

The World vs God's Promises

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Genesis

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Bible Text: Genesis 13:1-18
Preached on: Sunday, January 26, 2020

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If you would, please, open your Bibles to Genesis 13. Genesis 13. We're picking up in Genesis where we left off. Abram has just returned from Egypt. He's been humiliated by his own sin. He's felt the great effects of his bad decisions, the destructive events that occurred in his life in Egypt, and now he's back in the land of Canaan. God had rescued him, God had rescued his wife and brought them back despite Abram's bad choices. Of course, this points to the Israelites, the people who are receiving this word from Moses at this time who were reading and hearing Genesis from Moses as they wander in the wilderness. They have also just left Egypt and they are also on the way to the Promised Land so they can see a great continuity in what God is doing for his people. And as we read this, let's remember that this text today is not primarily about us, it's about God, as is all of God's word. Yes, there is application for us and it's a great comfort to us but this book is about God. I am going to spend a little bit more time today talking about application but let's not forget that this book is about God, God's faithfulness, God's righteousness, God's redemptive plan in our lives.

So as we turn to Genesis 13, I am going to read the entire chapter and we will cover this whole text today, so if you'd please stand for the reading of God's holy word. Remember that this is God's inspired word sustained for us throughout the generations by the Holy Spirit.

1 So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb. 2 Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. 3 And he journeyed on from the Negeb as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, 4 to the place where he had made an altar at the first. And there Abram called upon the name of the LORD. 5 And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, 6 so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, 7 and there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land. 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.

Please be seated.

Let us pray.

Precious Holy Spirit, we pray that you would illumine our hearts and our minds in the name of Jesus. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable to you, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

The title of the sermon today is "The World vs God's Promises." There are three points that I hope to make. Firstly, that God's faithfulness often produces and should produce repentance. God's faithfulness produces repentance. Secondly, we'll look at Abram. Abram trusts God once again and not himself. Thirdly, we'll look at Lot and the lusts of the world. But as we turn our hearts toward God's word, the first thing I'd like you to notice is that God's faithfulness produces repentance in Abram's life. Why do I say that? What is repentance? Our Shorter Catechism I think has the best definition of repentance that I have ever heard, "Repentance unto life is a saving grace whereby a sinner out of a true sense of his sin and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ doth with a true grief and hatred of his sin turn from it and unto God with a full purpose of and an endeavor after a new obedience."

Abram seems to have a new obedience, doesn't he? He seems to have a new trust in God. He went back to the place where his tent had been in the beginning, it says in verse 2. He went to the place where he had first made an altar to the Lord, it says in verse 4. And he called upon the name of the Lord. Now he had traveled from Egypt and he had traveled through the Negeb, and then that's in the southern part of Canaan, and then traveled up northward to Bethel where it had all started out. What was he doing? He was going back to the beginning, back to where he had first worshiped the Lord, where he had first made

an altar to the Lord. He returned from this horrible and disastrous time in Egypt, remembering his sins and his failures, and now he's remembering his first love.

Revelation 2 is where Christ tells the church of Ephesus that they have forsaken their first love. That is our nature, to forsake and forget our first love of Christ and yet we should be like Abram, we should go to our first love and build an altar to the Lord in our hearts, renew our worship.

He calls upon the name of the Lord. This reminds us that we never give up after times of sin, after times of rebellion. We never give up against this sin that's in us. We never give up fighting for the truth and fighting our way back to God who is always welcoming those who are repentant. It's a reminder that we should never ever give up.

