

Your Faith in Christ: Lame or Robust?

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Turn with me, please, to Genesis 13. Genesis 13 and then I want to read also three verses from Hebrews 11.

Hear the word of God.

1 And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. 2 And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. 3 And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai; 4 Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD. 5 And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. 6 And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. 7 And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land. 8 And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. 9 Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. 10 And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. 11 Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. 12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. 13 But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly. 14 And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: 15 For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. 16 And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so

that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. 17 Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. 18 Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.

Then turn with me, please, to Hebrews 11:8-10.

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. 9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Thus far the reading of God's sacred word.

You may be seated.

Your faith in Christ: lame or robust? That's the question of this sermon, an important question. We've been looking all weekend at the theme of Solus Christus, Christ alone. We've looked at it from four perspectives. The first is the only way to live and the only way to die from Philippians 1. Second, that the only way to run the best race of this life, to run through this life, through vanity fair, is to be looking to Jesus alone, Hebrews 12:1-2. Third, we've seen that the best way of coping with suffering in this life is by considering Jesus in a variety of respects, Hebrews 12:3. And then this morning, we saw that the foundation of the gospel, the foundation of our salvation, our entire salvation, lies in the precious blood of Jesus. Tonight, we hope to have the apex, the best wine until last of what it means to have eternal life and to live with Jesus in heaven forever and ever. But this morning, we're going to pause and take these four things we've been talking about, how everything in our life ought to center in Jesus, how Jesus ought to be our first love, our Solus Christus, our all and in all, that we ought to put off everything, to put on Christ, and ask ourselves the question: what does this precious Jesus and his precious blood mean to you? Do you have saving faith? But especially the question this morning is: if you have it, what kind of faith do you have? Do you have just the lame weak faith of Lot, or do you have the robust mature faith of Abram? That's the question because, you see, if Jesus is worth everything, if Jesus is everything to us and does everything for us, and we find all our life in him, then he's worthy that we are entirely sold out to him and we live our life by faith entirely to Jesus Christ. But if he's only a partial Savior, if he's only a helper in part of our life and our salvation depends on us, well, then maybe there's a reason for lame weak faith. No, he's just on the circumference of our life because he's not everything we have, he's not our total salvation, he's not total salvation so he's not Solus Christus, that is, Christ alone.

So what I'm arguing with you in this whole series of sermons is simply this: I've tried to show you that Jesus is everything and so I'm asking you this morning, is he everything to

you? And what does it mean when he's everything to you? What does robust faith look like? Well, it looks like Abram's faith. And what does weak unworthy faith look like? It looks like Lot's faith. Hence the theme this morning, "Your Faith in Christ: Lame or Robust?" Two simple thoughts: Lot's weak confession of faith, second, Abram's strong confession of faith.

Now these two men had much in common. They were from the same race, spoke the same language, shared the same culture, belonged to the same family. They were involved in the same occupation, shepherds, traveled together to Canaan, and by traveling confessed their faith in the God of promise. They shared a common faith in the Lord God. They shared past experiences of God's leading and blessing. They both separated themselves from the idolatry of their homeland. They had enough faith to abandon friends in their former lives. Neither Lot nor Abram was an Orpah who turned back. They both made a decision to cast their lot in with those who lived under the promises of God. They both followed the command of the covenant-keeping God in Genesis 12:1, "Get thee out of thy country unto a land that I will show thee." They went forth to go into the land of Canaan and into the land of Canaan they came and they both were blessed abundantly when they arrived in Canaan. God didn't only bless them outwardly with growing flocks and herds, but he also granted them the blessing of being separated, at least somewhat, from the Canaanites and the Perizzites that dwelt in the land.

They had much in common but they also had great differences, great differences and that's what our focus is on this morning, and I want to just read again to you as our text verse 11a and verse 18. 11a, "Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan." And verse 18, "Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD." So what do they have in contrast? There are three or four things here.

1. Lot and Abram had different hearts. Now if you didn't know that what Peter said about Lot, that he was a believer and that he vexed his soul in Sodom, it would be easy to preach Genesis 13 because then we would just say Lot is an unbeliever, Abram is a believer but it's not that simple. They had different hearts but despite all his failings, Peter calls Lot a righteous man with a righteous soul who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men.

