

## WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

### Genesis 13-19

Each of us faces many choices every day

Choices we make today are important; we're forced to live with consequences of those decisions.

The decisions we make today, affect us the rest of our lives.

*"Youth is such a wonderful time of life. It's too bad it's wasted on teenagers."*

Teens are frequently faced with decisions they seem frightfully unprepared to make; decisions that have implications for the rest of their lives.

In Joshua's day, Israel was at a crossroads.

They had a decision to make that would affect the rest of their history:

Joshua's ultimate question:

**Josh. 24:15** *"Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve"*

We all must face the demand to make choices.

#### **People make two kinds of choices:**

Sometimes people make choices on the basis of *what we can see*

Sometimes people make choices on the basis of *what we can't see*

**Heb 11:1** *"Faith is being certain of what you can't see!"*

Faith demands we make decisions based on invisible evidence!

#### **Whichever choice we make, we live with consequences of our choices.**

One of the hardest things about being a parent: watch your kids make bad choices, knowing they're going to live with consequences of those choices for the rest of their life.

That's one of the hardest things for a pastor also: watch people you love and care about make poor choices, knowing they're going to live with consequences of those choices.

We wish we could stop people from heading down the wrong path, because we know where it leads—we know the sad consequences of bad choices. But you can't stop them!

Sometimes we have to stand back, let them go, and watch the disastrous consequences.

We can pray for them; but we can't stop them!

That's what Abram went through with his nephew Lot in Gen. 13-19  
 The contrast between the choices Lot makes and the choices Abraham makes challenges *US* to consider carefully *our own choices*.

**Are our choices based on what we see, or on what we can't see?**

What difference does it make?

How do the kinds of choices we make impact our lives?

### **Biblical context:**

Abraham established a reputation as a person committed to trusting God: **"Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."**

=> God blessed Abram with great wealth 13:1-4

=> Tension develops within the family 13:5-7

=> Abraham offers Lot a choice 13:8-9

[ What kind of choices does Lot make? ]

### **LOT MAKES HIS DECISION BASED ON WHAT HE SEES**

He chooses the land that *looks* the best 13:10-12 => **It looked so good!**

He's not concerned about spiritual condition of the neighborhood  
13:13

Introductory incident shows values to which Lot is committed.

### **LOT MUST LIVE WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS CHOICE**

[What are the consequences of Lot's decision—of choice based on what we can see?]

- 1. Lot and his country are taken captive by the pagan nations**  
 14:1-16

[As story develops and we become more aware of conditions in the neighborhood, we observe what Peter later affirms: ]

- 2. Lot's righteous soul is troubled by immorality in the neighborhood** 2 Pet. 2:7 –Twice described as a righteous person living among the lawless.

He is a type (model) of godly people in a pagan world..

He was distressed by what was going on around him.

Yet he was powerless to do anything about it.

In part, because he himself was compromised.

He was making choices based on appearances,

He was living with consequences of those choices.

**3. His choice results in tragic consequences**

**His homeland is destroyed by divine judgment 19:12-13, 24-25**

**His wife is killed looking back 19:26;**

**Luke 17:30-32 => looking back at what she was leaving behind!**

**His *home* is infected by immorality in the neighborhood  
(impact on his daughters) 19:6-8 => 12-17 => 30-38**

**Because Lot's choice is based on what he can see,  
he must live with the sad consequences of a man-centered  
lifestyle.**

***When WE make OUR choices based on what we can see  
–on how good things LOOK–***

***WE must live with sad consequences of a man-centered  
lifestyle.***

Our eyes can *SEE* “the good life” –good job, good pay, beautiful wife, nice home,  
new car, great entertainment center, popular, intelligent kids (or grand kids!)

– we get the idea the good life is what's really important!

That's what you can SEE

It's a man-centered lifestyle,

Ultimately the good life never gives us what we're hoping for!

All the “stuff” of life doesn't satisfy!–It doesn't fill “the hole in your soul!”

[How about Abraham? What kind of choices does HE make? ]

**ABRAM MAKES HIS DECISION BASED ON WHAT HE CAN'T SEE**

**–based on faith**

**Abram allows Lot to choose wherever he wishes to settle**

He doesn't fight for his rights.

He trusts God to give him the good land He promised him

–he realizes that getting “the good land” has more to do with God than with  
geography!.