In 1940, Great Britain stood all alone. They had been waging war on the continent of Europe against the Nazis. The Nazi powers were rolling over everyone; the armies were crushing the Belgians, the French, the Dutch, the Czechs, the Austrians. Some of you were alive at that time and you remember this. They felt and looked unstoppable to the rest of the world and Britain stood alone, this little island was the only power that remained. Most people expected Great Britain to negotiate a peace with Nazi Germany since they were obviously over-matched. Of course, the British were tempted to despair and to give up, the US wasn't in the war yet, we were not helping them much. They were alone and yet God sent the right man to that people, Winston Churchill, and he inspired the people of this little country to fight on. He had the right attitude for survival in that battle which was tenacity. Speaking to the students at Harrow School where he was once a student as well, these are 16 year old, 17 year old, 15 year old, 14 year old boys, in the earliest and darkest year of World War II, when they had seen nothing but defeat this was Churchill's message to these young boys, many of whom would go on and die in this war, his great lesson in that horrible defeat and darkness to these boys was this, "Never give in. Never give in. Never. Never. Never. Never. Never. In nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in."

We are also in a battle and as we fight the enemies of the world, the flesh, and the devil, when we fight the sin within, we're to never give up. We keep fighting. No matter how many times that horse throws you, you don't let him beat you, you get right back on, right? We are to do the same thing. We keep fighting.

Now Satan would have us believe that after a failure, after a time of rebellion, after a time of darkness, you're not worthy to pray, you're not worthy to come to church, you're not worthy to open your Bibles, you'd better just not even do that because you are not worthy to do these things. You're not worthy to worship. You've sinned too much. It's a lie, of course. The truth is you were never worthy to begin with. It's only because of Christ Jesus that we worship God, we pray to God, because he has told us to do so in the name of Jesus Christ. Because of Christ and his shed blood, we return to God after times of sin and wandering and despair. We return like Abram to our first love.

God is faithful. God is loving. He's forgiving. His love for his children never changes. If you are his child, do not be discouraged by yesterday yet let yesterday motivate your worship afresh. Let the sins of the past bring you great humility but also bring you a new obedience, a new dependence on God, a new urgency and a new reverence. As you offer your bodies as a living sacrifice today, this is your spiritual act of worship.

This was Abram's response to this terrible tragedy, his terrible time of sin. It was of his own making and it should be our response to sin as well. Don't despair of your sin and your waywardness. You think God is surprised that you're a broken vessel? That you wander easily? Do you think this is a great shock to the Father in heaven who knows all things? No, it's not. Rather, like Abram, let your failures motivate you to renewed worship to your first love. Sin really is simply at its most basic core level an inability of worship. It's a problem of worship. It's you not understanding who God is and not understanding who you are in Christ because if you did, you wouldn't sin. You need to remember who God is and worship him in your life. Return to your first love as Abram did.

Point 2. Look how Abram trusts God in this trial and doesn't trust himself. Abram seems to have changed. He seems in this trial that faces him today, to have turned his heart toward God rather than trying to fix the problem himself as he did with the problem of Egypt. Abram here is certainly displayed in a more positive light by Moses. In the previous chapter we saw an independent and a presumptive and even a cowardly Abram. He didn't seem to trust God but rather relied on his own intellect and cunning and ability. Here we see him handling this same very difficult, very challenging trial in his life with a different response, a response of trust.

He and Lot have been together from the very beginning. Remember, Lot was his nephew. He came up with him. He's trying to care for him. And Lot and he have both become very wealthy, so wealthy that their herdsmen are beginning to fight over the resources of the land, and if you notice it says that the land was still inhabited at that time by the Canaanites and the Perizzites. That's Moses' way of saying, "This is still hostile territory." This isn't like everyone is so happy that Abram and Lot showed up, they're surrounded by enemies who would probably love to destroy them.

