

How Can a Family be Blessed by God?

- All righty. We are in a book of the Bible called Genesis chapter 12. If you've got a Bible go there. And we're spending some time looking at a marriage, a family, a case study, in two of the most famous people in the history of the world, Abraham and Sarah. And if you're not familiar with the Bible, you might think of the people in the Bible almost like superheroes. They get it right every time, they got it all together. That's not the case. These people are a real situation. And you're gonna meet them this week. And they are given for us in the Bible as the prototype and the pattern and the precedent of faith. But faith is not perfect faith. Our God is perfect. And our faith is in a perfect God, but we don't have perfect faith. You're gonna see their faults, flaws and failures today. And I hope that it encourages you. A buddy of mine, he's a pastor. He says there's two ways to learn. One is to make mistakes. The other is to let someone else make mistakes and learn from their pain. That's letting someone else pay your gum tax. Abraham and Sarah are gonna do that today, and especially Abraham. Let me just say this, if you're a terrible husband, you're still doing pretty good, I'll show you in a moment. You're gonna feel better about yourself on the way out. And the way it works with faith is this, those who are critics of Christianity will say there's basically perfect Christians and then hypocrites. They only give us kind of two categories. So they're just waiting for any Christian or maybe if you know someone who is critical of Christianity waiting for you to just say or do something that they deem wrong and then they just sort of dismiss you all together. The Bible says that when you meet the Lord, you are new. You're forgiven, you're adopted, you're loved. It is something called a one way grace covenant relationship. And when Jesus returns and you rise from the dead, you're gonna be perfect and your life is going to be perfect. In the middle, we're in a process. And it's where we're growing in faith. We're learning faith. We're learning to trust and walk with the Lord. It's not unlike learning to play an instrument or learning to speak a foreign language. Nobody gives you a trombone and you just play it. You're gonna make some mistakes as you figure it out. You're not going to learn how to speak a foreign language day one. You're gonna learn along the way. Faith is like that. Trusting the Lord. Walking with the Lord, listening to the Lord. It's something that we learn through trial and error, through mistake, and that's gonna be the case today. And it is to encourage us that even though our faith is not perfect, our God is faithful. And his faithfulness overcomes the times and seasons that we have a lack of faith. So here's the story of Abraham and Sarah. And they're gonna be center stage from Genesis 11 through 25. And they are told you're gonna have a kid. Now she's elderly and barren, and he's even older than she is. And God's gonna do a miracle and give them a son. Through that son is gonna come a whole nation of people that we now know as the nation of Israel. Through that nation is gonna come Jesus Christ as the blessing to the nations. And all of this is gonna take place in a piece of real estate called the promised land that God promises to this couple and their descendants. So the big idea is don't lose your wife and don't lose your land. Your wife is bringing Jesus and the land is bringing Israel. Well, that is the demand that God has, the command that God has for Abraham and Sarah. So we see that they had a good day. They did exactly what God said. They left their homeland, their mother and father. They trusted him and moved. You're gonna see today, they have some bad days. And this is what I love about the Bible. It's the most honest book ever written. We tend to present ourself on our best days. Here's all my greatest hits. Our critics tend to present us on your worst days. Here's all your faults, flaws and failures.

When the Bible tells us about someone, it shows us their whole life, and it's honest about both. Abraham and Sarah have had some good days. They're gonna have some bad days. Welcome to life with God as a real human being. So here's the big idea, we're gonna jump right in. In unbelief, Abraham nearly loses his promised wife. Genesis 12:10 through 10. Now there was famine in land. So crisis hits. Now we don't know why, is it a drought? Is it a plague? What is going on? We don't know, but there was famine in the land. So crisis hits. People are hungry and there's a lack of resources. So Abraham went down. The down is literally a downward spiral, things are going south. He's going down to Egypt to soldier in there. He is gonna hang out there for a while, for the famine was severe in the land. When he was about to enter Egypt, so right before they crossed the border, he's gonna have a conversation with his wife. He said to Sarah his wife, "I know that you are beautiful." So this ladies, this is not a loving husband. This is a manipulative husband. And what he said, "You're so beautiful. You're adorable. You're so attractive. Have I told you how amazing you are? Just looking at you, I can hardly breathe. It's amazing. I know that you're a beautiful woman in appearance." "Oh, thank you, honey." Now here's this downside, sweetie pie. When the Egyptians see you, they will say, "This is his wife," and they will kill me, but they will let you live. Honey, do you see the problem here? They're gonna kill me to get you. So say you are my sister, that it may go well with... That it may go well with you, me. Honey, one of us is gonna have to suffer, 1, 2, 3, not it. Okay. So lemme just stop right here. Let me tell you, so this is a guy who starts by flattering and complimenting his wife. Oh, you're so beautiful. She's yeah, I kind am. Okay. Now here's the problem, honey. You're so beautiful. They're gonna kill me to get you. Now, I know that living without me would kill you. You couldn't live without me. I'm so important to you that you wouldn't want anything to happen to me. So here's what we're gonna do. We're gonna say you're my sister and then you'll marry the king and then I'll be fine. And you won't have to live with the pain of losing me. You're welcome. Okay? So then they will kill me. So say you are my sister that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life might be spared for your sake. Honey, I'm doing this for you, 'cause you would hate to see me suffer. When Abraham entered Egypt, the Egyptian saw that his wife was very beautiful. She's around 60, maybe five years of age. She's still beautiful. When the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh, and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's... Okay guys, just... Okay, so here's your wife. You're like, bye. Okay, there she goes into another man's house. Is this a good idea or a bad idea?

- Bad idea.

