of God, keeping to his promises. Like Abram, we must “settle in the land of Canaan”.

*When faced with temptation, Lord, let me dwell in your house. Amen.*

**Friday, June 10 Psalm 37:23-24**

*“You must not testify falsely against your neighbor”*

In many ways, chapters 12 and 13 serve as a microcosm and summary of Abram’s life. Calling Abram, God promises to lead him to a land where he will grow into a great nation. He will be blessed and others will be blessed through him. However, Abram wanders beyond the borders of the promised land into Egypt where he relies upon deception for protection and provision. This pattern of God’s faithfulness and Abram’s disobedience is one found throughout his story. Though Abram has returned to Canaan at the end of chapter 13, we will see him stumble again.

Despite Abrams disobedience, God remains faithful. In Psalm 37, we are reminded that though God’s people may stumble, “they will never fall, for the Lord holds them by the hand.” God’s faithfulness is rooted in his love and grace. Though we often choose to direct our own paths, God remains true to the path he has won for us: the path of his loving kindness. Like Abram, he invites us to walk this path with him, constantly checking to see that our steps are in line with his. When we wander, he is there to correct our heading. Indeed, he will not let us fall!

*Lord, I thank you for holding my hand when I stumble. Amen.*

**Saturday, June 11 Genesis 13:14-18**

*“Go and walk through the land in every direction, for I am giving it to you”*

Chapter 13 is concluded with a reiteration of the promises God has made to Abram: the Lord will give Abram the land and many descendants. In addition, Abram is invited to “walk through the land” as a foretaste of the many good gifts the Lord is bestowing upon his people.

One might ask, “Why are the Lord’s promises constantly repeated?” To ask this question is to ignore an uncomfortable fact: we are forgetful people. When faced with uncertainty and hardship, we revert to the belief that we are alone and must forge our own path. We begin to cling to the promises of the world- promises that are empty and foolish. God’s promises stand as a reminder that the desire of our hearts can only be satisfied when we turn to the One who created and sustains us. His promises are the only foundation from which we can know that we are loved and cared for. Hearing God’s promises again, Abram builds an altar and worships God. We too should offer our praise to the One who keeps his promises

*Thank you, Lord, for reminding us of your promises. Amen.*