So this is a real threat to Abram's survival. His nephew's team and his team seem to be fighting. They seem to be verging together on the way to their own personal war and he knows that it can't continue. They've got enough to deal with just living in Canaan with the peoples around them. Abram had to ensure peace between his neighbors but especially between his own family. And remember also that Abram's the eldest. In that patriarchal society, did Abram have to do anything for Lot? No. He could tell Lot exactly what to do and Lot would obey. He could've relied on his own authority and told Lot where to go, but he did not do that. He does something remarkable, he says, "Lot, you're my brother. You choose where to go and I'll go the other way." You see, rather than trying to manipulate the future this time, Abram seems to be exalting his nephew. He gives Lot the choice that was rightfully his to take. He let Lot choose where to raise his family and Abram entrusted himself to God. This seems to be a changed man. He seems

to have learned from what had just happened. He understood the promises of God did not need to be manipulated, they did not need to be manhandled. God would accomplish his glorious and divine purpose in Abram's life without Abram's striving and grabbing ahold of every single one of them. Abram's duty was to be generous and to be kind and to trust God and this is what he does. This is the way of God. God is generous and kind. We should be like Abram and act in the interest of others and not ourselves.

If you'd open your Bibles to the book of Philippians, Philippians is in the back toward the end of the Bible. Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians. I'm going to read from chapter 2 because Abram, really, was acting like Christ. Here's why I say that starting in verse 1.

1 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each one of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man.

Abram was simply acting like Christ, taking the form of a servant. That word "doulos" is "slave." Taking the form of a slave. Christ who left heaven, who was in his glorious dominion in heaven, left it all and came in the form of a slave. He became someone who served others.

Christ considered that God the Father was faithful and his promises were true. Abram understood the same thing. This was the same lesson that Moses was trying to communicate to the people wandering in the desert with him. God's promises are true so Abram did not have to fight to protect his own interests. He didn't need to lean on his rights or authority. He could with quiet confidence be kind and generous and humble and put Lot before himself.

Now let's turn and look at Lot. We've seen Abram and how Abram has changed, Lot seems to have some issues. The third point: we'll look at Lot and the lust of the flesh. So that's what Abram did, what did Lot do? Verse 10 says that, "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.)" What Moses is saying was, "That area that's a desert now, wasn't always a desert." It was beautiful and lush at the time of Abram and Lot. You may not know this but Craig and Cathy when they were younger, their parents were stationed in the Middle East and they swam in the Dead Sea. Well, swim, they laid in it because it's so heavy with salt that you can't sink. They were in this area of the world and it wasn't always that way, it was beautiful and lush.

And when Lot looked down from Bethel and he saw this place, this lush valley, he thought that that was the place he needed to go and he moved his tent as far as Sodom, who are described as wicked great sinners against the Lord. In many ways, Lot is committing the same sin that Adam and Eve did in the garden and it's not surprising. Abram's tricks, Satan's tricks, sorry, Satan's tricks are always the same. Lot is forsaking the way of the Lord and following the way of the world. He's choosing the seed of the serpent over the seed of the woman. Remember what Genesis 3:6 says, "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate." She saw the tree was good, she saw it was a delight to the eyes and that it would make her wise in her own eyes. These are the same temptations we face every day. The Apostle John in 1 John 2 says the same thing. It was our New Testament reading. In verse 15 he says, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, pride of life, comes not from the Father but from the world."

Lot was following the lust of his flesh. He desired the pleasures of the earth that Sodom held. Lot was following the lust of his eyes. He desired the beauty of the earth that he saw in the valley, the lush green valley. He was following the pride of life as well. He was moving away from the godly and into the worldly and he saw great wealth awaiting him, great prominence, and we can learn so much from this sad tale, can't we? And this is a time when a pastor may say hard things but they're for the greater spiritual good. They're truths that are spoken in love. Of course, I'm not called to tickle your ears but to proclaim God's word as faithfully as I can, as persuasively as I can, and as lovingly as I possibly can, to call you to faithfulness and holiness, to proclaim Christ to you, to advocate his kingdom's standards, and also to warn you of the wiles of the world, the flesh and the devil and I'm going to do that by looking at Lot's life.