- It's a bad idea. If you're a single guy and you're like, it's a good idea, we just found out why you're single. You have no wisdom whatsoever. How many of you guys watching your wife go to another guy's house even if you thought it was a good idea, right about then you'd rethink your plan, right? All of a sudden you'd just find you're inner Liam Neeson and you do something, right? Somebody's gotta do something. He just, bye. Have fun. And said tell his harem I said, hi. He's saying goodbye to his wife, into another man's house. And for her sake, he dealt well with Abraham, and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys and camels. So Sarah has to join a harem in a cult and Abraham gets a payday, a very large payday. How many of you women are bothered by the story so far? I was outside this

week studying. Grace walks out, she's like, "What are you doing?" I said, "I'm studying Genesis for the summer." She says, "Oh, let's talk about it. I'll help you." Let me just say that this was not my favorite Bible study with my wife. She was very intense. She's like, "You better never sell me. Okay?" "Write that down." I wrote it down. Still got a little PTSD from my Bible study with grace. Okay. But the Lord did what? Afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues. So they all got the COVID. So, they all got the COVID. And they were very frustrated. They're like, "Why do we have the COVID?" 'Cause you're not supposed to have the promised wife. Well, we've been washing our hands. We got masks on, we've been six feet. We have not left the palace. Now we got the COVID. So God gives them all the COVID. So they can't consummate the marriage 'cause he can't even breathe, he's got the COVID. Okay, so, Pharaoh called to Abraham and said, "What is this you have done to me?" You gave me the COVID. "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?" But they didn't consummate yet. "Now, then here's your wife crazy old man. Take your woman, get outta here." And take the COVID and get out and take her and go. And Pharaoh gave men orders concerning him. Don't mess with that guy, he'll give you the COVID. And they sent him away with his wife and all that he had. All right. So here's the story. So let's look first at Pharaoh. Pharaoh is a counterfeit of Jesus. So the nation of Egypt is a counterfeit of the kingdom of God. Everything God creates, Satan counterfeits. So, it's a counterfeit kingdom. It is ruled by the Pharaoh and he's called the son of God. So, his father would've been considered a God and he would be the son of God. So he's the counterfeit Jesus. They have counterfeit signs, wonders and miracles, counterfeit priests, counterfeit religion, counterfeit priesthood. You could see more of this in the book of Exodus. It's the most supernatural time period in all of human history recorded in the Bible. And here, this is a counterfeit. Now, the way this works, so this guy, the Pharaoh, he's an evil king, he's a dictator. He's demonic. His country is a cult. It's run like North Korea. And "father Abraham" just gave him his wife. And now she is joining a cult, and she's gotta join a new country. And she's gonna be part of a large harem with a ton of other women. I mean, this is the beginning of the "Bachelors" series, right? Or this is a whole situation. Or is it the "Bachelorette"? I don't know. I don't watch either, but either way, it's just a really nefarious situation. But here's the big idea, between Abraham and Pharaoh, who actually acts like the more moral guy with better character? Pharaoh, because Pharaoh's overt, not covert, Abraham's lying and scheming. And Pharaoh's like, why don't you just come clean and be honest with me? In addition, we see from the Pharaoh that he is actually honorable, where Abraham, the believer is dishonorable. So you have an honorable unbeliever and a dishonorable believer. In this way, at least Pharaoh's gonna marry her, and he's gonna pay a generous bride price to Abraham and honor him. And he's not doing anything that he considers to be wrong in his country and culture, but Abraham is way out of bounds. So here's the big idea. Sometimes the believers act worse than the unbelievers. Have you seen this? Have you ever seen your like, I have some non-Christian friends and I have some Christian friends, and I wouldn't introduce these Christian friends to these non Christian friends 'cause these Christians are terrible, okay? And if you don't know people like that, that's you. Okay. So the way this works, there are some decent moral people, some good pagans. Jesus tells a story in the New Testament about the good Samaritan, and he's a decent guy, he's gotta a conscience. And sometimes God will use the unbeliever to rebuke the believer, that's here what's gonna happen.

Pharaoh's like, hey man, you gave me your wife and the COVID like you seek God on me. Why didn't you just get honest with me? So let's do this. Let's look at Pharaoh and say he doesn't even know the Lord, and he's got decent character at least compared to Abraham. So let's look at Abraham as a leader, crisis hits. And this is what always happens. Crisis hits, people get scared and they give up their freedom. You've been around the last two years? So he has total freedom. He's living independent of this king and kingdom of Egypt. Crisis hits. He is going to come under the government, give up his freedom to have some sort of temporary provision, but it's going to cost him long term. Here's what happens. Crisis hits, people give up their freedom out of fear, and the government never gives it back. Have you seen this? It's happening globally. And so what he does, he goes into Egypt. And God is going to deliver him and say you can't be there. You're going to give up your freedom. In the short term, it will relieve some pain. But in the long term, it's going to create some problems. This becomes a little case study in 400 years later at the end of Genesis, the descendants of Abraham go into the nation of Egypt during another famine. And then they are enslaved, they lose all of their freedom. Their churches are closed and God has to send Moses to supernaturally deliver them to leave this Godless government that takes away their freedom so they can reopen their church and they can worship their God. Genesis isn't just about what happened, but about what always happens. And when there is threat of danger, people give up freedom and they never get it back. That's why God is ultimately going to get Abraham and Sarah out of this country. Now, here's the story with Abraham. God told him, "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you." God told him he would bless him. Abraham does trust the Lord but in this moment, he's gripped with fear. He's anxious, he's worried because he's uncertain how God will provide. And ultimately he needs to trust that God said he would bless him. And if he goes into Egypt, he was promised that those who come against him, God would come against them. So here he is a man of faith. But in this moment he's not being faithful. And his faith is weak and it is wavering, and he is struggling to trust the Lord. In addition, the question I would ask is this, did God tell Abraham to go to Egypt? No. God told him previously, move, and he did. Here God didn't say move, Abraham did. And so the big idea is this, if you're gonna make a major decision, especially for your family, you better seek God's will. Don't just react to your circumstances, instead you've gotta find God's will. And so oftentimes what we do is we're like, well, this is a problem, so I'm gonna react and go here. And this is a problem, I'm gonna go there. And this is a problem, I'm gonna go here. No, you gotta stop me with the Lord. Before you move to another city, before you start a new career, before you pull your kids out of that school, before you go find a new church, you better make sure like these are big decisions. Lord, where do you want me? What do you want me to do? It doesn't say that Abraham prayed about it, sought the Lord. He just impulsively responded to his circumstances and he didn't meet with his God. Here's another principle we learn, big tests come after big victories. Sometimes we have faith through the big test. And then once it's over, we sort of let our guard down. He just responded in faith. He moved his whole family, which was a big win and a great victory. And then here famine hits and the test comes after his victory. Sometimes you feel like man, I made it through. No, no, no. Now there's something else. And sometimes the big test comes after the big victory. And what we see here is that fear is not anything that can produce the will of God in your life. You make your decisions out of faith or out of fear. Now Abraham is a man who has faith, but in this

