**ABRAM AND LOT SEPARATE**

Genesis 13:5-18 (Key Verse 15)

*"* *for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever."*

In today’s passage we are going to witness how Abram made a decision of faith to separate from his nephew Lot when a conflict arose between them, even though it meant great loss for him both emotionally and materially. Abram has been with Lot ever since, when the Lord commanded Abram to leave his country and his people, he left with Lot. Lot was like a son to Abram, and today in this passage Abram made a decision of faith to separate from him. When they separated, Abram also gave up a large portion of the land, livestock, large portion of his wealth and gave it to Lot who was much younger.

Have you ever been in a position where you had to make decision which could leave you at a great loss to resolve a conflict? How was your response to this situation. Through today’s passage we are going to learn why and how Abram could make such a decision and how God responded to Abram who made such a decision. I pray that as we listen to the message, our hearts may be changed so that we too can make a decision of faith like Abram, even if it means great loss for us.

The passage today begins after Abram together with his whole family had returned from Egypt and, at this point Abram had become very wealthy with livestock and in silver and gold. Now as Abram was moving about with Lot, his nephew, he also acquired flocks, herds and tents. And because of that a problem arose. Let us look at **verse 6-7**: “*But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together. 7 And quarreling arose between Abram’s herders and Lot’s. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.”* God had blessed Abram and his household so much, that the land could not support both Lot and Abram while they stayed together. It was a great challenge for the Abram and Lot’s herders began to quarrel. We are also told that the Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at the time, and as they lived in the land, they too could witness the quarreling.

When Abram witnessed this, he was deeply concerned and in **verse 8-9** it says: “*So Abram said to Lot, “Let’s not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herders and mine, for we are close relatives. 9 Is not the whole land before you? Let’s part company. If you go to the left, I’ll go to the right; if you go to the right, I’ll go to the left.”* Abram was deeply concerned for there was no peace, to Abram peace was very important. In **Hebrew 12:14** it says: “*Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord*” Abram wanted to honor God by living in peace with Lot, he wanted his and Lot’s herdsman to honor God by living in peace with one another, he wanted his household to honor God by living holy lives. Furthermore, he wanted his household to be set apart, he did not want the Canaanites and Perizzites to think that they are like them. Quarreling and conflict was normal for the Canaanites and Perizzites. But for Abram’s family, quarreling is not normal, it is not something to accept. As children of God we are to live with peace with one another, we are to live holy lives and honor God. That is why Abram was deeply concerned when there was quarreling in his household.

What then did Abram do? Did he just remain concerned? And just left it? Did he punish the herdsman for their quarrel? To resolve the conflict, Abram made a tough decision, a decision to part ways with Lot. He said: “*Let’s part company. If you go to the left, I’ll go to the right; if you go to the right, I’ll go to the left.”*” This was a tough decision because he had been with Lot for a very long time, Lot was like a son to him. Also Abram was very old and his wife Sarai was barren, so it really comforted him to have Lot by his side. So having to make a decision to part ways with Lot was very tough, it was tough because now he will be all alone, the Canaanites and Perizzites and could take advantage of his seeing that he is an old man.

Furthermore, Abram put to offer to part ways in a very humble manner. He was much older than Lot, it would have made sense for him to tell Lot where to go and allocate for him a portion of his wealth. But Abram did some thing different, he gave Lot priority to choose the land he wants to take, he said: “*If you go to the left, I’ll go to the right; if you go to the right, I’ll go to the left.*” The Lord’s promise was to give this land to Abram and not Lot, but Abram exercised generosity and offered Lord a choice to pick a part of the land, he prioritized Lot over himself. To honor God by having peace with his household, Abram humbled himself, he lowered himself and gave Lot priority and choice. He said if you go to the left I will go to the right, if you go to the right I will go to the left. Just like Jesus Christ, Abram lowered himself, Jesus though he is God, he lowered himself, leaving his glory in heaven and came down into this world, to live among us sinners, born in the lowest form, in a manger. Jesus even gave up his own life on the cross, he led himself to be separated and forsaken for our sake.

How could Abram make such a decision? Abram made this decision because he had faith in God, he trusted that God will provide in his own way and wisdom. Before in Egypt, Abram took matters in his own hands to protect himself from famine and death, but now we see great change in his heart, even though his current situation seemed like death, seemed like he is shooting himself in the foot, he had faith in God. He had faith and did not want to compromise on honoring God; he did not compromise on instilling peace and holiness in his family. To do this Abram surrendered his rights, his joy, the joy of having a son, the right to occupy the land unto the Lord. Abram trusted God more than this. When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, he rejected the devil for he trusted God’s power and he wanted to honor God, he wanted to glorify God.

How did Lot respond to Abram’s proposal to part ways and his offer? Let us look at **verse 10-11**: “*10 Lot looked around and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) 11 So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company:”* Lot made his decision purely based on what he could see with his eyes, it says: *“he looked around saw that the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt...”* He cared only for the material abundance of the land, he was only concerned about his selfish desires, he did not even for one moment consider to let Abram his uncle have the first choice. Worst of all he was not concerned about how it might spiritually impact him and his family. In **verse 12-13** it says Lot pitched his tent in Sodom, and we are also told that the people there were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord. Because Lot made his decision based on what he could see, he could not see the spiritual implication of his decision. He could not see the spiritual danger that he was putting himself in.

