

**Genesis 13:8-13**

8 Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herders and my herders; for we are kindred. 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 Lot looked about him, and saw that the plain of the Jordan 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 had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. 11 So Lot chose for himself all the plain of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward; thus they separated from each other. 12 Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the Plain and moved his tent as far as Sodom. 13 Now the people of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD.

In the Bible some people have a name change on special occasions. The name Abram changed to Abraham when God made a covenant with him. Abraham is very faithful and builds an altar to God. At the age of 75 God made a covenant with him in which Abraham is promised the Promised Land and that his descendents will become a great nation. During his lifetime there is a famine and he and his family go to Egypt which could have ended in disaster due to his lack of courage and honesty. However, due to God's saving mercy Abraham is rewarded with wealth. He and his family return home where he builds an altar and worships God. But due to his prosperity another problem developed.

In today's Scripture Abraham and Lot have a close personal relationship and are getting along well. Their prosperity grows to the point where they run out of resources. This causes friction among their hired hands. Since Abraham values their relationship his desire is to keep peace. However, in order to maintain peace it is necessary for Abraham and Lot to split up. Abraham wholeheartedly offered the advantage to Lot who ended up choosing to go toward Sodom which was wicked.

Both Abraham and Lot are considered to be righteous but there is a big contrast between the two. Abraham was devoted and faithful; he built an altar and worshiped God. He entered into a covenant with God and pretty much put God first in his life. His prosperity was achieved due to the blessings that he had received from God. Lot liked the land of desire and associated with the people that were sinful against God. His prosperity was due to his association with Abraham. He separated from his godly influence and left the source of his blessing for a place that was cursed. Lot put himself first and looked to the fruitfulness of the land. Guided by desire he moved closer to the comforts and the customs of the wicked and failed to consider that the inhabitants of Sodom were corrupt and wicked. Lot had a conflict within his own conscious - he did not like the corruption of Sodom but he did not leave it either. He stayed in Sodom complaining but compromising. He did not consider the impact that the environment would have on his family. Lot's life illustrates the negative influence of a selfish choice.

Lot's situation is very much like many today who choose a tempered version of religion over a life of devotion. Many in our society today rationalize that it is OK to be spiritual but not religious, to believe but not be active, and not honor the sacraments. The Christian is to hear the message preached, believe, and put faith into practice.

The Scripture presents us with two types of people. There are characteristics of each within us. Abraham was devoted and was rewarded by God accordingly. But prosperity does not mean that things will always go well. Prosperity brings its own set of problems. What people do with their blessings determine if they remain a blessing or become a curse. Abraham is a very good example of righteousness. Though he was far from perfect, he was loyal to God and this determined his decisions, behavior, and attitude. His highest values were placed on his relationship to God and his kindred. He brought a peaceful solution to a dispute and pointed to a righteous way of solving conflict. In life, the attempts to keep peace are made by the one with the strongest character. In the spirit of compassion he was willing to take second choice.

There is a characteristic of Lot within us when we go to church for spiritual things but go to the world for everything. We are like Lot when we go to the Scriptures for advice but go to the world for the pleasures of life. We are like Lot when we get our message from the Bible but our method from the world. We are like Lot when we get our priorities from society, our behavior from the flesh, and our motivation from our resources. We pitch our tent near Sodom when we turn our backs on God toward the temptations of the world. Lot went to Sodom when he could have chosen a better location for a man of righteousness.