moment, his decisions are governed and guided by fear. And what we have seen the last two years on planet earth is that fear doesn't result in anything good. And the Bible tells us in the New Testament that God has not given us a spirit of fear. Oftentimes with fear, there is a demonic spirit and it becomes contagious. Do you remember the great toilet paper shortage crisis of 2020? Everybody's like, well, they're running with toilet paper. I'm running with toilet paper, all running with toilet paper, why? Well, if the end of the world comes, I need to be clean. It's like, well, if the end of the world comes, I think that's the least of your worries. Like we're all in a zombie apocalypse holding toilet paper. And what it leads to is herd mentality, bad decision making. And when the crisis ultimately passes, you look back on the decisions you made. You're like, that wasn't very smart. That didn't make a lot of sense. But what happens is this, you and I, we were made to respond to threat with fight or flight response. And that's a good thing. But if you live in fright or fear, you cannot live in the will of God. And so God has not given us a spirit of fear. And the Bible says that perfect love casts out fear, just like a demon needs to be cast out, so the spirit of fear needs to be cast out. And what you find is that churches and families and schools and businesses and states and cities and nations that infected themselves with fear are continually gripped by fear. They don't have any plan for their future. They don't have any courage for decision making. And as a result, they end up like Abraham in a very dangerous place for themselves and their family. He is gripped by fear. This is not wisdom. And even if the threat is real, the fear does not help. Faith will get you through it. Fear causes you to respond to it and make very short term foolish decisions. So let's look at this, they're on the brink of heading into Egypt. Now it's kind of curious that he springs his plan on Sarah. They've probably got a household of hundreds of people, lot of livestock, this is a big move. And they're right at the border. He's like, oh babe, one thing I gotta run by you, you're so cute. Sarah does, "Oh my gosh." She looks okay. Shoes are amazing, hair's amazing, amazing, amazing, amazing. By the way, you're gonna join a harem. And he kind of springs it on her last minute. So let's just do this. Let's look at his options as a leader. What could he have done rather than take his wife into Egypt? What could he have done? He could have stopped at the border and said, honey, I wanna run this by you. I was thinking maybe you could join the harem of the cult leader. I mean, what do you think? Like yeah, just tell me, what do you think? Oh, okay, well, we could turn around and go. The other thing he could do, he could go in in advance and negotiate a deal. He could send one of his guys in, hey, I've got a wealthy guy, wants to come here for a short stay. He'd like to give some sort of generous gift to the king to protect his family. Can we negotiate a deal? The other thing he could have done I was thinking about it is this, I'm gonna need the women's help here, 'cause if I say it, it's not gonna go good. So ladies, is there anything you could do to make yourself less attractive? I'll just ask it that way. 'Cause Sarah is attractive, but she could become unattractive. Men do this all the time. So I assume that women are... I saw a guy at the store in his pajamas and I was like, good job, way to ensure singleness, way to do that. So, it is possible if you're attracted to make yourself less attractive. So, for those of you on the internet, this is not me. This is me just pulling the women and then sharing what they share. So ladies, what could you do to make yourself less attractive? You could cut your hair off. You could take your makeup off. What else?

- Put a bag over your head.

- You could put a bag over your head, okay? You could get a hoodie and wear it in reverse. Like, okay, you could do that. What else could you do?

- Don't bathe.

- Don't bathe, works every time, I mean it works every time. Like, wow, she's pretty. But as soon as I get close, I pass out. So it's deterrent. What else could you do to be less attractive?

- Talk.

- You can talk wherever you go. Okay. All right. We have a prayer team in the back after the sermon. They lay hands on people who need healing and deliverance. Okay, we'll see you there. All right. I'm not asking anymore questions. Yes, too far. Oh, but what I do appreciate Suarez, you now make me look reasonable. So I appreciate that, 'cause I look crazy, but you help. So thank you very much. So let's talk about Abraham as a husband. How many of you ladies think he is probably not gonna get a prize for husband of the year? He's not doing so good. How is he as a husband? Is he a burden giver, a burden lifter? He's a burden giver. And if you're a husband, you need to be a burden lifter, not a burden giver. You can't look at your wife and be like, hey, I got a lot of problems, thanks, I feel better. You gotta carry your responsibilities. In addition, does he have a low or a high pain threshold? Very low. He's not even suffering but he is like is I think they might hurt me. Well, I'll tell you this. If they don't, she probably will. I think that's how Grace and I had this talk. She's like, well, if the Egyptians didn't hurt him, she said, the wife should have. And so, pray for me. I slept with my eyes open last night. And it was kind of scary having this Bible study with Grace. But he's got a low pain threshold. And the key to this, if you wanna increase your influence as a leader, you need to increase your pain tolerance. And what happens is at some point, everybody says I can't handle anymore, that's where ultimately you're going to make a bad decision. And so ultimately what we see here is he's not even willing to hypothetically suffer, but if you're gonna lead, especially love your wife, you're gonna have to suffer a little bit. And let me ask you this. So Abraham, is he being selfish or a servant? Very selfish. And if you go back and read it, he says the words I and me a lot. Oh, I need this and I need that and they're gonna hurt me and it's gonna cost me. And he's not thinking about her. He's thinking about himself. The key to what marriage is this, the husband and wife, they've gotta have the attitude of servant. I serve you, you serve me. If one or both is selfish, it is going to be a brutal marriage and that's where they find themselves. And in addition, he here says, she's my sister. Now some of the comments, some of the Bible commentators, they'll go to the section, they'll say, well, technically this could be his sister there. There is a case earlier in Genesis 4 where Cain married his sister, a little bit of Kentucky in the promised land. And sometimes people in the Bible do marry their sister and maybe he did. And let me ask this, even if it is his sister, is this a good idea? No. And if it was his sister, it's now his wife. So it doesn't really matter. Here's the big idea, Abraham is a man who is loved by God, and God is faithful to him. And he is given to us in the Bible as a prototype of faith. But his faith is not perfect faith. It's faith in process. I hope that encourages you. And for a lot of the husbands, you

