

Abraham 2

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[0 : 00] Turn back with me this evening for a few moments to the chapter we read, Genesis chapter 13.

Genesis chapter 13.

And we'll take up the reading again at verse 9 where Abraham said to Lot, his nephew, 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. And Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

Even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him, all the plain of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated themselves, the one from the other.

[1 : 14] Abraham dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent towards Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.

And so on. We started off a fortnight ago looking at the life of Abraham. This carries on from the first theme that we looked at some months ago, which was from Adam to Abraham.

And we're sort of carrying on from that now and looking at the life of Abraham. Last week we looked at chapter 12, how God had called him from his home, which was Ur of the Chaldees.

And I think I explained to you then how modern and civilized Ur was, and what a cost it was, what a sacrifice it was for Abraham to listen to God and to do as he said.

And to travel a long, long distance from Ur to a place he had never been before. But I also said, we also saw that for him to do so did not make him immune to difficulty.

[2 : 19] The first difficulty that he encountered was that there was a famine in the land. You see, it's easy enough for us to talk about famine. Very few of us have ever experienced what a famine is.

Imagine not knowing where your next meal is coming from and having to depend upon a little field. I suppose those of you who have had crofts in the past would appreciate something of what a famine was.

Because you know, of course, that you depend, your food, your well-being depends on the potatoes at harvest time and so on and so forth. But you can appreciate that if your whole life depends on the ground producing crops, and if one year it doesn't produce anything, then where are you going to get food from?

And so that's what we have to remember that when we think about famine. The Bible tells about famine. It's a very severe thing to have to encounter, to have to experience a famine.

And because of the famine, Abraham had gone down to Egypt. And there he had, we remember, he had lied about his wife because he was afraid that because she was a beautiful woman and the Egyptians would take her to be their wife.

[3 : 34] Pharaoh would take her to that. And because he was afraid that they might kill him, he lied about her being his sister. Of course, she wasn't his sister. She was his wife. And the Lord intervened and rescued Abraham from a whole web of deceit that he found himself in.

And we saw that the Lord's people, and we saw that every one of the people that we see in the Bible, there's some flaw or another in their character. And we saw that this was because of sin that remains within us and that continues with us.

And God continues with us. And God intervened and delivered Abraham. And that's not to give us an excuse to live as we like or as careless as we like. And it doesn't really matter how I live or

anything, not to say anything like that.

But it's to remind us that God is gracious. And God, nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ. Now we come on to sort of divert, we're going to divert our attention away from Abraham, just slightly away from Abraham, onto the man who is with him and who's accompanied him all the way from out of the Chaldees, all the way to Canaan.

And this man is called Lot. Lot was Abraham's nephew. He's Abraham's nephew. And it looks as if he had accompanied him all the way until chapter 13, where we find them separating.

[5 : 00] We're going to see in a few moments why it was that they had to separate. But the whole of this chapter centers around a choice. And that's what I want to take.

That's what I want to look with you this evening. I want to look at the whole idea of choices that we make and decisions that we make in life.

And what it is that brings us to making those choices. What it is that motivates us to make those choices. When we make those choices. Why is it that we make the decisions and the choices that we do make.

And I'm talking about even the little choices. From the little choices to the big choices. You know of course that sometimes our decisions in life are just little. Little tiny decisions that really don't affect us one way or another.

And of course you go through. I mean I suppose that every day that we make one choice or another. If you look at it the past week. Then you'll discover there's probably not a day gone by without you having had to make some choice or another.

[6 : 06] Some decision that you had to make. And life is full of those decisions. From the little ones to the very major ones. And whilst there are some choices which have no effect on us whatsoever.

They might be cosmetic. And they might be just little trivial. Little things. There are other choices that once you make them. You have to live with the consequences. And this littlest tiniest choice. Can have drastic consequences. Isn't that true? Isn't that true? You think about it. You think about it. And how easy it is to make a seemingly innocent decision.

And then you end up and it has a drastic effect. I'll give you just a little example of my own experience. Remember once when I was 21 years old. I was on a summer mission in Danoon with the church.

I was a student at the time. And I had to go and pick up a caravan from a place just south of Glasgow. And I was very inexperienced at the time. I didn't know anything.

