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GENESIS 13

Series: Understanding Your Roots

[PRAYER] Father, I'm excited about your word and the power that it has to reveal things we need in our lives every day. I was so touched this week by things in my own personal study and in the Wednesday night study. Lord, I just pray that you give me grace as I share those ideas that come from your word with people. Thank you for speaking to me this week. Help me to be wise and a clear vessel as I pass on those things to these folks today. And then, Lord, I pray that each one would be able to take those things, hear from you, and be able to use those in their own lives and in the lives of those they love and care for and meet. So we're looking to your grace today as we open your word. In Jesus' name, amen.

I'm sure that you know someone whose life is so complicated because they made bad decisions. They make one bad decision, it leads to other bad decisions and then life gets so complicated. You get to a place where you wonder how are they ever going to get out of this problem. It is so deep of a hole they dug themselves in. That is the question I asked on Wednesday night as one of our small group questions. I was expecting a rather involved dialogue about how do you get yourself out of holes when you make this big mess. But I was so impressed by the simplicity of my wife's answer. She shared it. We talked about this in the group. I want to share her answer with you.

So here's the question we asked. The question is: What do you do when you make a big mess of your life, life gets complicated and seems overwhelming? What do you do? The answer is what you do is do the next right thing. Or do the right thing next. One thing. See, you may not know how to deal with all the problems, but you know what to deal with right now in the moment. You know what to deal with right now in this day. And if you do one right thing, you start making a right step in the right direction, then what happens is things start to open up.

God does miracles in the lives of people. When you start taking a step in the right direction things open up. So now there's other right things that you can do. God starts to now pour blessings on you and you're able to start moving out of the big holes. That doesn't mean all the consequences of our decisions are removed. But God offers all of these things to us that are so powerful and important in our lives. The peace that we need to overcome the anxiety. The love that we need to overcome. The love that we experience in our lives. The joy that overcomes the sadness or discouragement that sometimes we feel. All of those are available to us. We do the next right thing.

So I was very grateful that it's not that complicated. It's complicated to get into our problems. It's not that complicated to get out of them many times. We just need to do the next right thing.

And that leads us into our study this week because we see that last week you remember the reason we come to this question is because Abraham went to Egypt and he lies. He says about his wife that she's my sister. I wonder if he actually expected that Pharaoh would come and take his wife away. Now he's got a big problem. His wife is not with him and he's stuck in Egypt and he can't get out of there. He probably wondered how am I going to get out of this problem? And then they start giving him all kinds of gifts – camels and donkeys and people, servants that he would have. Now I can imagine him at night saying, "I have made such a big mess of my life. I do not know what I'm going to do now." God in His mercy steps into the situation and provides for him the next step, the next plan, the next what's going to happen.

So that's when we go to our story now in Genesis 13. Notice that we see what Abram does in the passage. Genesis 13:1-4. Let's look at those verses first. It says – *So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb.*

Now the Negeb is this part in southern Israel below Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and so on down there. It's a wilderness area. It's where Mount Sinai is when the Israelites, remember, came out of Egypt, they came into the Negeb, they went to Mount Sinai. So now Abraham is going to come pass this way and he's heading up to Israel.

It makes a statement about him in verse 2. It says – *Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.* This is the first reference we have in the Bible to someone who is wealthy. Someone has a lot.

I think it's important to point out that here's a guy who has money. He's rich. But he's still got some problems. I think some people believe that if I could just have a lot of money, if I could just get rich then I wouldn't have problems. The reality is that even if you have money you have problems. He's going to not only have problems from the past in Egypt that he just left, he's going to have another problem in this passage with his nephew Lot because of the money. The money is causing the problem is what is happening.

People with money have problems. So you don't escape problems by having more money. I know some people say, "Well let me just try it. I'd just like an opportunity to try that a little bit." I understand that. But the reality is the problems are different. Yeah, you don't have the same problems where you're working hand to mouth every week trying to figure out how you're going to get your bills paid. But when you have wealth you have problems that are associated with that wealth. That's what's going to take place in our story today as Abraham's wealth is getting to be a problem and Lot's as well. So it's going to create a conflict for them. We're going to look at that in our story today.