should see them right now. They're looking at their wife like I'm doing pretty good. But he's not a great guy. So let me ask this, let's talk about Sarah ladies. She's beautiful, she's 65. Her husband wants to give her away to a cult leader to join a harem, join another nation, join another religion. Here are some possibilities of why she went along with it. Number one, she may have just been sick of Abraham. She's like, I'm done, this is terrible. Okay? In addition, maybe she was just too passive and quiet. Do you think that's possible ladies? She's like, well, I don't wanna speak up. No, you need to, sister. Because ultimately it says in Genesis, it's not good for a man to be alone, and his wife is helpful to him. She needs to speak up here. And sometimes ladies will be like, "Well, I don't wanna raise my voice." Well, there are certain times like joining a harem demonic cult leader, it's harem, yell. So that's a good time to make your voice heard. She's too quiet. And some would say no, actually the reason Sarah didn't say or do anything, she was just trusting the Lord. What do you ladies think about that? No. Okay. I don't think so either. This might be the strongest candidate. At this point, Abraham and Sarah were living in tents. She may have just been sick of camping. It just might've been it. Like I married Ginger, not Maryanne. She's not a camper. That's just how we roll. She might have been like, at least he's got a kitchen, I'm out, okay? So she may have just been... How many of you ladies, you hate camping so much? Your husband's like I'm gonna get rid of you. She's like to a guy with a house? So, it may have been... That sounds interesting. So lemme ask you this, here's a big idea. Is Pharaoh the hero? Nope. Is Abraham the hero? Nope. Is Sarah the hero? Nope. Is there any hero? Yep. Who's the hero? God, God shows up. Here's the good news. God's always a hero. So God's the hero of their life, their marriage, their family, their legacy, their lineage. God is the hero of the Bible. God is the hero of human history. This is good news. If their God doesn't show up, this all goes bad. He loses his wife. The son doesn't come. Israel isn't created. Jesus doesn't come. We all go to hell. There's a lot writing on this. This is a big deal. God's like, you know what? I gotta come down and get involved. Here's the good news. This God involves himself in the protection and deliverance of his people. Oh thank you, Lord. 'Cause if we look at the story where if we look out, okay, Pharaoh, Abraham, Sarah. Oh, look up. Oh, thank you, Lord. God's gonna come down and get involved. Here's a line from the New Testament, even when we are faithless, this God is faithful. So there are times that we are faithful to the Lord. And there are times that we are faithless toward the Lord. Abraham is just like the rest of us. We tend to think of these people as like superheroes with mythical powers. And like actually, they're a lot more frail and human and normal and regular than we would think. They're a lot more like us. And God was good to them. God's good us. God's faithful to them. God's faithful to us. They have some good days. They have some bad days. We have some good days. We have some bad days. But God only has good days. And he's good even on our bad days. And he is faithful even when we are faithless. So what makes our relationship with God work is not that we have continual faith, but we have faith in a God who is continually faithful. That's such an encouragement. In addition, he steps in to save the marriage and family. And here's the big idea, sometimes God saves us from ourselves. How many of you God saved you from you? See, Abraham and Sarah can't be like, save us from all of our enemies. Abraham's his one worst enemy. God saves us from Satan, sin, death, hell in the wrath of God. And sometimes he saves us from us. He's like, that's a bad decision. You gotta fix that. That's a real mess, need to clean that up. You're going where? Come on, let me get you out of there. And this is the

goodness of our God. So the next thing that we see is not only is God saving them, he's blessing them. And the blessing must be stewarded. Genesis 13:1-7. So Abraham went up from Egypt. So he went down to Egypt. That's literally going south, downward. Now he's gonna turn around and go north, back toward the presence of God. Abraham went up from Egypt, he and his wife, and all that he had, extended family, those that are part of his household, his business, probably hundreds of people, and Lot with him. Lot is a near relative and a lot of drama, a lot of problems, the guy has a lot of issues, into the Negeb. Now Abraham was very what? Very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. So he's killing it. His portfolio is great. And he journeyed on from the Negeb as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, to the place where he had made an altar to the Lord at first. Here's a big idea, if you wander away from the Lord, go back to where you started. It says in Revelation of one church, you've lost your first love, go back to the things that you did at first. If you're like, well, when I got saved, I'd read the Bible every morning and spend time in prayer and go to church, well, then go back to where you started. Okay? And rebuild on that foundation. And there Abraham called on the name of the Lord. He's gonna apologize, repent. He's gonna have church. He's gonna worship the Lord. And Lot who went with Abraham also had flocks and herds and tents, so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together. Their businesses are booming that the land cannot contain both households, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. And there was strife between the herdsman of Abraham's livestock and the herdsman of Lot's livestock. If you've seen "Yellowstone", imagine two rips on one plot. He was like, we need a fence. This is gonna end badly. At that time, the Canaanites, bad guys, and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land. So what it says is this. Abraham and Lot are the believers, God prospers and blesses them, but they are starting to have some conflict between their businesses and households. And if they don't work it out, they're gonna weaken one another. That leaves them vulnerable to the attack from the Canaanites and the Perizzites. The point is this, if God's people don't work together, eventually they weaken one another, and then others attack them. This is why unity among God's people is so incredibly important. And what we see here is this, so there's Abraham and Sarah, and then there's this other character, Lot. He's gonna figure prominently in the storyline of Genesis as we proceed forward. And here's the big idea. Lot is never helpful. How many of you have a relative like that? Don't raise your hand if you brought 'em? But you've got those. You're like they're crazy. That part of the family is just nuts. It's just drama and crisis and issues and problems. And somebody like, I don't know anyone like that. Again, I hate to tell you, then that's you. That's just the point of the story, but we've all got relatives like that. You're like, they're just the crazy extended family. And what God told Abraham was leave your family. He leaves everybody except for Lot. And he probably shouldn't have brought Lot. It's probably partial obedience. Now what God did promise is that he would bless Abraham and bless those who blessed him. And God here is good to his word. God not only saves us. He blesses us. And here, Lot is freeloading off of Abraham's blessing. See, Lot seems to me to be the kind of guy, God's like, I'm gonna bless Abraham and those who bless him. He's like, awesome. Bless you, brother. He's that guy always looking for what's in it for him. Now, that being said, I want you to see here that they are rich, but it's because of God's blessing. We live in a culture that only has two categories, rich and poor. And the cultural trend towards socialism is the rich people are bad,