[7 : 07] It was the first time I'd ever towed a caravan. And I went down to pick up. I borrowed a friend's car. It had a little red Volkswagen Beetle with a tow ball on the back of it.

And when I went to pick up the caravan. I got a hand from the fellow. And we tried to fit the caravan onto this tow ball. But it didn't just quite fit. It didn't just quite fit.

Because apparently there are just two slightly different sizes of tow ball. And this one size didn't fit the other. But it fitted. As far as I could see it was enough. It was enough.

And so I decided. I made the choice. That it didn't really matter what size it was. And because the caravan apparently fitted onto the car. I would just tow it anyway.

And that was until the caravan came off the back of the car. While I was driving on the motorway. And it actually passed the car. It overtook the car.

[8 : 05] And crashed into a fence. And it was completely destroyed. You see. A little choice that I made in my inexperience. Just a tiny choice.

And I said to myself. Ah well it won't matter anyway. It's the kind of thing that you and I do. Quite often isn't it? The kind of thing that we say. Well it doesn't really matter anyway. But in actual fact. Sometimes. Well most of the time. It doesn't matter. But sometimes you make those decisions in life. And you end up paying the price. And suffering the consequences.

And you end up with a disaster. Like me and my caravan. Well thankfully nobody was hurt. That's the main thing. But somebody could have been. And that would have been a whole lot worse.

If somebody had lost their life. Out of my stupidity. And the wrong choice. That I had made. But you know what I mean. Because I'm sure you've made. Similar choices. In your life.

[9 : 00] Well you know the account of God's people. In the Bible. Is an account of real life choices. That people make. And the consequences.

In both the short term. And here is this man Lot. And he's making a decision. Here we have it in verse 19. Lot lifted up his eyes. And looked at the plain of Jordan.

That was well watered everywhere. Before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Then Lot chose. Verse 11. Then Lot chose him.

All the plain of the Jordan. I want to look at three things tonight. I want us to see first of all. What was it that led Lot to make his choice?

What was the background behind Lot's choice? To go to live in this place? Then I want us to look secondly at the motivation.

[9 : 57] What was in his heart? What was it that made him? What was it that led him to choose this particular place? He looked up. He saw the plain of Jordan.

It was well watered everywhere. Before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Even as the garden of the Lord. Like the land of Egypt. As you come to Zohar. Then Lot chose him. All the plain of Jordan.

So I want to look at what's in his heart. What's going on in his mind. As he makes this choice. Why is it that he makes this particular choice? Then I want us to look lastly. At the consequences.

The result. Of this choice. That he made. And I want all the time. To try and draw a parallel. Between the choice he made.

And the kind of choices that we make. In life. And what's really important. About the choice. That we make. In life. First of all then.

[10 : 52] What were the circumstances? Well Abraham and Lot had come away from Egypt. They had come north again. And you remember how in Egypt. Well they were rich beforehand. They were probably quite rich beforehand.

But in Egypt. They gathered together. They were given. A whole lot of cattle. And goods. And servants. And they were a whole lot richer. When they emerged from Egypt.

And I explained to you. Why that was. Last week. And so. The Lot and the Abraham. That come out of Egypt. Back north into Canaan. Are much bigger.

And richer. And more successful now. In material terms. Than they were. When they had. When they had gone before. And so much so. That the land of Canaan.

Was not enough. It didn't give enough pasture. To feed their flocks. So it became a struggle for them. Now isn't it interesting. Isn't it? We always think that riches. Bring you happiness.

[11 : 50] Doesn't it? The message that the world gives us tonight. Is your main objective. If you were rich. If only you could win the lottery. That's what they say. It could be you.

Don't they? They say it could be you. In other words. If it was you. You'd be the happiest person in the world. Well would you? Really? Would you be the happiest person in the world? Well here's two men.

And they are made. All of a sudden. They are mega rich. And they were. By the time they came out of Egypt. They had amassed great wealth. But they weren't very happy about it.

Were they? Because they eventually ended up quarreling so much. Because the land of Canaan. Was not enough to support their animals. And so here are two men.

And they go down into Egypt. And they're happy. And they're content. And they're within the promise of God. And they come out of Egypt. And they're fighting each other. Or rather their herdsmen were.

[12 : 46] In any case. Their herdsmen. The people who looked after their flocks. You see. If they hadn't had all this riches.

