

## Genesis, pt2: Worship: Intentional Obedience.

### Genesis 13-14

**MPS** God calls us to worship Him with our whole being and all of life to walk in His blessing and be a blessing in this world.

**OBJ** Every person should worship God because worship fuels obedience in five ways.

**INTRO** Do you remember where you were when you met Jesus for the first time?

**READ** Gen 13:1-4

So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb.

<sup>2</sup>Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. <sup>3</sup>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, <sup>4</sup>to the place where he had made an altar at the first. And there Abram called upon the name of the LORD.

**Abram is not a man on top of life's mountain.** He is a man in the utter shame of his acts in Egypt. He's just failed miserably in every way, as a follower of God, a husband, a leader of his family and as a man. And the tests of his faith are not over! This is where we find Abram. But what Abram models is what we must remember with God, because of Jesus Christ. You will never be more ready or prepared or righteous to come to the Lord than after your greatest defeat and ugliest shame. Often, the shortest distance to God begins from the bottom of the deepest pit of your failure or despair.

**Observe two key words here.** Abram returns "to the place where his tent had been at the beginning" and "to the place where he had made an altar at the first." Then it records, "And there Abram called upon the name of the LORD." Abram returned to the place where he first made an altar to worship the Lord.

**MLH Testimony** I was born again in the middle of the night, on my knees next to my bed, because there I met Jesus for the first time. I knew so much about him before that moment. I attended church all my life where I learned His truth and love for me. But I did not know Him until that night in remembering the gospel I believed. In faith, I repented of my sin, put my trust in Jesus and was made new. The person I am today is only because of the new life He put within me at the beginning.

**GSPL** Where you begin with God is where you continue all of life to follow Him. Jesus is the "the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through (him)." It is in Jesus we are made alive unto God. Eph2:5; Col2:13 For, "there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Acts4:12 No person knows salvation from God outside of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the first and beginning of our worship with God because in Him welcome to know and be known by God.

**INVITE** Today I begin with an invitation. God loves you and sent Jesus to save you. John3:16 Jesus came and willingly offered up His life to rescue you from your sin and reconcile you in relationship with the Father. 2Cor5:18 Without Jesus, you are dead in your sin. Rom6:23 When you believe in Jesus, you are born again by His Spirit to made alive. John3:3-8 The gospel is God's good news that you will have new life by faith in Jesus Christ when you believe.

Abram returned to the place where it all began with God, and there he called upon the name of the Lord. Genesis 12 showed us that worship was a key theme in Abram's life. We learn from Abram's life that God never intended worship to be a stop along the way; but THE way of following Him!

**Worship is the defining reality of life.** You follow after what is most precious to you; you become like what you hold of greatest value and highest esteem. When born again by faith in Jesus, Holy Spirit works the living Word within to center all of life on Jesus. More than only an act of singing, praying, reading or otherwise, worship forms the consuming center of life in Jesus as we set our heart and mind on Him to rule as Lord. Worship fuels obedience, so when you worship Jesus as Lord you walk in obedience to Him. Worship is the way to find your way when you've lost your way so you can know and walk in God's way. Worship is the way of following God, filling heart and mind with Him so all of life glorifies Him.



**Two lives are contrasted in these chapters.** One we've met, Abram. Today we meet his nephew, Lot. Both lives are formed by worship, one of blessedness and blessing others, the other of languishing from trouble to trouble. Abram worshiped God. Lot was passive because he was consumed with self. Abram felt responsible for him, so he brought him along. Lot didn't feel responsible for anything except Lot. Lot's life became a product of passive languishing, never owning his responsibility, letting himself be carried along, and only watching out for number one. Lot's whole life will become one trouble and heartache after another. And because of his passivity, Lot never knows the "why" of his languishing. [Passive languishing is the way of failing to worship God. Worshiping Jesus keeps you in God's way of intentional obedience.](#)

**God calls us to worship Him with our whole being and all of life to walk in His blessing and be a blessing in this world.**

New life in Jesus is a life of worshiping God! And your beginning, the person (place) of first encounter is the center of your whole life, Jesus Christ!