As Christian believers we should not make decision based on what we see, but like Abram we should make decisions by faith, not by sight (**2 Corinthians 5:7**).Although Lot followed Abram and worshiped God with him, living by sight made him half Christian and that is not good enough, it is not good enough for one to experience the blessing and power of God. In order to experience the power and blessing of God we need to live by faith, we need to surrender everything to God. Yes, it is not easy ,sometimes to surrender everything to God, it was not easy for Abram to let Lot go, it was not especially because his wife Sarai was barren. Yes, God had promised him to make him into a great nation, to bless him, to make his name great, but having to loose Lot was tough for him. But he made a decision of faith, he separated with Lot, he lowered himself, and trusted God.

What happened when Abram made this decision of faith? Let us look at **verse 14-15**: “*The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, “Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. 15 All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.”* After Lot separated from Abram, it left a huge dent in Abram’s heart, it was different from making a decision for Lot to part ways, now he had to live it, he missed Lot, he was lonely, Abram’s childless problem became a big reality. Furthermore, he gave Lot the best land, perhaps he also worried about his livestock, where they will grace, access water, he must have worried about his herdsman who struggled more to shepherd his flock. Basically, at this point Abram might have been in a vulnerable and sorrowful state.

And the Lord, the creator of the heavens and earth who saw Abram, came to Abram and gave him a promise. He said: *““Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. 15 All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.””* Just at the right time God came to Abram, he came to Abram to restore him, to encourage him and to bless him. God did this by providing an answer to all Abram’s concerns. The Lord said look around from where you are, all the land that you see, I will give to you and your offspring forever. When Abram parted with Lot, he was sorrowful for it felt like he lost the land to Lot who might lose it to the Canaanites and Perizzites and the wicked people of Sodom. But the Lord assured Abram and said to him, all the land that you see I will give to you. The Lord assured Abram that he has not lost, all the land will be restored to him. The Lord assured Abram that there is no loss when we make a decision of faith.

Furthermore, Abram was concerned and sorrowful, lonely for he lost Lot who was like a son to him, he was sorrowful for Sarai was barren. But the Lord said: “*All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever*” God assured Abram that through Sarai he will give birth to a Son, he will give this land to him and his offspring forever. When Abram made a decision of faith to separate with Lot, the Lord came to him to comfort him, to restore him and to re-establish his blessing. Because of his decision of faith Abram could now fully rely on God, he could have full hope in God for the blessing of a son, having Lot was good and I believe Abram was grateful to God that even though his wife was baren, God blessed him with Lot who was like a son to him. But God did not want Abram to settle for this, he wanted to plant a big vision in Abram’s heart, he wanted to plant great faith in Abram’s heart, he wanted to plant faith in God who is able to grant him a son through his wife Sarai who was barren.

God wanted to plant in Abram, faith in God who is able to do the impossible, faith in God who will raise him into a father of many nations. In **verse 16-17** God said to him: “*I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. 17 Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.”* Before God promised Abram that he will make him into great nation, and today he emphasized once again and said your offspring will be like the dust of ground. And immediately the Lord commanded Abram to Go, walk through the length and breath of the land. Why did God want Abram to walk the land? Walking the land could help Abram develop a sense of ownership to take care of the land. Walking the land has also become very fundamental in our UBF, when missionaries are sent out the also exercised the practice to visit campus, walk the land, and to develop a sense of ownership. They walked the land as an acknowledgement that indeed the Lord has called them to preach the gospel on the campus, to be used by God raise disciples of Jesus, to establish the campus as a kingdom of priests and holy nation.

After God gave Abram the promise and command to walk the land, Abram obeyed God’s command and walked the land. Abram believed the promise for thereafter he went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he pitched his tents and built an altar to the Lord. He worshipped God. His act of worship was an act of faith. He gave his wounded and sorrowfulheart to God. He no longer felt that he had lost something, but he had promise, mission and purpose from God, the creator of the heavens and the earth.

**Conclusion:**

From today’s passage we have learnt from Abram who made a decision of faith to separate with his nephew Lot, Abram humbled himself, he lowered himself so that there may be peace in his household. Not the kind of peace that we see today which people make to avoid having to deal with each other. The peace that Abram sought is peace in God, peace that honors God, peace that leads us to holiness. Lot on the other hand welcomed the separation, not for peace but selfish material gain, which led him to spiritual danger, his materialistic heart left him amongst a wicked men who sinned greatly before God.

Abram on the other hand, though it seemed like he lost so much, a son, great wealth and left emotionally broken. The Lord blessed him with a promise of a Son, with offsprings that would fill the earth, offspring that would be as numerous as the dust on the earth. God blessed Abram with a promise to give him and his offspring the whole land.

Now the question to you and me is, do you have a conflict or decision you need to make today? The word of God is teaching us today, to resolve our conflicts with a decision of faith, the word of God is teaching us today to make decisions based on faith, the word of God is also warning us against making decisions based on material gain or selfish gain. In order to truly experience the blessing of God we need to make a decision of faith. Now one may ask, how does a decision of faith look like for me today? To overcome this, one may ask the question, will this decision honor God? Will this decision help me to serve God more or will it separate me from God? Will this decision help me to have true peace with others? My colleagues, family, friends, Bible teacher, Bible student? Will this decision help me to grow as a child of God and a disciple of Jesus Christ? Will it help me serve my students effectively or will it hinder me to serve them?

I pray that God may have mercy on us all, to sincerely make a decision of faith, seek God and surrender all our being unto him. God is the creator of the heavens and the earth, he is the God of the impossible, by faith Abram who was in his old age and had a barren wife, could give birth to a Son Isaac, through him then nation of Israel was established, this him the Messiah Jesus Christ was born, and the whole world was blessed through him.