Look at verse 3. It says – *And he journeyed on from the Negeb as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning.* What's the very next step for Abraham? He's saying I've got to go to where I was talking to the Lord. He's in Egypt, things are going bad. He says okay, I'm going to go back to where I was at the beginning. I've just got to go back there and talk to the Lord.

Let me read the rest of the passage because he continues on. He says – *between Bethel and Ai, to the place where he had made an altar at the first. And there Abram called upon the name of the Lord.*

So Abraham is going back in his life and saying, ‘Okay, where did God speak to me last?’ If you don’t know where to go, go there. Where is it that God spoke to you? What did He say to you? Have you obeyed Him what He said to you then? But either way, I mean here it’s like he’s going back to the beginning.

You know I think that sometimes we say, ‘Okay, I got saved and I’m kind of in,’ and so then we just leave it alone and things start getting complicated. Maybe we need to go back to our salvation experience and say, ‘God, I need you. I want you in my life. I want to talk to you again.’ See, Abraham is continually going to go through the promised land, he’s going to plant the flag, he’s going to build an altar. It’s his way of taking his faith into the next step of his development.

I’m concerned. I just got to say I’m concerned about young people. I want to talk to young people for just a moment. I’m concerned that sometimes young people who make a commitment to Christ when they’re six or nine or ten, when they get to be twelve or fifteen they start saying, ‘Oh that was a childish decision I made. I’m not sure that’s what I want right now.’ The danger is if you don’t bring your faith into the next stage of your development, you’ll feel like you’ve grown out of it. You must bring your faith into every stage of your development.

It’s not just for young people, it’s for all of us. We must bring Christ into every day of our lives or we start to drift. We start to think it’s something from the past or that God was with me back then, but He’s not with me now. We must bring our faith into every day, every next step of our development.

That’s what Abraham is doing. Actually he’s actually kind of going back to the basics. I like that. He’s going back to the basics of his faith and he’s saying I need to get back to the altar. I need to get back and talk to the Lord. I know if I get back there then I’ll be able to speak to the Lord, He’ll speak to me, and things will be better. That’s exactly what he’s doing. Getting back to the basics.

Whenever I hear that ‘getting back to the basics,’ I think of my very fun football illustration. I love football. I don’t have enough patience usually to watch a whole game of football. I mean four hours of football is a long time for me to sit and watch. Unless I’m with one of my friends, Ed Miller, or my son, or someone watching the game, I can do that. I like to watch highlights (you know the fast versions of the games). I enjoy that more. But there’s this really fun story about Tom Landry who was a famous football coach of the Dallas Cowboys years ago. They had gone through a very bad game on a Sunday. It was just a terrible game. It was Monday now and football teams typically get together in the play room on Monday to look over the video from the day before and talk about it and learn from it. Tom Landry gets a football and he says to the guys, ‘Alright, guys. That was terrible game yesterday. We’re going back to the basics. This is a football.’

I like that because I think that sometimes we need to go back to the basics. This is a Bible. This is where I need to learn more about God. I need to go back to my salvation. I need to understand God and who He is. I need to understand who I am and what God has called me to do. Go back to the basics. That's what Abraham is doing in this story. That's what's needed. I think sometimes people don't go back to the basics or they don't have the basics down, so they wonder why the specifics aren't working. Life isn't working for me. This is not working. Go back to the basics. You've got to start with the basics if you think you're going to make it into the specifics. So we need to ask ourselves if the specifics aren't working maybe we need to go back to the basics. So that's Abraham in the first part of the story here.

But Abraham is going to face a challenge in his life at this point. When he does, I want you to see what's happening with him and Lot. So let's look at the next part of our passage in Genesis 13:5-7. It says – *And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents (so he was also rather wealthy, a lot of stuff) so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, 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.*

So here we have now a conflict, a difference, a problem. I shouldn't say it's a conflict. It is in this passage. But just because you have a problem doesn't mean you have conflict. Problems can be solved. Conflict is when problem is associated with emotion. When you have problems and emotions together it makes up conflict. That's what it is. If it doesn't have emotions, it's just a problem we've got to solve. But if it's going to turn into conflict that means somebody is getting upset here and generating some heat and tension. It's the emotion that creates the problem. So we have to separate those two and manage them both.

