

Genesis 14:14-16, Genesis 18:20-26 Abraham and God's Sanctity of Human Life.
Life Sunday January 24, 25, 2010 (Children – Sad news or good news)

Grace and peace are yours from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ Amen

God's Word about Abraham is written in Genesis 14:14-16, Genesis 18:20-26

These are Your Words heavenly Father to urge us to defend and pray for all human life. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear Friends, in Christ,

On this Celebration of Life Sunday, we continue with the life of Abraham and consider how much he valued human life and what he was willing to do to save it. Our theme for today is:

Abraham and God's sanctity of human life.

First, Abraham's faith in God and his concern for people moved him to action. Genesis 13 describes how Abraham and his nephew Lot had returned from Egypt, where they had acquired so many flocks and herds that the two had to separate. Abraham could have told Lot, "God promised me all this land. Go find your own. Instead, he said, *"Let's not have any quarreling between you and me... for we are brothers."* Genesis 13:8 More than being relatives they were believers in the same true God who had richly provided for both of them. Besides as a man of faith Abraham did not want the unbelievers to hear selfish bickering. His solution was to have Lot choose first, and he chose the fertile plain near Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham was content to stay in the sparse hill country. Through these actions of Abraham, we see that his concern for life showed itself by being generous.

Sodom and Gomorrah were not just known for an immorality. They had also rebelled against eastern kings who had earlier conquered them. The kings returned for battle, but it wasn't much of a fight. Sodom's soldiers ran, leaving the families and riches for the invading army. Lot was among the captives. It could have been so easy for Abraham to let Lot and all else be taken away. He could have said, Lot is getting what he deserves! He chose to live near Sodom. Let him pay for it! But, when Abraham heard of their capture, he ordered a rescue. He *"called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan (far north of where he lived). During the night Abram divided his men to attack them and he routed them.... He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with ...the other people (of Sodom)."* Genesis 14:14-16 Abraham was certainly brave to fight. He was probably outnumbered by many times. Yet, he trusted in God to give him victory over the enemy and God did.

We are living in an age when our families are in danger. Our society is turning from God at an alarming rate and it is setting a standard that seeks to destroy Christian families. What are we doing to stop it? Do we go home, lock our doors and hide under a blanket? Do, we watch tragedy after tragedy on the news, and just shake our heads and say, "It's too bad for them. They shouldn't live in those neighborhoods." The power of evil is growing stronger every day in our nation and it isn't just affecting Washington, D.C. We are all in danger. We need to be helping more children learn the saving truths of God's Word so they don't perish later in life. We need to be supporting the Gospel work locally and through our synod. We can support and volunteer for organizations like Christian Life Resources, so that more people learn the truth before their time of judgment comes. Now is the time to be brave, to take a stand, to hold those who are role models accountable if they set immoral examples. And most importantly we, as believing children, teens or adults, can set examples by our words and actions. We can take the time to listen to those who are troubled. We can express concern, not disgust, when we see people falling farther from the saving truth. Only God knows what victory there will be in the lives of the lost as we live by faith in Jesus.

Abraham also prayed to save those who were about to be judged. Genesis 18 tells of Abraham's intercession. God had told him, *"The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin grievous...."* v. 20-21 *"Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing--to*

kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" v.23-26 "Abraham pleaded the case for God's love over against God's righteousness." (Leopold) Abraham was thinking not only of Lot's family, but of his servants and others. How relieved he was when God promised to spare the city if 50 believers were there. But, just to be sure, Abraham asked what if only 45 righteous are there, and then 40, 30, 20 and finally 10. Surely among Lot's extended family and servants there must be 10 believers. Unfortunately no others except in his family were listed among the survivors.

What can we learn from Abraham's prayer? Should we say, "Why pray? God will do what He wants!" No. The Bible tells us to pray especially for the lost, because God wants all to be saved. 1 Timothy 2:4 God answered Abraham's prayer, doing more than he asked. Before all of Lot's family was lost to unbelief, God got rescued them from the city. He saved them by judging and destroying the unbelievers of Sodom. They became a warning to all people that God is angry and will punish sinners who refuse to believe in Him. God rained down fire on the whole area. And, worse than that, Jesus later said that their judgment after death would continue in hell. Matthew 11:24

How do we view people who are in trouble? Are they a hopeless case beyond our prayers? Can we plead like Abraham? Certainly we should pray for God to prioritize our lives, to give of ourselves and our offerings for the Gospel ministry here and in the world. Haiti is still in an awful situation, how often are we praying for the people's physical and spiritual needs? People in the world and in our community are in the dark regarding the righteous anger of God and His power to save us from it. God is angry about the disregard of the sanctity of life seen in senseless abortion, child-abuse that takes away their innocence, swindlers, especially of the elderly who lose their life savings, and those who have a desire for pleasure that leads them into deplorable sins. These are signs of a greater problem. People have forgotten their Creator in the days of their youth. For lack of knowledge of the truth people are perishing.

God, have mercy on us all! Like Lot, we live in danger from sinful friends, TV shows, music, movies, and the internet. How much are we under the influence of an ungodly culture and don't even realize it? How much have we compromised, just like Lot in Sodom? If we haven't been praying about these concerns, then, begin today with a prayer for our souls! It is not the time for idleness in the spiritual matters. Wake up with zeal for the lost before it's too late.

Second, Christ's love and concern for people moved him to action. As hard as we try, we will never have a perfect faith. If we think Lot made a terrible choice with Sodom, how about Adam and Eve choosing to sin to the world. Jesus could have stayed in heaven and said, "It's their own fault; let them pay for it with eternal suffering." Instead, He generously paid to give us a place in heaven. Abraham saved Lot with an army. Jesus He saved us by battling alone against death, the devil, and hell. While on the cross, He felt the suffering of eternal fire in hell for all people to save us.

Just like God answered Abraham's prayers in a miraculous rescue of Lot, so God is answering Jesus' prayers. He prays for our forgiveness and by faith we receive it and are saved from a worst destruction than the fire of Sodom. We were all destined for hell, to sadness, pain, and loneliness that would never end. But, Jesus took all that for us so we will be with Him forever in heaven with eternal joy and the great reunion of believers! Jesus believed in the sanctity of human life. He doesn't want anyone to perish by any sinful means. Rather He wants us to be with Him forever.

So, if we want to be motivated like Abraham, keep calling on God's name in worship. We need to pray for ourselves, our families, our country, and for all people, especially those in need. Ask God to move our hearts to action that many more might be rescued, even as Jesus has rescued us. Amen. The peace of God...