You see, life is often more complex than we think. It's not just that a church has believers and unbelievers in it, as every church does, but it's also that among believers and among unbelievers there are people in different spiritual conditions. Among unbelievers there will be some sitting here, no doubt, this morning who are, may I say it, impressed unbelievers. You know, your conscience speaks that you need the Lord Jesus Christ but you don't have him yet and you're living against your conscience and you're troubled, you're interested, you're challenged, you're troubled but you just can't bring yourself to surrender. And then there's probably other unbelievers here this morning who really are just sitting here, well, maybe because your dad and mom want you here, but you're just hardened to the things of God. You really really don't even want Jesus to be your Savior. You want to be captain of your own ship, master of your own fate, and you're not even

sure that this whole business of living, vital, joyful, overwhelming centeredness on Jesus Christ is the only way to live.

So there's differences among the unsaved but there's also differences in every congregation, every church, among the saved. Some are full of strong faith like Abram. Others, well, they've been saved but they're backsliding or their weak in faith and they're not growing, they've got some spiritual diseases, not growing as they should. And you see, that's what we have before us, really, in Genesis 13 when we read it in the light of Peter's comments about Lot. There's differences in their heart. Though they will both be saved, they're living quite differently. You see, Lot did go with Abram but Lot was always a follower of Abram. He doesn't take the initiative. He's always with Abram. He's always tagging along. You see, there is something a bit secondhand about Lot's experience. He had true faith but it was very weak. It needed support. He needed someone beside him to encourage him to bring him along. He was what you might call a person with chameleon Christianity. A chameleon, you know, fits into the background. It adopts its color according to surroundings. Lot seems to have been this kind of believer. When he was with believers, he was quite fine, thank you. But when he was taken away from believers, he was prone to wander, wander far from God.

What kind of faith do you have? Do you have environmental faith? You look good, you sound good when you're in church on Sunday, but when you're with the world on Monday, well, those around you aren't all that sure you're a Christian. Maybe your testimony at home is weak. Maybe your family worship is faltering as father and head of the household. Maybe you wouldn't be a consistent Christian at all if all the props of environmental faith were taken away from you. If God took you out of your environment and put you in some city where no one knew you and you were free to do whatever you wanted to do, would you be seeking an intimate life with God? Would you be seeking to evangelize others? Or would you be a chameleon? Would you mix in with the crowd? Would you be a Lot or would you be with an Abram? Would you be one who says, "Here I stand, God help me," like Martin Luther, like Abram? Or would you be one who would say, "Well, you can't always be righteous over much. I'll be with the world when I'm in the world. I'll be with God's people when I'm with God's people." What kind of a heart do you have?

Secondly, Abram and Lot had different hands. Different hands. Abram's hands were open, Lot's were closed. Abram was a generous man, Lot a greedy, grasping man. Their sheep, their cattle are multiplying, there's not enough pasture for all their flocks. They have herdsmen, they start to argue and quibble and Abram, being the leader, the older man, it's up to him, of course, to choose where he wants to go, where he wants to live. In that culture, you respected the elder. The older man had the right but instead Abram with his open hands says to Lot, "You, the younger one," being counter-culture now, "you choose whatever land you want and I will take the rest." Abram is not defensive. He's not self-protective. He's not worried about losing out. He's ready to concede. He's relaxed about the whole matter. He's not trying to nudge Lot toward the bad ground. He's a man of peace. He's a man who's free. He's free because he has robust faith in Jesus Christ. God

is his Father. He doesn't need to worry about where he's going, for wherever he goes, God is with him. His hands are open.

Lot cuts a poor figure in comparison. He's wealthy because of Abram. He owes so much to Abram. Out of a great heart for Uncle Abram, he should have said to Abram, "Dear uncle, you're my leader, you're my elder, you choose first. I will take the rest." But Abram's feelings, Abram's location, Abram's future doesn't concern Lot. Lot is out for Number One, himself. He's more concerned to get than to give. He doesn't merely possess, he is possessed by his possessions. Now you see, if we slip into a lifestyle like Lot, a posture of life where we're grasping, where we're defensive, where we're self-protective, where we want to get for ourselves, to keep, to hold on, "What's in it for me" attitude, if we're takers but not givers, we're headed into deep backsliding ways. This is the antithesis of Christianity. "God so loved the world that he gave, he gave his only begotten Son." God is a giver and his children when they have robust faith are givers for the glory of God.

What about you this morning? Your husband, your wife, your children, your parents, what would they say about you? Are you a giver or a grasper? As one writer said, "As Christians we have nothing to prove and nothing to lose." We don't need to worry. We don't need to be graspers and grabbers or gatherers for ourselves. We don't need to be envious or jealous of anyone. We have the Lord God as our God. We have everything we need in his promises. We have all the wealth in the universe. "To the meek, they shall inherit the earth." We are free men when we are robust in faith because we are in Christ. Solus Christus frees us to be givers for the sake of our Lord who gave everything for us. Are you living by robust faith?