Now what we're going to see in this passage is that Abraham approaches a problem in a way that addresses it and solves it. In fact I would suggest you, all of us find ourselves in situations regularly where we must be able to address differences. Young people, you must address differences that you have with your parents. Parents address differences that they have with their young people. Young people have challenges that they have with their siblings. Adults have challenges with people in work. There are problems. There are differences that exist. It's just a part of life.

I would suggest that one of the tasks of adolescence is to develop three skills. We're going to see them all in this passage. Three skills whenever you experience a difference. So if you're an adolescent, a young person I would encourage you to take notes on what I'm going to say right now. Because these are the three things that you're going to practice every day as you're working in life. You need to know these. You're going to experience them now. If you develop these as skills now in your life you'll be much more effective in dealing with these skills and challenges that you face later. Here's what they are. Write them down. Emotional management, gracious speech, and creative problem-solving. Emotional management, gracious speech, and creative problem-solving. Those are the three skills. They will help you work through differences. The differences that we have are what often generate the conflict. So we want to prevent the conflict from taking place by exercising these things.

We all need these. These are not just for young people. They are for anybody who finds challenges in their lives. So Abraham is going to do these in his life and we're going to see this.

You can see in verse 7 there was strife. There was conflict. They were arguing. What is happening is there is only so much grass right here to eat. They've got all these livestock – sheep and oxen and camels, and they're trying to eat off of this. So the herdsmen are arguing about whose spot this is and who can eat here. There's a limited amount of resources and a lot of wealth, so they're trying to figure all this out. It's a problem that they're trying to address.

So I want to look at the next verses and show you how Abraham approaches the situation. One of the things that he does is he's basically going to give Lot a choice. As he does this, I want to make this one statement that I think will help you just think about what Abraham does. When you choose to trust the Lord you always get the better deal. When you chose to trust the Lord you always get the better deal. Very important to understand as we enter this passage of scripture now.

Let's just see how Abraham approaches this particular problem. It says in Genesis 13:8-9 – *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."* Notice his emotions are under control. He's not coming in yelling at anybody. He is managing his emotions well and he's emphasizing this gracious speech. He's saying look, we are kinsmen. Let's not fight about this. Very important statement. He's saying let's value relationship more than the issue. His gracious approach is so valuable.

I think there comes a time sometimes in our families where we say to a young person living in our home, "You know what, I think that this strife that's going on in our home was probably damaging our relationship. It might be time for you to move out." You know sometimes we have to say that to a young person. I think it's time for you to move out. That's essentially what is being said here between Abraham and his nephew.

It happens in business relationships too sometimes when you're working with someone and it's just not working anymore. So it's just time for the sake of relationship let's split up and do this differently.

It happens in ministry. It's what happened with Paul and Barnabas. You remember the story of Paul and Barnabas where they were partners in ministry. They were doing great. But then there was this guy named John Mark who was not very reliable. He didn't keep his word. He didn't do what he was going to say. Paul is the kind of guy that says, "Look, I work with people who are reliable. If you're not reliable you can't be on my team." That's the kind of guy that Paul was. He was out to serve the Lord and he was very passionate about that. We're going to serve the Lord and you've got to be reliable to be on my team.

Since John Mark wasn't reliable, he says to Barnabas, "We can't take him. He didn't keep his end of the deal."

Barnabas says, "Ah but he has such potential. I think if we invest in this guy then good things can happen."

Paul says, “No way.” So the Bible says there was a sharp disagreement between them. So they separated.

They separated to preserve relationship, but then God used them both. Because Paul ended up taking Timothy and Silas and going one direction. Barnabas took John Mark and they went another direction and they served the Lord. There’s this place that Abraham comes to where he says for the sake of relationship we need to separate. That’s just how it is. And that’s what they end up doing. So he’s got his emotional management under control, his gracious speech in the way he’s presenting it. But then comes the creative problem-solving part. Let’s see what he does.