Then they wouldn't have been so miserable. They ended up in misery. You see. It's a lie. It's a lie. To think that all you need in this life.

Is to become a bit richer. And a bit more successful in life. And that's what will make you happy. You see. You see it on some of these reality TV shows.

That look into the lives of the rich. And the glamorous. And the celebrities. I don't see any happiness at all. I see nothing but misery. They've got everything in the world.

They've got cars. They've got houses. They've got wealth. They've got everything going. And yet they're quarreling with one another. And they're fighting with one another. Because riches hasn't brought them anything.

[13 : 39] Except misery. And trouble. Riches alone. Now. Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that being wealthy is sinful. There are plenty of people in the Bible. Who are wealthy.

Plenty. But the problem. The question is this. What place does that wealth have in your life? That's the real question.

What does it mean to you? Is it a God to you? Is it something that takes up your time and your energy and your obsession? Are you obsessed with what you have and what you don't have and wanting more?

You see I don't believe that. I think that was the main difference between Abraham and Lot. For Lot. It was of enormous importance to get more rich.

That's why he chose. That's why he chose the plain of Jordan. And Sodom and Gomorrah. Because he saw. And we'll see this in a wee minute. He saw. That having good pasture meant having good cattle.

[14:40] And having good cattle meant having more cattle. And having more cattle meant more personal wealth and more personal power. But you see for Abraham.

That wasn't what life was all about. Abraham. For all that counted. I see I don't believe that if you had taken away the whole lot from Abraham. We wouldn't have taken any different terms at all. Not in the slightest. Because for Abraham. He had found what he was looking for. Actually. As it happens. So had Lot. We'll see in a wee minute.

That actually. Lot was what the Bible calls a righteous man. Unfortunately. Sadly. Lot. Made a wrong choice. And suffered the consequences of it.

And tonight. I believe this chapter is a salutary warning to us. And a question to us. And the question is this. Can you afford. To be wealthy.

[15:36] And I say that. And we're all wealthy. Compared to the rest of the world. We're all wealthy. All of us. Have to. Have to ask this question. Can we afford. To place our hope.

And to store up for ourselves. Treasures on earth. Jesus says. Do not store up for yourselves. Treasures on earth. Where moths and rust corrupt. And where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves.

Treasures in heaven. For Lot. The treasures on earth. Were of first importance. For Abraham. Abraham. You could take it all away. And he would still have the Lord. Because Abraham lived in the promise.

That the Lord was his God. And God was going to bless him. So that's the circumstances then. And that's the reason why they had to separate. Because the herdsmen quarreled so much. The land wasn't big enough.

Or fertile enough. To keep the two families going. With enough pasture. But now I want to look secondly.

[16:33] At the motive. What was in Lot's heart. When he made this choice. Well first of all. I want to look at Abraham's heart. I want us to see. That the little.

This very tiny amount. That Abraham says. In this chapter. Reveals a tremendous amount. About the kind of person. That Abraham was. You see you can tell a lot. About the quality. Of a person's Christian life.

In the way that they deal. With another person. That's why Jesus laid so much emphasis. On dealing with other people. And the way that we behave. Towards other people.

And here is Abraham. And he could be a New Testament example. Of going the second mile. Of putting his brother first. Of esteeming his brother. As more important than himself.

Well here is what Abraham said. In verse 8. Abraham said to Lot. Let there be no quarrelling. I pray you. Between you. And myself. And between my herdsmen. And your herdsmen.

[17:30] For we are brethren. It's not the whole land. In front of you. Separate yourself. I pray you from me. Now here is what he said. Abraham was the older. Of the two gentlemen. And he could have claimed.

The first refusal. It was his by rights. Being the older. He could have said. Well here is the part. That I want. You will have to take. What is left. Left. But that's not what he said.

He said. You take what you want. And I'll take what's left. Isn't that amazing. Here is a. A prime example. Of a kind of person.

Who follows the Lord. Faithfully. Because. As I said before. You could have taken the law. Away from. From. From Abraham. And it wouldn't. Have mattered. Because what. What.

What. What counted to Abraham. Was. That he sought first. The kingdom of God. And his righteousness. That's what the Lord tells us to do. To seek first. The kingdom of God.

