**Abram and Lot: Humility and Blessing**

 ***8****Then Abram said to Lot, “Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are kinsmen.****9****Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left.”****10****And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)****11****So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other.****12****Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom.****13****Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord.*

***14****The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward,****15****for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever.****16****I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted.****17****Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you.”****18****So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the Lord. (Genesis 13:8-18, ESV)*

God responds to humility and faith with blessing.

 Greetings to you all as we talk today about the themes of humility and faith, through the passage that covers the divergence of directions between Abram and Lot. The two were so wealthy at the time of the story above, that they had no choice but to make a decision about the situation. Abram’s decision showed a lot about his person and faith, and based on the latter, God’s response to him. Today, we’re going to connect Abram’s choice to give Lot the first pick to our everyday life. Again, if we make our decisions based on faith and humility as Abram did, there will be blessing for us from the Lord. Let’s see how that is…

 If we approach God’s promise by faith, He will notice and reward our loyalty in His unique way. Abram was enjoying the promise of God and had already escaped a predicament in Egypt with a great wealth. God was with him, but it did not mean that he would be able to avoid hardship. Lot was his blood relative, and Abram did not act arrogantly when the time came to decide about the stressful situation concerning each man’s workers. Abram humbly gave Lot the first choice of land. Lot was free to choose any land that he wished to use, and he chose the obviously fertile land, full of water. Abram, however, was looking for a land that was invisible – one that he didn’t have yet from God. For that, God reestablished His covenant with Abram. It is true that the immediate benefits of God’s promised land were not evident, but Abram’s decision based on faith in God would become a blessing for him and his children. Lot, on the other hand, had a bad result from making a decision based on his finite logic. He lived near evil people and came upon evil situations, eventually even losing his wife as they fled Sodom’s destruction.

 One man trusted the promise of the invisible God, and the other the visible things he saw. Abram humbled himself and gave a chance for Lot to have whatever land he preferred, trusting God. On the other hand, Lot chose without thinking about God’s promise to Abram, deciding on the immediately attractive land, which would later turn out horribly for him.

 The famed church father Augustine says the following about Abram’s kind of faith: “God does not expect for us to move by faith without reason, but the limitations of our reason make the use of faith important.

 So, what about us? How ready are we to give way to another when there is still a promise from God which we wait to be fulfilled? How many times have we approached a project inspired by God with humility? Or, when the road or choice ahead of us is not from God, are we tempted to walk in it or through it, instead of waiting for God’s best way? Each question is tied to our personal life. My prayer is that our decisions would be tightly bound to God’s promises, as we put aside the human and worldly possibilities and choices. May we perform The Lord’s plans as we remain humble and in faith at times of decisions in our lives.

 If we approach God’s promise by faith, He will notice and reward our loyalty in His unique way. God responds to humility and faith with blessing. God bless you all. Amen.