He says – *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.*”

Now this is actually a strategy that I suggest young people use regularly. You can use this idea. I call it the “I cut, you pick” rule. “I cut, you pick” solution. If you have one piece of cake and two kids left you can say to your kids, “Hey, why don’t you guys do the ‘I cut, you pick rule?’” and you can go forward. If you have one game console and two kids who want to play it, they can engage in this particular solution that Abraham did which basically says I’m going to cut the land in half. Pick whatever side you want. You can have it. So if you’re saying we only got one game console – “I tell you what. Let one person play until they get to the next level and then they stop and the next person gets to play. Would you like to go first or would you like to go second?” I’ll cut, you pick. “We have one piece of cake left. Here. You take the knife and one of you guys is going to cut, the other can pick. So why don’t you decide who’s going to do that. One can cut it.” So one cuts. “Oh I’ll cut the cake!” “Okay. You cut it and then your brother gets to pick.” I cut, you pick. That’s exactly what Abraham is doing here. Creative problem-solving. I appreciate his approach to this.

So he enters into this situation with these three skills, which are so important with dealing with problems before they turn into conflict. Or if you see conflict going on, you need to know that it’s made of two things. It’s made of emotion and it’s made of a problem. It’s hard to do problem-solving when emotions are high. So we’ve got to be able to work within that to develop some strength. So young people, I would just suggest you want to develop this as life skills for you. Being in your home right now with parents who maybe don’t understand you and don’t agree with you and have different ideas about life is probably the best place for you to be right now so you can develop these skills and you can be stronger at them.

So that’s what happens with Abraham. He poses this solution. But now I want to change the whole story. I want to change the whole perspective. Instead of looking at it from Abraham’s perspective, I want to look at it from Lot’s perspective. Because I want us to look for a minute at how Lot makes decisions. I want to learn from Lot’s mistake about how he makes decisions. He gets in his own complicated situation here because of the way he makes decisions. So I want you to see what that looks like in Genesis 13. Let’s just go right to the next verses.

Notice what it says. Now he’s got this choice in front of him. What am I going to do? So it says – *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.)

Lot doesn't bow his head and close his eyes. He lifts up his eyes and says, "Oh! I think I like that land. That looks really good. It's pleasurable to my eyes. Oh that's going to be so good for all of my livestock because it's well-watered (notice it says – that means there's a lot of grass out there) that my flocks can eat and be a part of. In fact, it kind of reminds me back of Egypt." See, we're getting into trouble here. Notice it says there it's *like the land of Egypt*. Wait a minute. Nothing good happened in Egypt. Bad things happened in Egypt. It was an escape place.

But he was attracted to the grass which was greener on the other side. This is the greener grass syndrome. Probably where we got the phrase "the grass appears greener on the other side." That's probably where we got it. But Lot looks over there and he says, "I'm going to get that land. I want that. Because the grass looks so green over there." So he makes a decision based on what he thinks is a good idea instead of consulting the Lord and saying, "God, what's good here?" It's a mistake. He should have paused. He should have prayed. He should have asked God for wisdom. We don't have any indication that he does this. He just lifts up his eyes and he says I want that.

Now this is dangerous. There is nothing wrong with the grass down in the Jordan Valley. It's not the Jordan Valley and the grass that's the problem. It's what's associated with it right next door. See this is what happens. A child says, "I'm twelve years old. All my friends have cell phones. I don't see why I couldn't have a cell phone. My parents are so strict. They don't understand anything. They're so old-fashioned they won't let me have a cell phone. Is there something wrong with a cell phone?" Mom will say, "No, there's nothing wrong with a cell phone, but I know a cell phone is right next to some bad stuff, so I'm saying no because of the problems that exist there."

An older young person, "Hey, I just want to go hang out with my boyfriend over at his house. Parents aren't there. We're going to hang out in the evening." And Mom says, "No way. We're not doing that." "Well what's wrong with that? We're just hanging out. We're not doing anything wrong." Because Mom knows that right next to that is some bad stuff. It's often the case that the things that we want are not bad in themselves as they're right next to the bad stuff and it's the bad stuff that gets us into trouble.