the poor people are are good. And the truth is the Bible has four kinds of people, godly rich and ungodly rich, godly poor and ungodly poor. The question is not are you rich or poor? The question is are you godly or ungodly? So here in this story, we have Abraham who's rich, and the Pharaoh who's rich. Pharaoh is ungodly rich. Abraham is godly rich. Ultimately, Pharaoh gets his wealth through running a dictatorship and a kingdom that is corrupt to its core. And Abraham is just blessed 'cause God blessed him. You and I need to think biblically, not culturally. We need to think biblically and not socialistically. Just because someone is doing well doesn't mean that they cheated, it may mean that they were blessed. And so Abraham is a picture here of someone who is richly blessed of the Lord. And ultimately, he is so blessed that the blessing spills over to Lot. And so what they ultimately are gonna need is literally boundaries. And what happens is this, that when you have unhealthy extended family members, they don't maintain good boundaries. True? So, sometimes what happens is like you get married, you have a family. Your family thinks, well, we're just one big family. I don't know, we're a whole bunch of little families. So once you get married, it said in Genesis 2, that a man would leave his mother and father, cling or cleave to his wife, and the two would become one flesh. So now they are a new family. So like I'm a dad with two married kids. When my kids get married, they start their own new family. And what that means is... So, we've got five kids. So let's say the day comes that all of our kids are married. We're not one family now, we're six. And you got your family and you got your family and you got your family and you got your family. And as our families do things together, we gotta talk about that, and we gotta figure that out together. And there are boundaries. What happens with unhealthy family system? Like well, we're family. And what that means is you allow family members to get away with things you would never let anyone else get away with. And sometimes the way this works is like, yeah, hey, yeah, we're kind of down on our luck. We need to live with you for a while. Wait a minute, this is my house, not our house. Hey, my car broke down. I need your keys. Whoa, whoa, whoa. That's my car, you have your car. Your car does not run. My car does. I'm driving. You're walking. That's my car, not your car. Okay? Okay. Little healing going on in the room. Okay. So, I'm so glad I brought my in-laws. Okay. And sometimes this will be, hey, it's Christmas, or it's the holidays. And it's like, okay, well, we're family, we all get together. Here's what we're doing, wait a minute. That's your family. This is our family. Let's talk about this. And sometimes it's even in your own residence, right? This is my house, not your house. You can't just show up whenever you want. You need to call, ask. And if you lose your house, you can't automatically move into my house. Now we may wanna love you, serve you, help you, give grace to you, but there are boundaries. And the way this works is this is my family, not your family. This is my house, not your house. This is my car, not your car. This is my holidays, not your holidays. This is not my money, not our money. And this is what happens in a dysfunctional family. They're like, hey, I'm running low on cash. I'm gonna need some. Like, no, wait a minute, it's not our money. See this? You have your family. I have my family. This is why we have a door on the house. This is not an accident. Okay? This is why I didn't give you the PIN code to my ATM account. No, you got yours. I got mine. So what they're gonna literally do here, they're gonna create boundaries. This is your land. This is my land. This is your livestock. This is my livestock. This is your family. This is my family. This is your business. This is my business. And here's what happens. If you don't draw and maintain and keep boundaries with unhealthy family members, the least healthy person in

the family sets the boundaries. And it makes you miserable. And it hurts your family, true or false? True. Genesis isn't just about what happened, but about what always happens. Here, they're functioning as one big family. They don't have boundaries, and it is not going well. So they need healthy boundaries. And let me say this, when you make healthy boundaries with your extended family, they're going to test them, and you need to maintain those boundaries. But good fences make for good neighbors. And that's what's gonna happen here. So God promised to bless them and they are very blessed. They're rich in livestock, gold, silver. But here's the big idea, blessings need to be stewarded and managed. The big problem, we have a lot of problems in America. Here's one of them. Everybody just thinks, "I just need more money." You need more wisdom, not just more wealth. If you get wealth without wisdom, eventually you lose your wealth. And the big idea is this, sometimes success is at least as hard to manage as failure. Here they are successful. Their business is burgeoning. It is blossoming. It is booming, and they gotta manage that. What happens when you are failing is people have compassion for you. When you are succeeding, people criticize you. When things are not going well, people put an arm around you. When things are going well, people come with a fist at you. And so sometimes we think, oh, it's so hard to manage suffering. It's also hard to manage blessing, because it requires stewardship and management. So what we see here, this would be in the language of our present day, this would be what we would call estate planning. It's stewardship. What are we gonna do with our land? What are we gonna do with our money? What gonna we do with our livestock? We're gonna do with our golden silver? What can we do with our employees? This is estate planning. And again, we live in a day when most people think I just need more money, and we keep giving people money, and they don't gain any wisdom, which means we're not actually long term helping them. So even in the last few years, people are just like this, "I just need more money." Without wisdom, if you have wealth without wisdom, eventually you lose all your wealth. So I'll give you guys a simple example. I grew up in a poor neighborhood right next to an airport, working class. And there were three kinds of poor people in our neighborhood. There were first generation immigrants that just landed and they lived near the airport. And those people tended to work very hard. They pulled together. They tried really hard to start a fresh new life for themselves. And most of them got out of poverty and moved forward because they worked hard and they came to our country looking for an opportunity and they maximized it. So a lot of my friends growing up, English was their second language and America was their new home. In addition, we had people in my neighborhood that were working class poor. This was my family and my dad. My dad hung sheet rock until he broke his back to feed five kids, hardworking, honest integrous man. That is my father. And I love my dad and I appreciate his work ethic very much. And he didn't steal from anybody. He was generous. He worked very, very hard, but we were working class blue collar, but we were economically poor. And then the third category was people that had no wealth, but they had no wisdom. And they would get wealth. And without wisdom, they would lose their wealth. So there was a buddy of mine in the neighborhood. He had a lot of brothers and sisters, all from different fathers. None of the fathers were involved in the raising of the children. And the mother lived off of a lot of government assistance. And then one day, somebody in the family died and she got a big inheritance. I dunno how much it was, I was maybe middle school kid. And I remember talking to my friend, he's like, man, we just hit the jackpot. Like, my mom just got this big inheritance. I