But then these two men have not only different hearts and different hands but also different eyes. They see differently. Lot and Abram came to a crossroad in their lives, which way would they go? In verse 9, it appears that Abram takes Lot to a hilltop and he says, "Is not the whole land before thee?" And the Bible says so interestingly, both men lifted up their eyes and looked but, oh, did they look in different ways. They overlooked a great part of the Promised Land. They're both looking at the same thing but they see something very different. Verse 10 says, "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where." Verse 14 says that "the LORD said unto Abram, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward." You see, what they see is different. Different. Lot looked with natural eyes. Lot wanted paradise on earth. He looked around and said, "Where am I going to prosper most materially? Where can I get the best income? Where can I become the richest the soonest? Where will life be the easiest, the most pleasurable?" Lot looked with a lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Lot was like Eve and the very look at the pleasantness of the fruit was already the beginning of the road to backsliding.

To eat, to drink, and to be merry are the underlying motives of Lot's choice, to choose the land that borders on Sodom where there were wicked men exceedingly. Lot pushes those areas to the background, pushes those thoughts to the background. He's willing to live

next to ungodly people. He can handle himself quite fine, thank you. He won't go to live in Sodom, he'll only pitch his tent toward Sodom. The problem is Lot had dollar signs printed on his corneas. He saw the good land, the rich harvest, the profit, the cash. Abram saw other things. He saw that they were brothers. He saw that they shouldn't be fighting. He saw that the Canaanite was in the land. They shouldn't demean the Lord's reputation before the heathen by quarreling. Abram saw the promises of God by faith. Abram saw that the essence of those promises is Jesus Christ, graciousness, kindness of God in Jesus. One believer saw the here and now, one backsliding believer the profit and the material. The other by robust faith saw the honor, the promises, the blessing of God and they chose according to what they saw.

So here's the third danger sign for us. When we seldom look up to heaven, when we seldom live for the eternal but our eyes become sharp and keen for the profit, for the temporal, for the pleasures of this world, for the lust of the flesh, we're going downstream fast, we're going downhill fast, we're going into the quicksand of backsliding fast. Someone put it this way: believers who are idealists in their 20s and materialists in their 40s are not far from being idolaters in their 60s. This is Lot. Jesus said, "For the joy that was before me, I endured the cross." You see, that's how we ought to live, taking up what he sends our way, being willing to lay down our lives for him, being Solus Christus believers. Here's Lot's big mistake, "Then Lot chose for himself," for himself, "all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east." He chose by himself. He chose for himself and Abram chose for the Lord.

Now finally, these two men had not only different eyes and hands and hearts but also different destinies. I wonder how Abram felt. Did you ever think about that? When Lot journeyed east and he watched Lot going to this green plush land and the rest of the more barren land was left for him? Do you think he thought, "Well, maybe I've been a fool. Maybe I've been just too too generous." Well, the Bible doesn't say that. The Bible says at the very moment that Lot journeyed east, God visits Abram and God in his kindness renews his promise to Abram. He says in verses 14 through 17, "I'll give you all the land you see. I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth. Arise and walk through the land. I will give it all to you." God will give Abram much. You see, when we walk closely with God, when we choose God's way, we will have God's blessing by God's grace. When we take the heavenly vision and the open hand and the heart devoted to God and lay ourselves on the line and suffer loss for Christ, God will bless us. Those who seek first the kingdom of God in Christ Jesus, Solus Christus, and his righteousness, all other things shall be added to you.

That's Jesus' own experience. That's the experience of his people. He made himself of no reputation and took the form of a servant, but now he's exalted above all other names. When we choose like Abram, God blesses us. When we're not looking for that blessing in the first place and we're not looking in the first place Solus Christus, for the glory of God, and God's blessings are like a byproduct, well, we have weak faith, we're like Lot, the clever man, the shrewd operator. And what happens to Lot? Well, if you could have stopped Lot as he's traveling to the outskirts of Sodom to set up tent toward Sodom and you would have said, "Is this a wise choice, Lot? Are you doing the proper thing, Lot? Is

this the right way, Lot? Is this consistent with your confession of faith, Lot, to walk as a separate people?" Lot probably would have said, "What's wrong with it?" Instead of asking, "What's right with it?" He would have probably said, "Well, I know it's not in Canaan, it's only just over the border. After all, I'm not going to live in Sodom, you know? I'll just pitch my tent outside of the city. What's so bad about moving just east a little bit? What's so bad about compromising just a little bit?"