[18:27] And his righteousness. And you know what the Lord promises us. Promises us that. If we do that. He says. All these things will be added to you. We're going to lack nothing. You're going to

lack nothing.

If you seek first. The kingdom. Of God. And so. But Lot. Took his chance. And he saw. Let's look at. Let's look at what Lot does.

He saw. He looked. He lifted up his eyes. And beheld all the plain of Jordan. That it was well watered. Every way. And that's all it. That's all it.

It. It. It tells us. That it was when he saw. That was enough to him. All he saw was what was in front of his eyes. He saw the long grass. He saw as far as his eyes could see.

The plain stretching out. And he saw that this would be so good for his cattle. He wouldn't have another care in the world. And that he would become more and more wealthy. And it would become more and more successful.

[19 : 27] I want us to think for a few moments on the relationship between our choices and what we see. And. You won't. This is not the first time you see it in the Bible.

You find it in the Bible way back at the very beginning. In Genesis chapter 3. Where God said to Eve. He said. He said to her. Do not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. For in the day you eat thereof you shall surely die. What was it that the devil came in and said to her. He said you will not surely die. And then the next thing. Eve saw. She looked up and she looked at the fruit.

And she saw that it was pleasing. It was attractive to her. And it won her heart over. And she took the fruit. And she gave some to her husband Adam. And her and her husband fell.

And the whole world fell with them. On that day. You'll find that all the way. That there's a connection between what we see. And the choice. There wouldn't be any TV ads.

[20 : 23] If that wasn't the case. There wouldn't be the millions and billions of pounds. That are spent on TV advertising. And on the kind of advertising that makes things look so pleasing.

And so attractive to us. It's because they know. Marketers know. That there is an intimate connection between what we see with our eyes. And our decision to buy something.

And the whole point about advertising. Is that it is the whole thing is geared in order to make us. To bring us to the point where we make a choice. To spend money. And the thing.

By the way. Remember that the goal of advertising. And I say this because as Christians. We live in a world full of advertising. Wherever you look. In magazines. And on TV. And in books.

And on radio. Wherever you look. It's the whole point. Is to get us to buy things. That we don't actually need. And to divert our attention.

[21 : 21] Away from the things that are really important. In this world. And to things. That we don't. Really. Need. Because our first reaction is to be drawn.

To what. Looks. To looks good. You'll find it everywhere. Don't you? We're surrounded by it all the time. And that's where. The Bible is so relevant for the 21st century. Because it describes.

There's nothing new. Under the sun. It describes the same heart of mankind. That lies. In each one of us. Maybe I could give you an example. Maybe I could. Imagine a.

Imagine a. A magazine today. And let's call it life. Let's call this magazine life. And the magazine shows us. Everything that is.

Good looking. And everything that is glamorous. And everything that is so attractive. In today's. Modern world. Page one. Is all about celebrities. What is it that makes a person a celebrity?

[22 : 19] What is it that separates. The person who is called a celebrity. Well I have no doubt that they can sing well. I have no doubt that they've got skill. And all that kind of thing. But in order to be a celebrity.

More often than not. You have to look the part. Don't you? You have to look attractive. In the eyes. Of the public. And that's what elevates. A celebrity. In our modern world.

To the status. To the. The God status. That they have. It's because of looks. Because the world that we live in. Places so much emphasis. On what you look like.

And if you look the part. Then you attract loads of people. But if you don't look the part. Then you're out. Well I'm thankful today.

That the Bible places dignity. On you and I. Not. According to what we look like. But according to what we are.

[23 : 15] The question that God asks us. Is not. The question that the world asks us. Which is. Are we good looking or not? The question that God asks us.

Is are you right with him? That's the most important thing. Again on TV programs. Or the popular TV programs. And the thing is. Once again. What they look like.

And the kind of furniture that we buy. The next page is about. Is about clothes. Everywhere you look. It's what they look like. It's what other people. Are going to see us. And how other people. Are going to see us. Let me ask you a question. How many of our choices to buy. Are grounded. On what.

Other people. Are going to think. Of us. How many of our decisions. Are grounded. Are grounded. Are grounded. Are grounded. Do we take.