**TRANS** Be careful lest you think "passive languishing" means you have nothing. Lot was a successful man in his own right. The land could not support both Lot and Abram. Their flocks were too large and it was caused problems between them.(.7)

**READ** Gen 13:5-13

*5And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, 6so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, 7and 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.*

*8Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are kinsmen. 9Is 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." 10And 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.) 11So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other. 12Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom. 13Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD.*

*14The 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, 15for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. 16I 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. 17Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you." 18So 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.*

Abram loved Lot, this is obvious, but he couldn't make all his decisions or live his life for him. He did not want the strife to lead to greater problems. The land was not large enough to support both flocks. With no sin or wrongdoing, the reality of the situation created a big problem. And that problem was creating even bigger problems. As heavy as it must have burdened Abram's heart, knowing the void in Lot's heart toward the Lord, he knew they needed to separate before the problem grew worse. [Love is always more committed to healthy relationship than personal preference, even when what is best is hardest.](#)

Abram told Lot to choose the land he wanted, and they would part ways.(.8) Lot looked at all the land and found what looked to him like heaven, and chose the best for himself. Abram settled where Lot was not interested, and Lot moved his tent to Sodom. But verse thirteen tells one thing that Lot didn't bother to consider: in the midst of what looked like heaven to him lived men who were wicked and great sinners against the Lord. [Lot's passiveness toward God drew him right into the heart of wickedness.](#)

Once Lot was gone, the Lord spoke to Abram.(.14) God directed Abram to look in every direction to see His blessing, "northward and southward and eastward and westward". Everything he could see God would give to him and his offspring.



He reminds him of the greatness of His promise. He commands Abram to see the extent of his promise by walking over it. [When Abram surveyed the greatness of God's promise it led him back to where he started, to worship the Lord.](#)

**APPL** What rules your heart does matter because that determines how your eyes see all that is before you and what it means to you. Faith empowered Abram to discern what he saw in light of God's call, instead of determining God's call by what he thought was best. In renewed vision of God's call, Abram worshiped. Maybe this is what Paul meant when he prayed for the Ephesian church.

*that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Eph 3:16b-19*

[When we come to know God's great love for us, we have no need to seek love in worldly things but are able to trust and rest completely in His love. Worship is the only way to truly grasp a vision of and trust God's love for us.](#)

**TRANS** Bigger problems begin to stir that will reveal even greater languishing of Lot's passiveness toward God.

**Kings begin to do what worldly leader do, draw up lines, form alliances and go to war for power and control.** (14:1f)

When problems arise, war breaks out and worldly powers threaten, the heart will be tested. No one could have predicted what transpired as kings broke and turned against alliances. All of a sudden, what at first looked 'like heaven' to Lot with abundance was now stripped bare. In an instant the wonderland became a wasteland and the land of promise became a prison. (14:11-12) The security and provision of the world collapsed, and everything that rested on it with it. [Lot's passivity toward God and preference for "worldly stuff" that conflicted his heart left him destitute in the land of wickedness.](#)

**One escaped and came to tell Abram.** Abram took men from his household to rescue Lot. He was victorious and retrieved all Lot's possessions and family. On his return he encounters two kings and a revealing incident occurs.

**READ** Genesis 14:17-24

*17After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). 18And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) 19And he blessed him and said,*

*"Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;*

*20and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!"*

*And Abram gave him a tenth of everything. 21And the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself." 22But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have lifted my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, 23that I would not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.' 24I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me. Let Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre take their share."*

Abram is met by the King of Sodom, who is returning from his defeat, and Melchizedek, the King of Salem, which means peace. They came to recognize his victory. Melchizedek, a king for whom we know almost nothing and who is also a priest of God Most High, blesses Abram greatly. Abram recognizes Melchizedek as God's representative and gives him a tenth of everything, a tithe. This is the first time "tithe" is in the scripture and used as a representative portion of the whole.

The King of Sodom watches what transpires. He is a defeated King looking for a better ally, so he too recognizes Abram's victory and tries to give the spoils of his victory to him. But Abram, recognizing his offer is a "mutually beneficial business transaction" instead of an "exclusive blessing of worship that honors God alone", refuses the offer. Abram refuses to taint God's honor by even "a thread or sandal strap". He gives the spoils to others but leaves no room for wickedness to steal God's glory.



**Abram knows all of life and every blessing is from God alone.** Lot was conflicted by his passiveness. Abram is intentional with all that he does, receives and guards against to ensure that God alone is worshiped with his whole life. And he enjoys God's blessing as he walks in obedience. **Abram is focused on honoring God because his heart is consumed with one glory in worship.**

**OBJ** Today, I want us to see **Five Ways Worship fuels intentional obedience**, to guard against passive languishing in self.