Well, you know the result. Lot went down the slippery slope of sin. Like Eve who first saw, then shows, then ate, so Lot lifted up his eyes, then shows, then pitched his tent. And if Lot had known then the slippery slope, he would have been astonished. First, we see him living with his tent toward Sodom, verse 12. Then we read in 14:12, he's living in Sodom somehow. Though his soul is vexed, he apparently failed to testify to his family and neighbors as he should have. Instead of living as a stranger and a pilgrim and influencing the Sodomites, they influenced him and soon he and his children marry Sodomites. Then in chapter 19, verse 1, he's sitting in the gate of the city on Sodom's town council. Next he even shows Sodomite thinking when he offers two of his daughters unbelievably to be abused by the crowd of men surrounding his house. Then he loses his married children to Sodom. And finally, he lingers and he's to literally be pulled out of Sodom by angels. And on the way to Zoar, he loses his wife whose heart could not leave Sodom. And if you would have told Lot as he first traveled to Sodom that the end result of his weak confession of faith and poor choices would be that he would lose all his goods and live in a cave and commit drunken incest with his two youngest daughters, he would have been shocked and repulsed. But each step in the downward spiral of Lot's life can be traced back to his weak, compromising confession of faith, to his initial choice of taking a wrong path.

Oh, the fatal results of compromise and bad choices. Lot made a mess of his life. He made choices without consulting God, without consulting his God-fearing uncle. He chose the land without prayer. He failed to think through the spiritual consequences. What a warning his life is to us. Matthew Henry wrote, "In all our choices in life, this principle should overrule us that that is best for us which is best for our souls and which centers most upon Jesus."

Well, you and I are scarcely different by nature. We, too, want to return to paradise. But Lot's problem and Cain's problem and our problem is that we want to do it without the blood we heard about this morning, without the substitute. We want to do it our way, not God's way. And perhaps right now, perhaps right now you're standing at a crossroads in your life, the Lord willing, you'll stand it many more, how will you choose? Will you choose by a weak, floundering confession of faith that allows you to succumb to materialism and worldly ease and worldly pleasure? Or will you choose perhaps to move somewhere without considering where will we worship God? Is there a sound church in that area? Will you pitch your tent toward Sodom? Will you choose the borderline path, the one that maybe doesn't indulge you directly in sin but keeps you close to sin? Will you place yourself in borderline places and use borderline language and associate with borderline people, and say, "I'm only going to pitch my tent toward these things and I

won't succumb to them"? You see, weak faith says, "How far can I go and still not sin?" Strong faith says, "How may I stay far away from sin and from temptation?"

Maybe you heard the story of an uncle of a girl who became an orphan who lived in the valley and went to school in a certain area, but the uncle was kind of like a hermit on top of the mountain, didn't have a vehicle, and in the will of the parents who died, they committed the uncle to raising their daughter. And the uncle had agreed so the uncle put an ad in the newspaper for a driver to come up the hill and take the child to school every day and bring the child back home. He got three to respond to his ad and he asked them all the same question. He said, "How close can you come to the edge of the road as you go down the mountain and not go over?" The first guy said, "Well, I'm an expert driver, sir. I can easily do one foot, I can be one foot from the edge and you don't have to worry." The other guy said, "Oh, I'm outstanding. I can go within six inches." The third guy said, "Sir, I don't know because I'll be hugging the other side of the road." You know who got the job.

You see, when you play with sin, when you flirt with sin, when you come close to sin, your faith grows weaker, your conscience gets desensitized. When you look at wrong things on the television or when you look at wrong things through your internet, you may say, "Well, I'm not participating in it. I'm not putting it on." That's not what the Puritans would say. The Puritans would say if you watch it, you are passive observer not only but you are a guilty culprit for tolerating it and for allowing all this sin to come into your mind. You're being a Lot and that's how we desensitize our consciences today. How are you doing? Are you a Lot or are you an Abram?

Well, Abram lived in a different way. Abram chose differently. Abram's choice reveals a strong confession of faith and for that we have to go also to Hebrews 11, don't we? There it's clear the way that Abram lived and we understand it better, Genesis 13 from Hebrews 11. There are seven things here about Abram's choice that we need if we're going to really live Solus Christus, if we're going to live by strong and robust faith. Let me give them to you very quickly before we close.