I first want to look at Lot's bad company. Look at the people that Lot went to spend time with, to be with, the people of Sodom who were very wicked and great sinners before God. Do you think this was a surprise to Lot and Abram? They didn't know who was down there? No, they knew exactly what was down there and yet Lot chose to leave the company of the godly and to immerse himself with the company of the world. And we all face this tension because we work in the world, we live in the world, we go to school in the world, we shop in the world. But we are not to love this world, nor to make our primary company, our primary group of people, our close bosom friendships with people of the world. These are people who are still in the kingdom of Satan as Ephesians 2 makes so clear. There's two kinds of folks, there's the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of God. Don't choose Sodom to make your friends. Don't choose the people of Sodom, of the world, who are going to drag you down.

Think of your acquaintances, think of your friends, especially you young folks, young adults, folks in high school and younger. Think of the people who are your company. Think of who your close friends are. If it's an unbeliever, you are playing with fire. If all of your friends are only unbelievers, you are definitely in danger. And don't think that this is something that you can manage. I'm sure Lot felt like he could manage this. He

was gonna go down to Sodom and he knew who he was and this would be okay. It wasn't okay. This is not a neutral thing. This is not something that you can manage. Bad company really does corrupt your Christian morals. Now of course, we want to remain on good terms with everybody. We want to be friends with everybody in the sense that we don't want everyone to be our enemy. So we do everything we can to show love to the world but you need to recognize that you are different. If you love Christ, you are different from those who do not and you should not desire to please those people, you should not desire their good opinion, although that is typically where our flesh takes us. We want to please the people who really are our enemies because they don't love Christ. Of course, they're not enemies in a physical sense but spiritually they are opposed to God.

So don't be unnecessarily offensive or unkind, for sure. Be as loving to the world as you possibly can but your heart should be instructed by God's word, your actions should be instructed by God's word which says these are the people who you have close personal friendships with. Look around, these are your brothers and sisters in Christ. We're to remain separate from worldly company, company that will only drag us into the world. Don't make the same bad choice as Lot's. Don't surround yourself always with only worldly people and especially your most close, intimate friends. They should be people who love God. And don't presume upon his grace and think that it's all going to work out as Lot did. Show them love, show them Christ's love and bring them into the family of God but you should look at them differently than you look at God's family.

Secondly, let's look at Lot's bad desires. We looked at his bad company, now let's look at his desires. We're challenged the same way Lot and Eve were challenged in this world and we have to admit just right from the front that the desires that the world presents to us are alluring. You go and you see parties or you see things on tv, and you see folks being drunk and folks, the laughter and the great dances and the sporting events and all the cheering and it all looks so enticing. All the fun that the world has to offer is vanity. It's like Vanity Fair, it's all looking so good and it seems so desirable and we have to admit that our flesh longs for it, that our flesh lusts after these things, but it's empty.

Lot's other desire seems to be prosperity. He looked down on the valley and saw that it was green and he thought, "That's what I want." And we're tempted that way as well. We see the lives of the wealthy, the lives of the famous, their Mercedes Benz's, the Rolex watches, the fancy suits, the flash of the cameras and the adoring fans, the private planes, the luxurious homes, and we think that's where it is, "That's how I'll be happy." These things are illusion. They're like grass, they're here today and gone tomorrow. And you don't have to look at the news too long to find someone else who's wealthy and famous and who's horribly unhappy. Christ said, "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his very soul?" If you're chasing after pleasure or riches, or as a long-term goal or even this day, then you're not living as a Christian. Christian people chase after God, not the world.

It got me thinking about how times have changed. You know, in the 1600s, the 1700s, the 1800s, children were taught by their parents that self-indulgence was a vice, that restraint was a good thing. That seems to have been gone. They were taught as children to forsake

fleshly desires, not to pursue them. They were taught that moderation was a virtue. Of course, these things are biblical. True gentlemen of those days were men who would forego a temporary pleasure for the sake of a greater duty, maybe to their family, maybe to the men that they led. They would set a good example for their families rather than pursue their own fleshly desires. Integrity was much more important than indulgence at that time. And ladies were taught that modesty was a virtue, that it was a good thing to cover up, to cover your bodies, and it was a beautiful thing to do so, and now every one of us are barraged with more feminine flesh on a daily basis than a man back then would ever see in his lifetime. Times were different.