### 1. **Worship guards the heart so problems don't consume and rule you.**

A heart clouded or conflicted is most susceptible to being overwhelmed, and that always confuses the mind. A heart set on the Lord in worship is ready for whatever comes because it is anchored in Jesus. This doesn't mean you don't have problems, struggles or challenges. Abram felt the struggle of too little land for their herds, but he did not allow it to overwhelm what He knew of the One who called Him. **When your heart is anchored in Jesus through worship, your mind doesn't get on the roller coaster of "the unknowns" but stays tethered to the promises of the God who called you.** <sup>1Thes5:24</sup>

### 2. **Worship prioritizes love for people above love of "stuff" or selfishness.**

When confronted with the problem of too little land, Abram felt the demand for his flock as much as Lot. But he never let the threat of loss or insufficient provision cause him to cease loving or caring for Lot. Threat of trouble and potential for abundance alike have a way of revealing true heart priorities. Trouble revealed Abram's love for Lot. Potential for abundance revealed Lot's love for self. **When our heart is set on Jesus in worship, we view every situation as an opportunity for God to bless others through us by His blessing to us.**

There is never a time when we must stop loving others to follow the Lord. There are times when loving others will demand sacrifice of self, in preference, convenience, abundance and what may feel like provision. When these situations arise, it will be our love for God that sees the greater glory in loving others by sacrifice of self above trying to ensure provision for self over risking love for others. **Worship holds the heart by the Rock to which it is anchored.** When the heart is held by Jesus, the values, priorities and glory of His truth come through in the way we love other people, no matter the potential cost to self.

### 3. **Worship recognizes God's blessing as the source of all one has, and in all we do not have.**

When Lot left, Abram was alone with the left-overs. And this is where God met and reminded him of His promise. What Abram discovered in obeying God by faith in the way he loved Lot was that he was exactly where God was leading him. God directs his eyes to look as far in every direction as he can possibly see, then walk the whole area and know that he would be blessed with it all. With every glance and gaze, and every step Abram knew it was all from God. **Worship consumed Abram's heart so that no matter what he received in life, he knew it was all from God's hand of blessing to Him.**

### 4. **Worship guards a person from walking into a trap of darkness or wickedness by Spirit-discernment.**

Abram's focus on honoring God by loving Lot became a guard for his whole life. Lot's concern with loving self became a deception that led him into a trap of wickedness. When selfishness consumes the heart, it distorts one's vision as it twists one's thinking. This is only one main way sin deceives to destroy. Sin never allows you to see destruction coming, but it always comes. Worship that consumes the heart trusts in the will of God by Spirit-discernment above the eyes of man.

*<sup>2</sup>For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. <sup>5</sup>For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup>For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.*

*<sup>8</sup>Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. **Rom 8:2, 5-8***

**God's Holy Spirit works within to illumine, counsel and guide so that our heart, mind and way aligns with the will, way and purpose of God's call.**

### 5. **Worship honors God with life's "stuff" to guard against entanglement with worldly promise.**



When Abram is met by two kings he recognizes it as a test of his heart's loyalty. The heart consumed with Jesus recognizes every situation and decision as an opportunity to obey and honor God. He gives a tithe of everything to Melchizedek to demonstrate that God owns his all. He also rejects any profit with wicked ties because he will allow no threat to God's glory.

Tithe is a specified, prioritized portion, the first one-tenth, that represents the whole. The place where the tithe is offered reveals where the whole is focused to direct honor and glory. Some say, "I can't tithe. I give God all I can." And this is the problem. God never said "give me all you can." When you give by faith what God commands, God gives you all He can. When Jesus consumes the heart in worship, a person's thinking about their life shifts one from "what I can give to God" to "how I can bless others because of what God has given to me". [Tithe, the first tenth of all, tells God that you know He owns it all and that it is all for His glory.](#)

[Is your focus in life clear because your heart is consumed with God's glory?](#) Or are you confused because passiveness toward God has left you conflicted? Worship is the way of following God, filling heart and mind with Him so all of life glorifies Him. Worship is the way to find your way when you've lost your way so you can know God's way. [Worship keeps you in God's way by honoring His glory alone.](#)

[God calls us to worship Him with our whole being and all of life to walk in His blessing and be a blessing in this world.](#)

**INVITE** I have often returned to that bedside where I was born again. It will always be a special place for me because of the person I met and began to worship there, Jesus Christ. I want to invite you to a new beginning with Jesus this morning, a place for your first for new life with Him. I invite you to believe today, to repent of your sin and put your faith in Jesus and receive His new life in you.