was like, okay, cool. What are you guys gonna do with it? He said, well, my mom said we all get a new waterbed. How many of you know that the watered market is not a secure place for your investment future? It's not like... If you go to an investment banker, they'll be like, well, there's silver, gold watered. Like waterbed is up into the right. 'Cause if it doesn't work out, every body's looking for a used waterbed. It is crazy, the supply chain. And he said, and we got a huge new fish tank and some exotic fish. We're going out to dinner. We're taking a vacation. My mom got a new car, and she's going to the casino. It's what he told me, guess what? They were broke again very soon, because the answer is not wealth, it is wisdom. And even if God blesses you, you need to manage and steward your resources. In the last year, the average homeowner in America made more on their equity than they did from their job. The question is, what are you gonna do with that? What are you gonna do with that? And we have a government that gives people wealth, but it doesn't give people wisdom. We expect the government to just send us money, and they don't give us a class in school on how to steward or manage it. And so what happens here is Abraham is being a good steward, a good manager of God's blessing. What he's saying is we need an estate plan. We need a business plan. We need to make sure that our assets are calculated. And ultimately there are boundaries with another family, another business, another income stream. And what it says is that he goes north, and this is literally repentance. If you wanna know how a family can be blessed, it is that when you get it wrong, repent to God and ask him to make it right, that's it. So Abraham makes a terrible decision. All right, everybody pack up. We're going to Egypt. He gets to Egypt. God's like, this is a terrible idea. You're supposed to be there, not here. You're supposed to be with your wife, not giving away your wife. Abraham's like, oh gosh, okay, everybody pack up. We're going north again. This is him going back to the Lord. And he goes back to the altar where he first worshiped the Lord in that land. Repentance is this, it is literally turning around. It's a change of mind. It's a change of heart. It's a change of life, because faith is two things. It's what you believe in here, and it's how you behave out there. Abraham turning around and going north, that's an act of repentance. And guys, let me just say this, for a man, this is hard. He had to look at his wife and say, honey, I was wrong. What do you think she said? Duh, okay? Duh, duh. He had to look at his household, all those employees. They're like, we just packed everything. We took all the livestock. We've been carrying the gold. Like this was a big job. And he is like, yeah, I was wrong. I was wrong. Guys, we gotta turn around and go back. Actually, everything we did was a waste of time, money and energy. I made a bad leadership decision, but here's the good news. If you make a bad decision and you repent of it, God can bless you. A pastor friend of mine, one of our overseers, he uses the analogy that when you're disobeying God, your canoe is going upstream. When you're obeying God, your canoe's going downstream. The question is do you want your canoe to go upstream or downstream? See when he is going to Egypt, he's going downstream. He's working against God's will. That's exhausting. He repents, turns around, now he's going down. Okay, God, this is what you want. God's like, "I'm gonna help you with that, 'cause that's the direction I want you to go." Sometimes the reason we don't repent and turn around, we don't like to say things like I was wrong. It's my fault. I'm sorry, that was a dumb idea. It's gonna cost us a lot. And sometimes we just get stubborn. We double down. Or sometimes we think, you know what? I've already chosen a course of action. Proceed boldly. Abraham is a man of faith, and it doesn't mean that he gets it right the first time. But when he

gets it wrong, he repents and he trusts God to make it right. The point is this, are you going the direction that God wants you to go? And if not, are you willing to stop, own it, repent of it, apologize for it and change it? And he does. Now, you would think at this point, he just almost lost his wife and God said, here's the two things I'm gonna give you, wife, comes a kid, comes a nation that's gonna live in the land. So the wife and the land, really important. He almost lost the wife. You think he would've learned his lesson. Nope. Okay, he almost loses the promised land. Genesis 13:8-13. Then Abraham said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, between your herdsman and my herdsman for we are kinsmen. Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me." Here's the boundaries. Here's the business plan. Here's the estate plan. Here's the stewardship. "If you take the left hand, I will go to the right. Or if you take the right hand, I will go to the left." Lot, you decide, what do you want? This is a bad idea. Lot lifted up his eyes and saw. So, Lot lives by sight, not by faith, saw that the Jordan valley was very well watered everywhere, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt in the direction of Zoar. We live in the desert. If you've got a river and a well, that's a good piece of land. This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan valley. Oh, I'll take Scottsdale. You get Yuma, Abraham. I'll give you Yuma. Good luck. So Lot chose from himself, Scottsdale, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other. Abraham settled in Yuma, while Lot settled in Scottsdale of the valley and moved his tent as far as... Lot is gonna take his family and go camping in north Sodom. Now, the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord. Janet Jackson level, nasty, nasty boys. Nasty, nasty boys. Okay. So Abraham, who should make the decision as... Okay. Here's all the land. You get a piece. I get a piece. Who should make the decision, Abraham or Lot? Abraham. He's the man of God chosen by God, got the promise from God. He's older, and God gave him the promised land. Now what if Lot chooses the land that God told Abraham was his? Not only has he potentially lost his wife, now he's gonna lose the land. So ultimately, some would say that Abraham here is demonstrating tremendous... Let's just case study this. He's just demonstrating faith. He's just trusting the Lord. I'll just let Lot pick and the Lord to serve and rule. How many of you think he's demonstrating faith? Yes, no? I hate to interrupt you now. So, the other option is some say he's being very generous, but you can't give away what God said he needs you to have. Third option is just being a coward. This is a likely candidate. He seems like a guy, Abraham seems like a guy, doesn't really like conflict. Hey babe, when we get to Egypt, they might want you so they can have you. I don't do conflict. Hey Lot, I don't know. I don't like our employees, our herdsman are having some conflict. You're ripping my rip. They're really getting into it. So, I don't want any conflicts. You pick the land you want and I'll take whatever's left. He seems like a man who's got fear of man, cowardice, people pleasing, and he avoids conflict. Let me say this, if you avoid conflict, you're not going to do well in following the Lord or loving your family. It's not that God's people love conflict, but sometimes there's no choice. In Revelation 21:8, it talks about the people who don't make it into the heavenly city of God's kingdom. And one of the things it says is the cowards. Let me say this, being a coward is a sin, and being a coward is living under the spirit of fear, which is the opposite of faith. And Abraham seems to be here to me, a bit of a coward. He's willing to lose his wife and his land. And God said, no, that's your wife and that's your land. And this is not a man who is operating in faith. If he had faith, he'd have the courage to have the conflict, to stand up for his wife and to stand up for the land

