

Building on Biblical Foundations

“Who is Your Provider?”

Karin Paparelli Peters

Genesis 14

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We continue our story in Genesis Chapter 14

SLIDES: 14:14-24

And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.

15And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.

16And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

17And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale

18And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.

19And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:

20And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

21 And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

23 That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:

24 Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

We start chapter 14 with an account of war. War has broken out among the nations that dwell around Sodom and Gomorrah. During these battles, the King of Sodom is defeated and his enemies take away his goods and his people, including Lot.

And what does Abram do when he hears of this? He takes his own men, arms them and pursues his nephew. He overtakes their armies, rescues his nephew and brings everything that was taken back to the King of Sodom.

In thanksgiving, the King offers Abram all of the loot.

First thing to notice is he goes to rescue his nephew Lot. His commitment to his late brother's son is still intact. In fact, he takes great risks to recover him. His faithfulness is a part of his character. He proves himself again to be trustworthy and reliable.

What else? He refuses to take a reward from the King. . .

Let's look at what Abram says. . . verse 23. . . **"I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich"**

Why does he say this? He earned his reward. Right?

We don't find the reason spelled out for us here but I would venture there were two plausible reasons for Abram's response:

1. He will not benefit from wickedness in any form. . . Remember what we said about the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah? How they were filled with wickedness. . . Abram refuses to partake of this ill-gotten gain.

What does the Word of God say about this?

Psalm 125:3 “For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest upon the land of the righteous, So that the righteous will not put forth their hands to do wrong”

For Abram, a man chosen by God and called to follow him, any association with wickedness is unacceptable, even to accept a reward or just recompense.

2. He will not allow anyone but the LORD MOST HIGH to be credited for his good fortune. He relies upon the Lord to fulfil his promise to Bless Him as he already has. We see in this chapter how much Abram has already increased . . . he has over 300 men in his service that can be sent to fight. The Lord has already blessed Abram with flocks, and herd, and also with people – men and maid servants – why would he now take profit from an evil King – so the King can later say. . . I made Abram rich – and therefore deny what God has done., robbing God of his glory and diminishing Abram’s faith and trust in God.

No - Abram refuses to gain from this good deed. His good deed is unto the Lord and his reward will come from the Lord alone.

What can we learn from Abram?

1. He was a man of reliable character

- Abram’s character is revealed by his actions – not just empty promises. Can that be said of you?
- Are we counted as faithful?
- Do we remain true to our nature and character regardless of those around us?

- Abram rescued Lot not because Lot deserved it, not because Lot was a righteous man. . .but because Lot was his kin. Looking after his brother's son was his duty and his privilege. He chose to honor his brother by being a replacement father to Lot. He continued to care for Lot even after they parted, and risked his life and the lives of his servants to bring Lot back from captivity.

2. He would not profit from the hands of wicked men

- He was not tempted by the riches of others
- He would not benefit from the wealth obtained through wickedness
- He would rather receive no reward, than tarnish his reputation
- Yes, he does not offend those offering with his refusal
- Do we share in the profits of wickedness? – we see this today in boycotts. If products have been manufactured through the use of child labor, or other despicable practices we can choose NOT to purchase those goods. We can boycott products from nations who violate civil rights and treat their citizens inhumanely. We can choose to purchase food that's been grown without harming the environment, or brutalizing the livestock. Do we allow our character to dictate what we consume? Do we allow our values and commitment to the Lord to take priority over our desire for wealth? Do we shop with our conscience?

A while back there was a campaign to shop American - to buy goods produced here in the states. Why? Does it matter where our goods are made? Or grown? I believe it does. Sure we can save a few bucks to buy stuff made overseas. . . but buying local infuses capital into our communities. We keep it in the family – so to speak.

3. Abram relied on the Lord to be his provider. He would not allow anyone else to take credit for his prosperity . . . not even himself.

- What does that mean? We talk about the Lord being our provider. But have you ever really considered what that means? When you are farming I think there is a better opportunity to see the hand of God over your crops or herds. You are more acutely aware of how little you control. . .and how

- much of your livelihood comes from the graciousness and generosity of God. The rains, the sunshine, the increase of livestock.
- Often our livelihood is not so closely related and we forget that it is still by the hand of God that we ***“live and move and have our being” Acts 17:28***
 - In former times, the people were more aware of the Lord providing for everything –

Here are a few verses to remind us. . .

Psalm 65:9

**You visit the earth and cause it to overflow;
You greatly enrich it;
The stream of God is full of water;
You prepare their grain, for thus You prepare the earth.
You water its furrows abundantly,
You settle its ridges,
You soften it with showers,
You bless its growth.
You have crowned the year with Your bounty,
And Your paths drip with fatness.**

Psalm 145:16

**You open Your hand
And satisfy the desire of every living thing**

When the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt He did so in such a way as to be the sole provider of all of Israel’s needs. Bringing water out of rock, manna from heaven and quail when they cried for meat. He did this to mold a people for himself who relied upon him – a people who were no longer slaves to Egypt but His own Chosen People.

Deuteronomy 2:7

For the Lord your God has blessed you in all that you have done; He has known your wanderings through this great wilderness. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you; you have not lacked a thing.”

Jesus reminded his disciples and us too . . .

Our Father in Heaven in A good father – if we lack for anything He is faithful to provide.

Matthew 6:31-33

Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you”

And this promise of providing for all of our needs continues to this very day.

How many of you have stories of God’s provision? I do. I have many.

Just yesterday as I was preparing this message – I got a call from a client (who has become a dear friend) who needs me to help her transfer the sale of her franchise business in Franklin.

I never advertise for legal clients and yet every month I have work. All of my clients come word of mouth . . . but really who brings them? The Lord. He is able to provide all I need. I don’t need to worry or fret about it. I do need to be a good steward of what he gives me. I need to be thankful and not grumble and complain. I need to see his goodness outstretched to me from every direction. That is the TRUTH.

The enemy wants to plant seeds of discontent. Seeds of dissatisfaction. Seeds of complaining, comparing, coveting. Don’t nourish those seeds. Instead rip them out at the root.

Let’s be like Abram. Trusting God with our every need and thanking Him for his great love toward us.