1. Abram chose by faith and obedience. By faith and obedience. By faith in Jesus Christ. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." You see, Abraham placed God above all circumstances. He looks higher than Lot. Lot looks to natural circumstances, Abraham looks to the God of circumstances and what a difference. What a difference between the two.

2. Abram chose by God's word and God's command. Was he aware God had sent him? Was he aware God had told him to be? To Abram that was worth more than anything. To be where God wants you to be is worth more than anything. When you know you're in the circle of God's will, it's worth more than anything. That's what Abram wanted. That's why he left his family. That's why he left everything behind. He went out not knowing whither he went but knowing he was being directed by God, knowing he was in the circle

of God's will, knowing he was obeying God's word, God's command. That's the way to choose.

Thirdly, strong faith chooses by grace God's promise. God's promise. Look at verse 9, "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise." He lived out of the promise. He walked through the land of promise and for Abram the promise was the Messiah. That is the promise, the Messiah, Jesus, the gospel, the good news, salvation. These are all synonyms for Abram. Jesus is the promise. Paul says, "All the promises of God are yea and amen in Jesus Christ." Solus Christus, that's what drove Abram.

4. Robust faith chooses by foundation. Look at verse 10, "For he looked for a city which hath foundations," foundations. Abram wanted something better than an earthly city, he wanted a city that had foundations that would never crumble. He was looking for the heavenly Canaan. He's concerned about the foundation. Lot was not. Lot only looked at the green grass. He didn't look at the foundation beneath where he was going.

My dad and actually my wife's dad too were both builders all their lives. Our family was quite poor, actually. We lived in a very small home and all the people my dad built houses for, they would all come to our house and there was nowhere to go so I would hear all the conversations. They'd sit at the kitchen table, my dad and the people that wanted the house built, and I can see my dad in my mind's eye right now with all the plans laid out across the kitchen table, and people would ask him questions. They'd ask him about the color of the shingles and the color of the siding and the color of the front door and could he make this room a little bigger. One guy I remember asking could he sink the living room floor six inches because he liked that look. But my dad asked me one day how many people, after he retired, how many people do you think in all those decades of building, how many people do you think ever asked me, "Mr. Beeke, what kind of a foundation do you build under your home?" One. One person of all those people. They didn't care about the foundation, they just cared about what things looked like.

You see, this is Lot. This is our weakness, the outward appearance not the inward man, not the foundation. Lot didn't care about the foundation. Abram did. He looked for a city which had foundations that would not crumble. When I say to you, young people, but also to your parents, to you children, the only city that has foundations is if you are built on the rock Jesus Christ and him crucified and him exalted. You need to be on Jesus. You need to live Solus Christus. You need to have a foundation under your life or you will perish.

Then fifthly, robust faith chooses by God-centeredness. Notice the end of verse 10b, "whose builder and maker is God." Whose builder and maker is God. What does that tell you? It tells you that Abram wanted God to be everything in his life. He didn't want to do anything that God didn't want him to do, and he wanted to do everything God wanted him to do. This is the way to live, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" This is the way to live

in married life when husband and wife look at each other and say, "We want to do what God wants us to do. Lord, show us what to do. Show us what not to do." The Puritans used to say, "You don't ever go anywhere without the Lord's will." You don't pick up and move to another place until you have comfort that this is the Lord's will. You don't live for yourself and just make decisions by yourself, for yourself, through yourself like Lot did. You commend it all to God and you say with Moses, "If thy presence go not up with us, carry us not up hence." I want a city, I want my life to be like a fortress and I want God himself to be the maker and the builder and the foundation. Solus Christus.

Sixthly, Abram chose where he could best worship God. Lot didn't even think about where he's going to worship God when he went on the outskirts of Sodom but for Abram this was important. Verse 18 says he went to "Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar to the LORD." Mamre in Hebrew means "plenty or fatness," and Hebron means "communion." You see, there he worshiped God. He lived in Hebron, he lived in communion with God. In Mamre, in a land of spiritual and physical plenty. He cared about his worship with the Most High God. Robust faith cares always about worship. In fact, worship becomes my supreme goal in life, the purpose for which I am alive. I want to worship the living Triune God.