that God had promised him. Now, God is ultimately going to overcome his cowardice, but he is, I believe responsible for it. So let's talk about Lot. Lot is a guy that he probably should not have brought with him. He should probably have left him with the other relatives. But Lot is selfish and entitled. He's very selfish. He looks out. He is like, okay, that land looks good. That land looks bad. I'll take the good land. It's very selfish. And he's very entitled. The only reason Lot is blessed is because he's with Abraham. So it's like Abraham, you're blessed. And I'm getting the spillover of your blessing. This is like let's say you got two cars and your relative's car blows up. And you're like, well, I got two cars. Why don't you come over and I'll give you one? Okay. What you got? Well, I got this old pickup and I got this new Maserati. They're like Maserati. That's kind of entitled and selfish, and that's Lot. And that's gonna be the way that he works. In addition, he lives by sight. He doesn't live by faith. It tells us that Abraham built an altar, worshiped the Lord with this household. It doesn't say that about Lot. Lot doesn't build an altar. Lot doesn't pray. Lot doesn't worship. He is a believer. The Bible says in New Testament, he's a believer. We'll get there in a little bit. The New Testament actually talks about the righteous Lot. You're like what? I don't know if you could convict him in court of being righteous, but that's what God says about him, because God gives him grace, and he's righteous by grace, not because he's a great guy, but because God gives him a great gift of righteousness. But nonetheless, he lives by sight, not by faith. And here's the big idea. Something can look fantastic, but only God knows the future. And what is fantastic could become the biggest crisis in your entire life. And so ultimately, it's not about what you see, but it's about what he sees 'cause you see what is today, he sees what is tomorrow. This is where seeking the Lord, praying and finding the Lord's will is crucial. And we've got this right now, people all over America are relocating. They're moving. We're in the fastest growing city and county in America. People are like, well, where's the best housing market? Where can I get the most square footage? Well, where's the best tax base? And the question is where are your family members going to flourish? Where are they going to grow in character? Where are you to be able to have a life relationship together with God that is healthy? It's not just about your income. It's not just about your square footage. It's not just about your tax base. It's about your soul. And ultimately, Lot doesn't factor any of it. He just sees what looks to be the short term best strategy. So what he does, he moves his whole family further south toward Egypt. And this is physical and it's spiritual, they're going south. And they plant their flag on just this side of the border of what? Sodom, okay? And this becomes a catastrophic decision, because Lot lacks wisdom. So what happens is they both start, Abraham and Lot with tremendous blessing. In the end Abraham's family is going to be wealthy for generations. Lot's family is gonna go bankrupt. They did a study. Those who won the lottery, 70% go broke, and one in three falls for bankruptcy. The point is this, if you get wealth without wisdom, eventually you lose the wealth. That's going to be the tragic story of Lot. So without spoiler alert, we're gonna get into this in the ensuing weeks, we're gonna get into Sodom and Gomorrah, and you're gonna be offended and I'm gonna get kicked off of Facebook and it's be awesome, so come back. And ultimately, he moves his family into Sodom. And the Sodomites, they are just reprehensible people. They have no character, they have no sexual guardrails or boundaries. They do whatever they want. They put rainbow stickers on their camel. They are just out there. They are out there people. So the story continues that what happens a little bit later, God is going to send flaming road tar to eviscerate Sodom. Okay? 'Cause he told Noah,

