

## Sermon Discussion - 28 May 2023

Read Genesis 12:10-13:4

### **Getting Started** *Sharing from personal experience*

Think about the promises of God...He forgives, He is always with us, He does not condemn or shame, He is good.

Under what kind of circumstances have you found it most difficult to believe God's promises? What are the pressure points where pain causes you to take matters into your own hands most quickly? Why do you think God tests our faith in these areas?

### **Observation** *Discovering the context*

The Midrash is the collection of stories told by Jewish rabbis to explain passages in the Old Testament. Its commentary on this text highlights how the account of Abram going down to Egypt at a time of famine was foreshadowing the exile in Egypt by the people of Israel later on.

Notice some of the parallels. It is a famine that takes both Abram and later Israel down to Egypt. The foreign ruler in both cases is Pharaoh. There is a threat to life in which the males will die and the females will live. There are plagues placed upon Pharaoh and his house in the account with Abram and Israel. In both stories, the departure is enriched with spoils from the Egyptians.

- How do you think the parallels would have spoken to the nation of Israel when they received or heard Abram's story for the first time?
- How would the story of what God did for Abram impact them in their journey toward the Promised Land?

### **Interpretation** *Discovering the meaning*

1. Do you think the famine was a test to see if Abram would stay in the land that had been promised to him? Why or why not? In what ways have you found God's promises tested in your life? How have you been tempted to compromise them?
2. Abram made a faithless choice to go to Egypt and lie about Sarai. At first glance it seems like he's rewarded for it (Gen. 12:16). Perhaps this caused Abram to justify his actions. Have you ever tried to rationalise your disobedience because you were not experiencing God's immediate discipline?

3. Many times, in the pressure of life's trials and difficulties, certain character traits come to the surface. It's as though crisis unveils our true character. What character qualities does Abram display in this story? What character qualities do you display when you are faced with difficult circumstances?
4. What should Sarai have said to Abram when he instructed her as in v. 11-13? Peter commended Sarah for her submissive obedience to Abraham (1 Peter 3:3-6). Is this a good example of submission?
5. Abram was supposed to be a blessing to the families of the earth (Genesis 12:3). Instead, he brought plagues upon Pharaoh and his house. What affect does a Christian's sin in the public square have on his ability to witness and share God's grace?

**Application** *Putting knowledge into practice*

- What do we learn about God's covenant promises and His grace for our own lives from this story?
- When you're in a "famine," how can you determine whether you're facing it in fear of the circumstances or with faith in God?
- Try memorising Genesis 13:3-4.  
*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 at the first. And there Abram called upon the name of the Lord.*
- How has God blessed you and answered prayer this week?