[24 : 11] On what someone else. Is going to think. Of me. Well that's where pride comes in. Doesn't it. It comes in. All the time. No matter. Where you look. Pride. Comes in.

To decisions. That we take. No matter what it is. Whether it's cars. Or furniture. Or clothes. Or homes. Or whatever it is. Looks. In our world.

Are all. Important. Lot. Lot. Lifted up his eyes. And beheld. And on. That basis. And on that basis. Alone. He made. His. Choice. He says. Two very strange things. The two very strange things. In this verse. First of all.

He saw that it was well watered. Everywhere. Even as the garden. Of the Lord. That's the way. Now I wonder why. That is written. In that verse. This is what he saw.

[25 : 06] He saw that it was well watered. Everywhere. Even as the garden. Of the Lord. And then the second thing. It tells us. Is that it was like the land of Egypt. As you come to Zohar.

I wonder why those two descriptions. Are in that verse. And I wonder who was it. That wrote that verse. Or where did it come from. And I reckon.

That the most obvious answer. Has to be. That that is what. Was on the mind of Lot. As he looked at the land. That was in front of him. What immediately entered his mind.

Was two things. First of all. It was like Egypt. Well that was his immediate memory. He'd just been in Egypt. And he'd just seen. How fertile. And how successful. And how lush. The land was down in Egypt.

Maybe he had regretted. Ever coming back away from Egypt. Because he was storing up for himself. Wealth and success. Wasn't he? And maybe he had regretted. Following Abraham. Coming away from there.

[26 : 03] Because Egypt. Was such a great place. And yet. He knew that there was another side to life. He knew. That God must have his place as well. And the other thing that entered into his mind. Was the garden of the Lord.

Well. And I wonder at this point. Whether he was trying to justify his choice. By bringing the Lord into it. You know it's amazing. How people will twist things. And try and bring the Lord into their decisions.

And it's not as if they're asking the Lord. Whether what they're about to do is right. Because what he was about to do was not right.

But asking the Lord to bless them. In whatever decision. You know. Have you ever heard people saying. Well. I've prayed about this. I've prayed about it.

And I've asked the Lord to bless me in this. That may be so. But have you asked the Lord. If what you're doing is right. And have you asked the Lord.

[27 : 01] What he thinks of what you're doing. And have you asked the Lord. Whether what you're doing. Is within his guidance. Have you asked him to guide you. In what you're doing. That's the first question. Because it's the easiest thing in the world.

To make decisions. On our selfishness. And because we want. To do something. And. Oh well I asked the Lord to bless me anyway. And so it must be right. Don't go down that road.

That's self-deception. Asking the Lord to bless you in something. Doesn't necessarily mean that what you're doing is right. What we must do.

Is commit. Our decisions. And our future. To the Lord. And seek to be guided by him. And his word. Principally. Through his word.

Lord. And as we saw last week. It wasn't. There was nothing wrong. With the land being fertile. In front of. Of Lot.

[28 : 00] The problem was. That Lot. Left. The Lord. Out of his decision. And he was not. Led. By. The Lord.

Into it. And there are of course. Questions. Which we all should ask ourselves. That should govern. Our choices. Number one is. How much does God.

Figure in my decision. Even the small things. That I. The small decisions that I make. From week to week. Or day by day. How much does the Lord. May. Figure. And how much.

What secondly. Does my own pleasure. And my own prosperity. And my own pride. Figure in the choices. That I made. And have we really prayed.

That the Lord will lead us. And guide us. From one day. To another. But you see. There are one more question. That we need to ask. Continually. About the choices. And the decisions.

[28 : 56] That we make. And that question is this. What are the consequences. Of this decision. Going to be. Not just on others. But on myself as well.

You see. There were many many. Consequences. And results. That Lord had to suffer. First of all. He had to suffer himself. He had to suffer himself.

Because the one thing. He didn't take into account. Was that the people. In Sodom and Gomorrah. Amongst whom. He was choosing to live. Were amongst. The most wicked people.

I won't say amongst. Because they were. The most single. Wicked people. In the whole world. The reason I say that. Is because. They were the people. This. They were the cities.

Who God chose. To destroy. In a few years time. After Lot. Had chosen to live there. And he hadn't taken that. Into account. But it wasn't. We all know.

