**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, October 30, 2020**

Good afternoon!

When you think about Abraham, you might think of his covenant with God or that he was known as the father of Israel or a man of great faith or his mountain top experience with Isaac! Recently, as I have been reading in Genesis when I came upon Abraham this time what stood out to me was something more subtle. What stood out this time was his heart for harmony! Check it out! “Then Abram said to Lot, please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers.” Genesis 13:8. Harmony, there it is again as I wrote about in my last post. With the things going on in our world, a second helping of harmony may be just what we need!

In our story today Abraham is on his way to Canaan land as the Lord had instructed him to do back in chapter 12. He also has his nephew Lot along with him. Lot’s father Haran had died and now Abraham in a sense became his father figure and a positive role model. Through the years that followed Lot was exposed to Abrahams's love and support. Long story short it seemed like they were on the same page, in the same groove, and certainly that they shared the same family bond of loyalty. By the time we get to chapter 13, we see that both Abraham and Lot have accumulated much. This suddenly presented a situation of disharmony!

“And the land could not support both of them while living together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together. And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram’s livestock and the herdsmen of Lot’s livestock. Now the Canaanites and the Perizzites were living in the land at that time.

So Abram said to Lot, “Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers! Is the entire land not before you? Please separate from me; if you choose the left, then I will go to the right; or if you choose the right, then I will go to the left.” Lot raised his eyes and saw all the vicinity of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere—this was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah—like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt going toward Zoar. So Lot chose for himself all the [vicinity of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. So they separated from each other. Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the vicinity of the Jordan, and moved his tents as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked sinners against the Lord.” Genesis 13:6-13

In this story Abraham did three things that we can learn when it comes to having a heart for harmony:

1. Pursuing and taking the initiative to maintain it. Their possessions were great as noted in Genesis 12:5 and 13:2&6, but the land could not support them both while they remained together. For Abraham, possessions were just stuff but a harmonious relationship with his relative Lot was a priority. So, what does Abraham do? He gave Lot first choice! He showed a willingness to possibly being cheated because harmony was more important than having more! Abraham could have pulled rank on his nephew as being older and leader of the family but he didn’t. Brothers and sisters in Christ, the precious commodity of harmony is something that needs to be pursued as well as prioritized over material things!

2. Putting family peace over personal desire. Lot’s choice reeked with personal desire. Lot chose what he believed to be the better land for himself. Surrounded by hostile neighbors, the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot could have pulled together instead of allowing petty jealousy to tear them apart. Lot’s choice was not only a self-centered choice but it was a short-sighted choice. The land looked good and was well watered but it had a price tag! He was now rubbing elbows with the wicked people of Sodom. Bad company corrupts good morals according to I Corinthians 15:33. In fact when the angles came to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah Lot had moved from pitching his tent near the gate of the city to now inside the city, a place he now called home. Folks, only when personal desire plays second fiddle to harmony will the powerful force of unity be motivated.

3. Placing past problems in perspective. In chapter 14 a war breaks out and Lot is carried off by enemy kings. When Abraham hears of this he does not say, well he should have thought about that when he ripped me off by taking the best land for himself! He does not go on to complain, well he just got what he deserved, I hope he enjoyed it while it lasted! He does not say, now don’t come crying back to me for help! Abraham rises up above the situation and called 318 trained men and brought Lot back! No lecture, no condition, no unforgiving spirit. But only a problem placed in perspective while focusing on the greater goal and priority of harmony! Remember when we see the cross of Jesus that this is exactly what He did for us in placing our past problems in perspective!

Have a great weekend!

Mike