God will give him what he promised–*he doesn't have to fight for  
it!*

**Abram depends on God to supply all he needs, rather than  
allow pagan kings to make him rich. Gen. 14:21-24**

God will supply all he needs--so he gives up spoils of victory.

He refuses to be enriched by pagan kings  
 No *human* gets credit for making Abram rich.  
 God supplies all he needs.

So Abraham let go of possessions he had a right to take for himself.

*NOT* a *normative* position—not a standard for all people at all times.

It was a specific conviction God gave Abram. In that situation  
 He was faithful to that commitment, though he didn't know where everything  
 he needed would come from.

*He wouldn't let any pagan king take credit for making him rich!*

If he should get rich (*and he did!!*), God gets the credit.

Principle for us: **DON'T CLING TO THINGS!**

Abraham *was* successful.

He was capable of working things out himself.

Even in this situation, he *earned* the right to spoils of battle.

Like successful business people today, a major client could make or break us.

If king gives spoils, he could claim credit for Abram's wealth and demand allegiance

Abraham trusts God; he gave up wealth, cut dependence on anyone else.

No *major client* made Abraham successful.

Abraham wasn't a *self-made man!*"

**GOD made Him successful.**

God supplied everything he needed

Have you come to end of the month and realized your pay check ran out before your month?

Have you sat down with bills in front of you and said, "I'm going to acknowledge God first this month!"

Many of us know feeling of writing a check to God' for 10%, 11%, 20%, sometimes more.

Then looked at rest of bills and wondered how we'd reach the end of the month.

When we trust God to give what *HE* leads us to give Him, He multiplies our efforts.

Paul says, when we give God first place, and give to Him first, THEN, ***"My God shall supply ALL your needs according to HIS riches in glory."***

**Abraham trusted GOD to supply all His needs.**

[ Like Lot, . . . ]

### **ABRAM LIVES WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS CHOICE**

**God promises to bless Abram because of his faith 13:14-18**

God promises to give him all the land he can see 13:14-15, 17

God promises to multiply Abraham's seed as the dust of the earth 13:16

God promises that He Himself will be Abraham's reward 15:1

**God gives Abram victory over pagan nations and uses him to free his nephew from the consequences of his own choices 14:1-20 16, 18-20**

**God repeats His promise to bless Abraham 18:18-19**

**Because Abraham's choice  
is based on trusting the invisible God,  
Abraham enjoys God's blessing,  
God's protection, and God's provision.**

***When WE make OUR choices based on what we CAN'T see  
– based on trusting the invisible God –  
WE can enjoy living with the happy consequences  
of a GOD-centered lifestyle!***

*What does this look like in real life today?*

Faith-promise giving—when we followed God's call to Guatemala

My folks didn't have any extra—made a commitment to give \$50/mo.

They couldn't SEE where it was coming from

=> God provided a raise at work, the same week.

Could have looked at personal loss

Could have crabbed about not seeing the grandkids

Could have struggled to keep their kids where they could SEE them

They let go and trusted God to supply their needs and send their kids!

**Which will *you* choose? Whom will YOU serve?**

Will YOU go by faith? Or by what you can see?

**Youth**–Temptation to look good–be nice and “blend into woodwork,”--rather than take a stand for Christ.

Live and let live      Don't make a fool of yourself

Sex now–instant gratification vs. Trusting God's way–WAIT for a better reward.

Cheating to look good–make an impression-win the impressive scholarship

Acting entertained by crude jokes the gang tells–to be accepted

**=> It all LOOKS so good!**

**Young Adults**– desire for more “stuff” –instant gratification

Credit's easy to get We'll worry about how we'll pay for it later!

**=> It LOOKS so good!**

**Business**

Get ahead at all costs.      Compromise integrity vs. take stand for integrity

MaryAnne Farrier's work situation

If we have influence, it's easier to get people to listen when we talk about Christ.

**=> Prestige looks great!**

***When WE make OUR choices***

***based on what we can see***

***–on how good things LOOK–***

***we live with sad consequences of a man-centered lifestyle.***

***When WE make OUR choices***

***based on what we CAN'T see***

***– based on trusting God –***

***we enjoy living with happy consequences***

***of a GOD-centered lifestyle!***

*Which will YOU choose?*