A guy was telling me the other day, "I have an opportunity to get a job. The job is going to pay me almost twice as much money as I was already being paid. It was just great. But then I ended up turning it down for two reasons. One, it would increase my stress level really high and it wasn't worth it for that kind of money. And two, it would take me away from my family too much." So he's making a decision that's bigger than just "Oh money! I want the money!"

Let me read on in the passage. It says – *So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other. Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord.*

See, it's not the green grass that's the problem. It's what's next to it that's the problem. If you look at the progression that Lot makes here, he lifts up his eyes first and then notice what he does next. He pitches his tent next to Sodom. And then in the next chapter we're going to see him living in Sodom. So this thing that's bad is something that tracks him and his whole family end up living in Sodom where bad things are going to happen.

I'll just tell you. His life gets really complicated. Things are going wrong in Sodom. Bad things are happening. So the angels (real angels) come to Lot and they say, "We're going to take you out of here."

While they're having this discussion some of the men from Sodom come to the guys and say, "Bring these men out of here. We want to mistreat them."

And Lot says, "No, no, no. We're not going to do that."

"No, get these men. We want them."

And here's what he says. "Look. Take my daughters. You can take my daughters and mistreat them." Of course the men are so inflamed with their own lust, they don't want the women. They want these angels they thought were men. So it's so perverted. It's a bad, bad situation. Because the grass looked greener on the other side?

What ends up happening is that Lot and his family are rescued. It's a beautiful story. God rescues these people out of Sodom. On their way apparently his wife had some attraction back there to Sodom and she turns back around and she turns into a pillar of salt. So he ends up away with his two daughters who think this is the end of the world and they get pregnant. The whole situation then is torn up. It's bad. It's a really bad, complicated situation. It started with the grass being greener on the other side?

I like the statement that goes like this: The grass is always green around the septic tank. The issue here is that sometimes it's not the green grass. I mean we go after things we like. How many young people say, "Oh I'm going to try this, I'm going to try that." There's nothing wrong with what they're trying. It's just that right next to it is bad stuff. The people they're hanging out with are bad. I mean you're going on this, doing this kind of thing. It's the things associated that are a problem.

Well anyway, that's what Lot did. It's just sad seeing him making the decision the way he did. Young people, be really wise in how you make decisions. Because the most important thing you can understand from this story is that when we trust the Lord that He gives us a lot of blessings and benefits. We're the ones who get the best deal. Let me just show you more about Lot's error here.

Proverbs 14:12 says this: *There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.* You know what that says? You can't rely on yourself the more you think you can. Sometimes people will say, "Just do what makes you happy." They have no idea what they're talking about. That is not how you measure your decision-making. You don't just do what makes you happy. You don't just choose the green grass because that looks like it's going to make you happy. That is not the goal in life is for you to be happy. That is not where you want to be headed. *There is a way that appears right, but in the end leads to death.*

So what do you do then? Well you get advice, you're trusting the Lord, you're asking what would God want me to do here? What's the right thing to do? You're asking a lot of other questions. So the psalmist says in Psalm 20:7 – *Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.* That's going to be the issue here. Where do we put our trust? Where are we going to invest our faith in this situation?

Here's a statement I like. "When you see what you want to see you miss what you need to see." That's what's happening in the greener grass syndrome with Lot.

I like this verse that many of us have memorized from Proverbs 3:5-6. It's a great verse. Young people, I encourage you memorize this verse. It summarizes the Abraham-Lot story. You've got Abraham on one side, Lot on the other side. Here's what it says. *Trust in the Lord with all your heart* (that's Abraham) *and lean not on your own understanding...* That's the Lot part. Don't just lift up your eyes and say, "Oh yeah, that's a good idea." *Don't lean on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

See there's this real temptation we have in our lives to get sucked in. Here's what makes it tough. In our world there's what we call the world system. In the world system there are these pillars out there, these lights that say oh come here, this is attractive, this is a good place. Ooh sparkly lights. Ooh those are really cool lights. So John describes this and warns us in 1 John 2:15-17 when it says this: *Do not love the world* (this is the world system) *or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world* (and here's three things, watch these) – *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – comes not from the father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.*

Lot made a mistake. He gets himself into big trouble. If he would have trusted the Lord instead of relying on his own understanding, he could have gone much further and not fallen into the significant trap that he fell into. So that's Lot. We're looking at it from Lot's perspective.