[29 : 52] That his family suffered. We all know. That he lost everything. Eventually. When God rained down. Fire and brimstone. On Sodom and Gomorrah. But what we perhaps.

Miss out. Is the effect. That his choice. Had on himself. He. He spent. The rest of his life. In Sodom and Gomorrah. An utterly. Miserable man.

It's amazing. Isn't it. How do I know that. Well I'll tell you. The Bible tells me. The Bible tells me.

Look at the. Look at the New Testament. And it. It tells us. In 2nd Peter.

Chapter 2. And verse 6. And it tells us. About how. God delivered. Lot. 2nd Peter. Chapter 2. And verse 6. And it tells us.

That he was. Vexed. With the filthy. Conversation. Of the wicked. And it tells us. In verse 8. For that righteous man. Dwelling among them. In seeing.

[30 : 47] And hearing. Vexed his righteous soul. From day to day. With their. Unlawful deeds. In other words. Lot went in there. He started. Pitched his tent. He started.

He started. Living among them. And you know. You might be asking. At this point. Well why did he not. Decide to go. Well by that time. He had set down his roots. You couldn't just live there. You had to invest there.

You couldn't just live. And go. The way we. The way we. Do so much. Easy traveling nowadays. Once he had decided. To go there. He started investing there. He started doing trade. With the local people.

And his children. Were started growing up. They made their friends. His wife made friends. They began to put down roots. But before you knew it. He discovered that he had made. A drastic mistake.

Which took its toll. On his soul. Because every day. He had to contend. With the most incredible wickedness. He had never seen.

[31 : 43] Anything like this before. And it's so much so. That it. It caused him misery. Every day. For the rest of his life. Happiness. Happiness. He had no more happiness.

For the rest of his life. But then. The consequences were. And on his wife. She became so obsessed. With living in Sodom.

It had to take the force of God. To move her from there. And even then. She ended up looking back. And God punished her. God put her to death.

Because her love for Sodom. Had become so great. It was the same with his daughters. His daughters ended up. To marrying two guys. Who couldn't care less about God. And so it brought ruin.

On himself. And his wife. And his family. Let me ask you this. If you're making serious choices. That are going to affect. Yourself. Your future. Your family. And your relation to God.

[32 : 42] Then it better be a choice. That you sit down. And think. And pray long and hard about. It better be a choice. That is not made easily. And simply. That you. And make sure.

That you're led. By the Holy Spirit. And God who promises. To lead. And to guide us. Every day. If we believe. In the Lord.

And Jesus Christ. As our Savior. And eventually. Lot ended up losing. Everything. Everything. It was all destroyed. And he was saved.

And he was saved. By the skin of his teeth. He was one of those. People in the Bible. That we can describe. As scarcely. Was he saved.

Now it amazes me. How many books you read. On Lot. That actually try and make out. That he wasn't a Christian. That he was some kind of fraud. That he was a hanger on.

[33 : 38] With Abraham. And that he wasn't. The genuine article. That he was an imposter. That's what some of the books say. They call Lot. An imposter. And they say. That he was like.

Judas Iscariot. And that he. He played the part. While he was with Abraham. Then he went off. And he betrayed. Everything he knew to be true. The problem with that. Is that.

The Bible says otherwise. The Bible actually says. That deep down. Lot was a righteous man. I just read it. Let me read it again. And God delivered.

Just Lot. That means. Righteous Lot. But deep down in his heart. He was vexed. With a filthy conversation. Of the wicked. For that. Righteous man.

Man dwelling among them. You see. It turns out. That Lot is actually. A believer in the Lord. That's what the Bible calls him. It calls him a righteous man. He was a believer.

[34 : 32] In the Lord. You know what the tragedy is. The tragedy is. There isn't a single. Piece of evidence. In the chapters. In Genesis. That shows. That he was a righteous man.

Isn't that terrible. There's not a single. Piece of evidence. Everything we know. If it hadn't been. For Peter. In the New Testament. Of what God says. Through Peter.

We would never know. That he was a true believer. Isn't that a tragedy. And isn't it a warning. To all of us. Like I said last week. Last time. If people were to find out.

That you are a Christian. Would they be surprised. From your life. That was a question. I asked two weeks ago. I'm going to ask another question. Tonight. If it ever became illegal.