And seventhly, robust faith chooses in the light of eternity. Chooses in the light of eternity. Verse 10 again, "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." A city that would not crumble forever and ever. Heaven never crumbles. Heaven never fails. Heaven never disintegrates. If you leave your house on earth for a long period of time and you come back home, something's wrong, isn't it? We came back home from a trip just a few weeks ago and there's one little part of our hallway, there's a whole bunch of little bugs. Where in the world did those things come from? Well, we weren't there every day and somehow a few of them got in and they multiplied and your home will disintegrate if you're not there. You see, heaven, there's no disintegration. There's no decay. Heaven is always vibrant. Heaven is always God-centered. The foundations will never crumble. Heaven is perfect. Heaven is a world of perfect love. Abram was choosing in the light of eternity, recognizing that the land of Canaan to come to him and to his descendants is a type of the heavenly land of Canaan that will abide forever.

Wow, what a difference. What a difference. So where is your tent pitched? Are you worshiping God? Are you still choosing Sodom as we all do by nature? Some of you, some of you are still pitching your tent toward Sodom. I say to you that is a disaster. A disaster. Your life will never prosper when you turn to the world, when you pledge allegiance to this world and not to the living God. You will destroy yourself. You will backslide. Don't trust your natural eye as Lot did, ask for spiritual commitment and spiritual vision. Don't rest short of living Solus Christus and getting the favorable will of God upon your life so that you can say, "I am where God wants me to be. I am doing what God wants me to do. I am seeking although with shortcomings, by the grace of God, to live the way God wants me to live. Solus Christus, salvation is of the Lord. That is what I want."

And if the Lord has worked in you and is continuing to work Abram's good choice in you and you cannot deny that you love Christ and hate sin and pursue holiness and your heart's desire is to live in the light of eternity, ask God to deepen that work in you, to make you all the more oriented to Christ. Solus Christus, that the fruits of true conversion in you may become increasingly evident and that Christ's kingdom may come in you and through you to others. There's no greater joy in this life than to worship God in purity and lead others into that worship as well.

Third, third conclusion, if you feel torn asunder by the world's temptations and you really don't know if you belong to God or to Satan, pray to God, "Lord, if thou hast savingly begun in my life, please confirm it and lead me further and deeper and help me to say farewell to the world. And if thou hast not begun, please begin today, this morning under this sermon. Save my poor soul! Don't let me postpone one more day the only way to live and the only way to die, Jesus Christ. Help me to repent of my sins and to be believe unconditionally in the Lord Jesus Christ today."

And finally, if your life is out of focus and you, like Lot, have begun to live a seemingly perpetual backsliding life, a life of double-mindedness in which you think you can serve two masters, you too must repent of your ways right now. Jonathan Edwards said backsliding Christians ought to be treated like they're unbelievers because they're acting like unbelievers and they need to return to God as they came to him the first time. And that's what you need to do as well. Don't try to serve two masters in this world. You will perish. And don't try to minimize your faults and your sins. Do you know what a true believer does? It's like looking through binoculars, you know, if you're a bird-watcher like I grew up as a bird-watcher with many of my friends, we'd always have binoculars with us, especially in May when the warblers are migrating through, and we'd bring those birds seven times closer. That's what you've got to do with your sins, binocularize them, bring them closer, study them, hate them, abhor them, abandon them, put a sword through them. Don't do what you do by nature, you see, people by nature turn the binoculars around and they make their sins look seven times further away, so minuscule they say, "Well, I'm better than other people." Who cares whether you're better than other people? You don't stand on the judgment day before men, you stand on the judgment day before the living God and unless you are in Christ, you have far more sins than you'll ever need to perish at the feet of Jesus Christ. You need the Savior. You need a life of confession, a robust confession. Solus Christus. He's everything to me.

So boys and girls, teenagers, parents, grandparents, lift up your eyes, flee Sodom and come and dwell in the plains of Mamre in Hebron and build an altar of commitment, of submission, of confession, of thanksgiving to the living Triune God. In Jesus, it's the only way to live, it's the only way to die. Amen.

Let's pray.

Lord God, we thank thee for strong confession of faith and wise choices which thy Holy Spirit can make in us and give to us, and we pray that we may be Abram's in that regard and though far from perfect, as Abram also was far from perfect, may we every day

confess our sins and every day look to Jesus as our only life, our only hope, and strive with all that is within us to live a life that is totally honoring to thee, a Christ-centered life. O Lord, help us to live Solus Christus. And for those who are displaying weak confession of faith, making poor choices, backsliding, arrest them, O God, and turn them back unto thee, to come back from every backsliding way. And be with those who are making no confession of faith at all. O God, penetrate their souls even this day. Show them the emptiness of their life, the futility, the vanity of it, and show them that if they continue this way, they will perish in the abyss of hell forever and ever. Save their poor souls even this day. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.