So chase after God. Desire God, not the pleasures or the wealth that this world seems to offer, for it's empty. And there are so many so-called Christians or even Christians today who are unhappy. They desire and chase after the world every day. They're running after pleasure, running after comfort, running after the world, running after everything the world has to offer, and then they sprinkle a little God on the edges of their lives and they wonder, "Why am I not happy? Why am I so discontent?" God will not allow his children to live like Lot, nurturing fleshly desires. He will change you. He will sanctify you. He will do it. So run from the world's trinkets and baubles and run to Christ.

And finally let's look at Lot's worldly influences, the culture that he immersed himself in. Again, Lot may have thought he could manage the influence of the culture of the valley. The culture of the valley of Sodom was very different than the culture of Abram. Two different worldviews: one was God-centered, the seed of the woman; the other was man-centered, Satan-centered, the seed of the serpent. He thought he probably could handle it when he went down to the valley. He lived among the Canaanites with Abram and he worshiped God for a time so he knew the distinction that he was making yet the reality was he was deceived. The influences in his life away from Abram, away from the covenant community of God were not good for him because he was away from them and he could not handle the culture. He was overwhelmed by the culture, by the world. He needed godly fellowship.

And we all know our worldly influences today. We all know where they come from. They're not difficult. If they're not your friends, the company that you keep who are worldly, the television that you watch, the internet, the YouTube, the social media, the radio, the music you listen to, that's where the world digs its claws into each one of us, Satan himself. So I ask you: what are you doing to monitor the undue influence of the world in your life today? Don't think that this is neutral, that this is just random. Satan is active. Satan uses these things in the world to distract you, to deceive you. Don't just hope it's all going to work out. It's not. And Satan's not hoping it works out. Satan is actively strategizing against each one of you because he hates you. He wants to murder you. He hates your children. He hates your parents. He hates your family. He hates you because you are God's people. And yet we wander into the world like we're just oblivious, that Satan is active and he's there. He's the prince of the power of the air and he desires to sift you like wheat. But 2 Corinthians 2, Paul tells us that we are not unaware of his schemes. We know his strategy and I've outlined it for you today. It's never

changed. It's the same old thing since the garden of Eden. Why would he change it? It works and it continues to deceive people.

So I'm telling you not to play games with your Christianity, not to play games with your worship. Stop dabbling in the world. Stop riding the fence. The lukewarm will be spit out of God's mouth. You need to look at your life and see where the world is impacting you and your family and your life and make a change. Christ told us this was gonna be a fight. If your hand causes you to sin, what are you to do? You're to cut it off. If your eye causes you to sin, what are you to do? You're to gouge it out. The reality is some of you spend more time watching television in a day than you spend praying in a week. In a month. Some of you spend more time tracking sports teams and watching replays in a day than you spend reading your Bible in a month, or in a week. Some of you are on social media more in one day than you spend pursuing God in a week.

So stop pretending that you're trying to live for God if this is what you are doing. If you're indulging in the desires of your flesh, pursuing the world, immersed in the culture of this world, in Satan's kingdom, stop. God calls you to faith and repentance now. As Abram did, now is your time to repent. Now is your time to change. Today. Go home to your families and say, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry for what I've done. The world is too much in my house and it will not stay that way." And then repent to God. Don't wait another day. Return to your first love.

The 17th century Puritan, Edmund Calamy, was speaking of sin and prosperity because he saw that some folks would say, "Well, actually I'm doing pretty good right now. There's nothing that needs to change because God would let me know by making my life miserable." Here's what he wrote, "Some may say I have committed many sins, but am not brought into any difficulty. I say maybe thy prosperity makes way for thy damnation; and this is the greatest distress, that thou goest on in sin and prosperity." Satan could also give you prosperity to deceive you. Remember, he offered Jesus, he didn't know what he was doing but he offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and look at how many wicked men are wealthy today. So don't think because times are good that God does not care about your worldliness. He is calling you back to himself, to your first love. Like Abram, don't ignore this call but listen to it.