he's like, I'll never flood the earth. And the people are like, great. Then we'll do it. Well, he's like, I'll do road tar. So he sends road tar instead of water, and to get Lot and his family out, God sends a few angels. The angels show up and the men in the city, they encircle his house, and they wanna sexually assault the angels. So God delivers them. And what happens to Lot's wife as they're fleeing from the destruction of Sodom? They're leaving, they're going north. And she's got her iHeart Sodom sweatshirt on, and her keep Sodom weird hat on. And she looks around with the iHeart Sodom and the keep... I miss Sodom, Sodom was so crazy. We had such good times, oh, I just... And then she is turned into a pillar of salt, and then they flee into the mountains. He leaves all of his wealth. His daughters grew up in Sodom, and they are not well. They're watching crazy conspiracy stuff on YouTube. They think that the end of the world is come, they're freaked out. They're in a cave with their dad. Their dad gets naked, passes out. You're like, did you not read the Noah's story? We already did this. So he passes out, naked. They sleep with him so that they can have a baby before the end of the world. And you look at Sodom and Abraham. And it's like, why did this family flourish? And why did this family just get decimated and devastated? Because this guy lived by faith and this guy lived by sight. And when this guy got it wrong, he repented. And when this guy got it wrong, he didn't. And ultimately, the point is this, we're gonna get there, but be very careful that you don't move your family to Sodom. And sometimes people are like, well, my family's in Sodom. What's the big deal? Well, the big deal is that Sodom is in your family. And here's what happens to Abraham. He gets his wife and his daughters, or God gets his wife and his daughters out of Sodom. But they don't get Sodom out of his wife and daughters. They've been brainwashed. They've been perverted. They've been corrupted. Their thinking is completely wrong, and their desires are completely debased. So here's the big idea. Don't let Sodom raise your kids. Don't let Sodom dictate the values of your family. If we've learned anything from the story of Noah, it is, you better build an ark for your family, and love everybody and tell 'em about Jesus, but make sure that your family makes it. The story of Sodom is not only does he not have converts. He doesn't even have family members who love and follow the Lord, and their thinking and their identity and their desires and their sexuality and their gender is totally corrupted by growing up in Sodom. So it's a conviction for each of us. The decisions that we're making today, they will decide where does our family live? Who do we hang out with? What do our kids see as normal, healthy marriage, relationship and family? What will our kids think is normal sexual identity and behavior and conduct? And if all they are seeing growing up is just the spirit of Sodom, don't be shocked when they grow up to think and act like Sodomites. It's a forewarning and a foreboding that will manifest itself a little deeper. So the question then is, well, is there any hope? Is there any good news? Pastor Mark is on and up? No, no. Actually there is. So here we go. Find God's will and worship him. So as opposed to Lot that doesn't build an altar and worship with his family, Abraham builds an altar and worships with his household. Genesis 13:14-18. The Lord said, Abram, God speaks to Abraham, he doesn't speak to Lot. Abraham worships the Lord and it doesn't seem like Lot does, after Lot had separated from him, lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are northward and southward and eastward and westward. Here's the land I'm giving him you. We now know this is Israel. For all the land that you see, I will give to you and to your offspring forever. That wife you almost lost, she's gonna have a son. That son is gonna turn into a nation. That nation is gonna be Israel. Through Israel is gonna come the son

of God, Jesus Christ. I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth. Abraham, I got big plans for your family. I wanna bless you for generations so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. Arise, walk through the length and breadth of the land for I will give it to you. So Abraham moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre. It was a historic place that was well known, which are at Hebron, and there he what? He built an altar to the Lord. But Abraham, so first he needs to walk. He needs to worship and he needs to wait. God says walk around the promised land. Look, here's all that I've given. You need to pray over it, dedicate to me. This is my land. I'm the owner. You're the manager and steward. You need to pray for generations. You need to start to make decisions for not just your life, but your legacy and your lineage. You need to start thinking about the future. Dedicate this to me. This is like the people walking around Jericho, like it now belongs to the Lord, he needs to walk and he needs to worship. So he builds an altar. And probably what he does, he brings his wife over, and I'm guessing it's something like this. Like honey, all right, like I've made mistakes. I've messed up. I've sinned. God spared us. Like if it wasn't for him, we'd be doomed. So I'm gonna repent. I'm gonna apologize. Let's sing together. Let's hold hands, let's pray. Let's make sure that together we're in God's presence and God is speaking to us and we're obeying him. The point is this, you've gotta build an altar at your house. It's good to have an altar here at God's house, but you need to build an altar at your house. You need to be praying, worshiping, singing together as a family at your house. And that's what Abraham does. It's like he's planting a church and he's a pastor, and his household are the first converts. And now all the pagans, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, they're welcome to come worship his God and to convert to the worship of his God. And then he's told to wait. And what God says is whole nation is coming. It's gonna be a while. He's not gonna see that in his lifetime. Ultimately, the waiting is for the coming of Jesus Christ. And from the promise of Abraham to the first coming of Jesus is 2,000 years. But all the promises come true. The sons come, the nation comes and the son of God comes to the nation of Israel. And then Jesus, it's amazing 'cause what we've seen, we've seen the fall of Adam, the fall of Noah, this is the fall of Abraham. Jesus comes, no fall. All the other sons fall, but the son of God does not. And he lives without sin. And he goes to the cross and he dies. And he pays the penalty for all of Abraham's sin. And now Abraham is forgiven. And Jesus dies. And his body is buried in the ground that was promised to the descendants of Abraham, and his body rises in the ground, from the ground rather, promised to the descendants of Abraham. Jesus ascends into heaven. And he is the real king. He is the greater Pharaoh. He is the son of God, ruling a kingdom that is greater than Egypt. And now we have waited 2,000 years for the second coming of Jesus. He waited 2,000 years for the first coming of Jesus. We're waiting 2,000 years for the second coming of Jesus. And let me just close with a bit of encouragement 'cause if you look at Pharaoh, Abraham and Sarah, it's discouraging. If you look up and see God, it's super encouraging. And so, we're gonna turn this into an altar moment where we meet with the Lord. But let me just summarize this for you and pray for you. If God can forgive and use Abraham and Sarah, God can forgive and use you. If you've failed your test, God can use it for your testimony. That's why their story is in the scriptures. If you've made a mess of your life, God can make it into a message of the new life that God gives. That's the story of Abraham and Sarah. If you've lived by sight and we all have, God can open your eyes so that you can now live by faith as Abraham did. If you've made some bad financial decisions, God can still bless you as he did

Abraham and Sarah. If God can save this marriage, God can save your marriage. If God can save this family, God can save your family. If God can love these people, God can love all people. If God can have a plan for them, then God has a plan for you. And if you've gone south, the good news is right now you could turn around, and God will give you grace to start heading north. And the good news is this, even when we've done some things that are awful, our God is still willing to meet with us at his altar. That's what we're gonna do right now. Father, I thank you that the story of Genesis is not just a story of what happened, but what always happens. And God thank you that you don't just show us the best or the worst days, but the best and the worst days of your people. And God, there are days us men were like Abraham, and there are days that us women are like Sarah. Now God, you're the same today, yesterday and forever. You're the God who knows. You're the God who heals. You're the God who delivers. You're the God who speaks. You're the God who blesses. You're the God who redeems. You're the God who saves. And you're the God who is faithful for generations. So we now come to meet with you. And we thank you, Lord Jesus that you are the God of Abraham. Amen.