To be a Christian. Supposing one day. It was against the law. To be a Christian. Supposing if you were a Christian. You would be. You could be taken away. And arrested. And put on trial.

[35 : 28] And put in prison. And supposing. The police came. And arrested you. And put you on trial. For being a Christian. Would there be enough.

Evidence. To convict you. I asked the same question myself. Would there be enough. Evidence. In my life.

To convict me. It's a very solemn question. Isn't it. Very very solemn. In which God. Challenges every single. One of his people. As to.

The fruit. That we bring forth. Out of the life. That we live. In Christ. Not a single.

Piece of evidence. In the Old Testament. It's only what we know about him. In the new. And tonight. I wonder. How many of you.

[36 : 26] Are faced with the greatest choice. Of all. You know. Some people don't like. The gospel. In terms of choice. They're like. I don't see any problem. With it at all. The Bible tells us. God says to his people. Choose this day.

Whom. You. Will. Serve. And that's the greatest choice. Of all. Who we're going to serve. In this life. Don't tell me. I'm a free agent. I don't serve.

Anyone. But myself. That's not what the Bible says. The Bible tells us. Jesus says. Whoever sins. Is a slave. To sin. That means. That if you're not in Christ.

Then you're a slave. To sin. Don't tell me. You can give it up. Anytime. Don't tell me. You can make up. What you've done wrong. By what you do right. Don't tell me. That your good intentions. And that your good works.

Are going to outdo. All the bad things. That we've done. Because the Bible tells us. That even our righteousness. Even the good things. That we try to do. Are like filthy rags. In God's sight. Even then.

[37 : 20] We can't. We can't. Even the things. That we try to do. We fail. And Jesus goes on. To tell us. That we're all addicted. To sin. That means. We serve sin. And Jesus tells us.

No man. Can serve. Two masters. Now I want to ask you. The question. Tonight. Which master. I don't ask. Do you serve a master. I'm just saying. Which master. Do you serve.

Which one is it. Because. If it isn't Christ. Then. It's the evil one. That's it. That's all there is to it.

It's as serious. And as solemn. As that. Either tonight. You're building your house. On the sand. Which is going to collapse. And the flood. Or you're building your house. On the rock. Either tonight. You're. You're losing your life. In which case. You'll save it. That's what Jesus says. Whoever loses his life. For my sake. Will save it.

[38 : 16] Or else. You're trying to save your life. You're desperately trying to. Save. And make the most of your life. And in the end. You will lose it. That's what the Bible tells us. Either you're storing up.

Treasure. On earth. For yourself. And one day. You will lose the whole lot. Or else you're storing up. Treasure. In heaven. Where neither moth.

Nor rust. Breaks in. And corrupts. Which will last. Forever. When you put God. First. And trust in the Lord Jesus. As your savior.

He promises. An inheritance. That puts everything else. Into the shade. And that can never fade. That can never. That can never. Be taken away.

Kept. In heaven. For you. I'd rather have that inheritance. Tonight. Than anything this world. Can give me. Because what the world.

[39 : 13] Gives me. And what the world. Offers me. Is only going to fade away. One day. That if I have Christ. I have everything. Nothing. Nothing.

Can separate me. From his love. Which is all that counts. Well what is our choices. What are our choices tonight. What are our decisions tonight. Have we committed them.

To the Lord. And are we ready this week. As we face the days. God willing. That lie ahead. Are we ready this. This week. To put God first. To seek first.

The kingdom of God. And his righteousness. And to make sure. That we crown him. Lord of all. In everything that we do. In our thoughts.

In our words. And in our actions. Let's pray. Our gracious and eternal God.

[40 : 08] We know how prone we are. To make the wrong choices. To make the wrong decisions. In life. And some of those decisions.

Are going to have. Drastic consequences. Lord. Because the word tells us. That whatsoever a man sows. That shall he also reap. We ask.

Oh God. That we might sow. The right seed. In the right ground. And we ask. Oh Lord. That we will listen. To the voice of God. Speaking to us tonight.

And calling us. And drawing us. To put our faith. And our trust. In the Lord Jesus Christ. Because he alone. Is the one who is able.

To lead us and guide us. Through life. And to lead us beyond life. And into eternity. For we ask these things. In Jesus name. Amen. Thank you.