So in conclusion I want to focus on these last few verses and focus on the hope we have in Christ. In verse 14 it says that, "The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had left, 'Lift up your eyes and look where you are standing, north, south, east and west, for all the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.'" He repeats the promises. "I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, if anyone could count the dust of the earth, they could count your offspring." After Lot leaves God reminds Abram of his promises. As you have been challenged today by God's word, remember the promises of God. John Owen said that the greatest hindrance in the Christian life is not a lack of effort, it's a lack of knowledge of our privileges in Christ because if we knew who we were and we knew what God had done for us and who God was, we would be more motivated than anyone to love him, to serve him rightly. Just as Lot lifted up his eyes and looked to the valley, looked to the world, now God tells Abram, God tells you, "Lift up

your eyes and look at," what? "My promises." He reminds Abram of all of his promises to him and these are the promises to you. Today lift your eyes and look to our hope.

We have great and precious promises in Christ. Our Savior has come to earth. He has died for us. He is immersed in love for you. He loves you even when you are unlovable. He is faithful to you even when you are unfaithful. It is a love that he has put on his children that cannot be removed. Don't be discouraged, my brothers, my sisters. Look to Christ. Look to Christ now. Look to our inheritance. Look to the Promised Land. As Moses was telling the Israelites trust in these promises, "You are adopted. You are free. You are loved. You have a great inheritance." God tells us the same thing. We're not to desire this world, to run after this world, to love this world. We are to run from the lust of this world but we run to Christ. It's not just what we run from, it's mainly what we run to.

This is our heavenly Father. He loves us. He loves you. Remember the parable of the prodigal son. The prodigal came back with his head between his legs, with no clothes, no shoes. He was dirty. He was filthy. He had been in pig slop. The father ran to him with his arms opened wide. He put a new robe on him and a new ring on his finger. His son was repenting. His son was coming back.

Don't be discouraged. You have a heavenly Father who loves you and he's prepared a heavenly kingdom for you. Trust in God's promises. Paul says if we have hope only for this life, we are men most to be pitied. But we don't. We have a heavenly hope. We have a hope in Christ. Our kingdom is a heavenly kingdom. We desire a heavenly city. Hebrews 11, you know, is one of my favorite chapters. It describes how the men and women, the great men of God and women of God of old walked the earth. Verse 13 it says, "They were strangers and exiles on this earth. They were seeking a homeland but not one on earth." If they had been thinking of that land which they had come out, they would have an opportunity to return to it, the Bible says, in other words, this earth, but it's not that way. They desire a better country, a heavenly one, therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God for he has prepared for them a city.

We have a great and heavenly hope, an inheritance waiting for us. We should be like Moses, verse 26 of chapter 11 of Hebrews it says, "Moses considered the reproach of Christ of greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt." No matter what the world had to offer, Moses said, "I choose Christ." No matter what the world has to offer, you choose Christ. Beloved, flee from your sin. The enticements of the world are vanity, they are here today and gone tomorrow, and set your hope on an eternity with Christ. Think very little of this world and very much of the next as it relates to temptation, as it relates to desire. May we like the heroes of old be those of whom God is not ashamed to be called their God. May we desire a better country, a heavenly one. God who promised to Abram was faithful to accomplish it and he did to his eternal glory. He is faithful to you as well and he calls you to himself, his arms open wide, "Come back to your first love. Repent. Come back today." It's the hope in Christ alone. Trust in him today and receive him truly.

Please pray with me.

Father God, we come to you now as people who are truly broken, broken vessels who need your comfort. We need your Holy Spirit. We need your help. Lord, mold us and make us into your image because in ourselves we cannot do it. We need to fix our eyes on Christ. Help us, Lord, now. Help us in this hour. Give us courage. May we never never never never never give up. May we keep pursuing you until the last fleeting breath of our life. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen. Never give up.