

**Reading:** Genesis chapter 13

**Key Thought:** Romans 12:10 – *Preferring and honouring one another in love.*

**Context:**

Abraham's nephew, Lot and his family, had travelled with him on the journey from Haran to Canaan. And God had blessed them abundantly with livestock and wealth (silver and gold), so much so that the land could no longer support them if they stayed together; and some of the herdsmen were quarrelling. So, Abraham realised they would have to part company and asked Lot to choose between the fertile valley of the River Jordan or the higher ground to the left. Lot chose what he thought was the best place to live. He not only had his eye on the green pasture but on the added benefits of the cities Sodom and Gomorrah (verses 12&13). Abraham chose to live in the area which we now know as Bethlehem.

**Content:**

This passage already demonstrates that Abraham was rewarded for his faith and obedience and closeness to God (verses 4 and 18b). The 'fly in the ointment' was a strain on relationships between Abraham's group and Lot's group. God had already promised the land to Abraham (Chapter 12v7), but he still graciously gave Lot the choice. It was Abraham's right to choose, but in giving up his rights he wasn't being weak – through it his faith and walk were strengthened. And the result was that God repeated the promise and expanded on it: "I will give you all your eye can see, and make your descendants as plentiful as the dust on the earth" (verses 14-17).

**Challenge:**

Do we put others before ourselves?

The world would say that we should be actively assertive and stand up for our rights. Sure, we should not become 'doormats' that people walk over and take advantage of. However, it is worth considering the negative impact of "standing up for our rights".

- We might cause others to miss out, or get less than they need
- Self-assertiveness can make us self-reliant and therefore weaken our trust in God to provide
- If we determine to attain something it might turn out to be less than God's best for us
- If we determine to get something and it doesn't happen, we could become very resentful

By stepping back in favour of others, we are not showing weakness (as the world might see it) – but we are showing kindness, grace and strength of character. We have choices:

- We can do things the world's way, "every man for himself" "I'm claiming my rights" etc
- Or, we can do things God's way, "preferring and honouring one another in love" (Romans 12v10)

Abraham let Lot make the choice, and on the surface it looked like Abraham came off worse. The actual outcome was so different. Abraham received further blessings from The Lord (verse 17), whilst Lot needed to be rescued from the horrific judgment on his chosen place to live (chapter 19). Let us pray that God will help us to act in the way that leads to blessing, both for others and for ourselves.

**Communicate:**

Feel free to let us know if you have questions or comments about this study. Perhaps you have a word of encouragement or a need for prayer if you are struggling with any of the issues. We will gladly get back to you.