Now let's go back and look at it from Abraham's perspective. Because when you trust the Lord you always get the better deal.

So let's go into the next verses in Genesis 13, verses 14 to the end of the chapter. Let's see what happens to Abram. As I read these I want you to kind of feel how kind of the load is lifted off of him. He's kind of gotten rid of his baggage that is the Lot problem, and now he's just freed up in his heart. It's just one of those beautiful things. When you're serving the Lord and God's directing you, you offload the baggage, you serve the Lord, good things happen, and you move forward. Let's read the verses and you'll feel the same thing I was feeling as I read this.

The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are." Notice what He's saying. Look from the place where you are. Stand there and look. Lot's gone. Look from where you are. This is the same place where he said you take this, I'll take this. He's standing right in that same place. Okay? Look *northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever.* This is not just the half that you said was going to Lot. You get it all. You look down in

the Jordan that's over on the east. You're going to get all of that. It's all coming to you is what He's saying to you.

"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. Arise, walk through the length..." And I imagine now what God is saying is *go taste and see that the Lord is good*. That's the verse that came to mind. Just walk through this and enjoy the beauty of living the life that I have called you to live. You got rid of the baggage, you can enjoy the life I called you to love. Walk through it and enjoy it. It's yours, He's saying. *"Walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you."*

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. He is continually planting the flag. Wherever he goes he's planting the flag. He's learning how to trust the Lord. He's learning and growing in this faith. When you choose to trust the Lord, you always get the better deal. He's experiencing that in his own personal life.

There are three choices and I just want to conclude with this today. There are three choices. We talked about only two so far. I want you to remember the third one. The first choice is Abraham chose to trust the Lord. That's why he gets the better deal. Secondly, Lot chose by lifting up his face and he chooses the greener grass. The greener grass syndrome is his problem. That's what Lot chooses and he gets in all kinds of problems. But there's a third choice. Remember God is the one who chose Abraham. If you look at another verse in the New Testament where Jesus is speaking to His disciples, He says something to them that is applicable to us as well. He says – *You did not choose me, but I chose you*. You need to know that God has chosen you to be part of His family. He has chosen you to be part of His kingdom and He wants to bless you. He wants to give you all of these things.

So I want to go back to where we started today. Because if there's anyone here listening to this who is saying, "I have come too far away from God, I have made too many mistakes, I am in too much trouble, I can never get back to where God wants me to be," you are making a big mistake. Because it's not about you. It's about God's work in you. He wants to do amazing things in your life.

How does He do that? He does that when you take a step to do the right next thing or the next thing right. When you make that step then God has blessings He wants to pour out to you and He wants to move you in a direction. You are never too far away from the Lord to come back.

I just want to invite you today to go back to the beginning, just like Abraham did. Go back to the beginning where you can talk to the Lord and say, "God, I know I'm a sinner. I know I messed up my life. But I need you. I need you to control me, to run my life, to help me make decisions. Lord, I need you to clean me up, to forgive me of my sin. Lord, I just need you in my heart and I want to ask you to come into my life. I want to serve you wholeheartedly in my life. Show me what my next step should be and I will do it." That is where we start. That's where we started, that's where we end. That's where Abraham is now.

We're going to continue following Abraham through his life. Some more ups and downs and challenges that he faces. But there is a very important lesson that we learn that is when you choose to trust the Lord you get the best deal.

Would you stand with me and let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we ask that you would give us the ability to trust. Sometimes we feel like that one guy who came to Jesus – “Lord, my faith is weak, but help my unbelief.” I ask that you would give us the ability to trust you in everything that we do. We want to appreciate you and value you. Lord, take us back to the beginning or take us back a couple steps, wherever we got off track. Thank you for the privilege that we have for do-overs. That you're a God who gives us grace in those do-overs. We appreciate and we need them. Keep giving them to us, Lord. We're grateful for that. We trust you now and ask you to work in our lives. In Jesus' name, amen.