

These verses portray a horrible failure in the life of one of God's choice servants.

If you remember Abraham's journey down in to Egypt in Genesis 12:10-20, you will notice some similarities between this event and that one.

It is never pleasant to see failure in the life of one of God's children.

But, I am thankful that God did not sweep Abraham's sin under the rub.

I am grateful that He saw fit to record the event in the pages of Scripture.

I am grateful because, like Abraham, I struggle with sin.

Sometimes, I struggle with the same sins over and over, as I am sure you do too.

What we need in the midst of our struggle is some encouragement!

What we need is the blessed assurance that we have hope in the midst of our failures!

This passage offers that hope to our hearts this evening!

It may seem like a passage of darkness, gloom and failure, but in reality, it is a passage filled with hope and help for you and me.

I want to point out a few principles that are contained here that speak to your need and mine.

I want to preach for a while on Sin And The Saint If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

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To Know Him and Make Him Known

1) SIN DOESN'T HAVE AN EXPIRATION DATE

- a) Remember that Abraham is 100 years old when this event occurs.
- b) When he did this same thing in Genesis 12, he was just beginning his walk with the Lord.
- c) Here, he should be at the height of his maturity as a believer.
- d) Notice also that this is a sin he has carried with him for many decades, v. 13.
- e) For us the point is clear: there will never be a time when we will be beyond falling!
- f) Therefore, we need to avoid some of the mistakes that Abraham made.
- g) Never stop trusting God to take care of you –
 - i) Why was Abraham there in the first place?

- ii) Well in Gen. 12, he went because of a famine, not believing that God would take care of him.
- iii) This time, we are not told why he went, but my opinion is that he was getting away from Sodom and Gomorrah.
- iv) He probably thought that all the area would be burned up.
- v) Note: When we come to the place where we no longer trust the Lord to meet our needs and to get us through the trials of life, we are headed for disaster!
- h) Never put yourself in the place of temptation –
 - i) Abraham had a fear that some man would kill him so that he could have Sarah.
 - ii) When he felt this fear, he was inclined to lie to save his hide, not believing that God would be able to take care of him.
 - iii) Note: Only a fool subjects himself to temptation's lure and believes that he will walk away unharmed!
 - iv) If you know that you have a problem in a given area, you are foolish to place yourself in a position to be tempted!
 - v) When temptation comes, you and I need to be like Joseph: Run! - Gen. 39)
- i) Friends, we must never let down our guard!
- j) May we never come to think that we have arrived at a place where we cannot sin, or where we are free from the temptation to commit a particular sin.
- k) As sure as you let down your guard, you are headed for trouble,
- l) **1 Cor. 10:12—" Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.**
- m) As long as you live in this flesh, you will never be safe!
- 2) **SIN CANNOT OVERCOME GRACE**
 - a) Even though Abraham is clearly out of God's will at this time in his life, he is still enjoying the Lord's blessings!
 - b) That may mess up our theology, but it is still true!
 - c) You see, even when Abraham is in a place of his own choosing and is not doing what God asked him to do, he is still being blessed by the Lord.
 - d) Notice the blessings that came his way:
 - i) He Forgave Him Of His Sins - Implied in verse 17
 - ii) He Protected Him From Harm - v. 2-9, 18
 - iii) He Blessed Him Financially - v. 14-16
 - iv) He Used Him For His Glory - v. 17
 - e) Note: This same principle is witnessed in the life of Elijah - 1 Kings 19.)
 - f) What does this teach us?
 - g) Simply the truth that who we are in Jesus cannot be invalidated by our sin!
 - h) We all know that God chastens His children –
 - i) **Rev. 3:19 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.**
 - j) **Heb. 12:6-12—" FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES." It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the**

Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble,

- k) However, how many of us could testify to the truth that there have been times when we were miles away from the Lord and He still blessed our lives!
- l) What is this?
- m) Nothing less than our grace!
- n) This just serves to remind us that God deals with us on the basis of who we are rather than on the basis of what we do!
- o) Note: This does not give us a license to sin!
- p) After all, the redeemed sinner is going to want to serve the Lord and will not rest until things are right between them and the Lord.
- q) It is also true that after a while God will deal directly and completely with the sin that resides within His children's hearts.
- r) Thank God, even our sin is unable to separate us from the love we have in Jesus Christ –
- s) **Rom. 8:38-39—" For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

3) SIN CANNOT DERAILED GOD'S PLAN

- a) When Abraham left the promised land to enter Gerar, he placed the plan of God in jeopardy.
- b) You see, God had promised to send the promised seed within a year,
- c) Gen. 18:10-14
- d) Abraham showed very poor judgment!
- e) If Abimelech had been allowed to sleep with Sarah, it could have short-circuited God's plan.
- f) Of course, the Scriptures tell us that God prevented anything like that from taking place!
- g) Another problem is the fact that Abraham is the sole representative of God Almighty, v. 7.
- h) He has been commissioned to be a blessing to all the families of the earth.
- i) Instead of being a blessing and a witness for God, Abraham's life could have been a hindrance to prevent Abimelech from coming to God.
- j) However, in spite of Abraham's sin, God spoke to Abimelech and dealt with him anyway, v. 6-7.
- k) Regardless of what we do, God's plan will be accomplished!
- l) For too long, preachers have tried to keep the people of God in line by using fear tactics against them.
- m) The saints have been told to live right or God can't bless, He can't work and He can't save souls.
- n) Many have been told that they have sent others to Hell by the lifestyles they live.
- o) Well, I just want to set the record straight this evening!
- p) You cannot hinder God from doing His work!

- q) You might miss out on the blessing of being a part of what He is doing, but God will accomplish His will in the church and in the world whether we cooperate or not!
- r) And, another thing, you cannot "send anyone to Hell".
- s) Men go to hell when they refuse to receive Christ as their Savior and nothing you or I do can cause them to do that or prevent them from doing that!
- t) That may not be what you have heard all your life, but it is still the truth!
- u) Our job is to warn them and to live right before them, but the decision they make in the end is their's and their's alone,
- v) Eze. 3:18—" **“When I say to the wicked, ‘You will surely die,’ and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand.**
- w) Did you know that Abraham's sin should have shamed Abraham?
- x) But there is no indication that he ever acknowledged it or repented of it!
- y) Much like many in our world today!
- z) But, think about this: Abraham's sin was used as testimony to the greatness of God.
- aa) Abimelech would have never known that God was a God of mercy, grace, forgiveness and restoration if that old saint had never fallen into sin!
- bb) But, because he did, God was able to demonstrate His power through forgiving and restoring Abraham by grace.
- cc) Note: This is not an excuse for sinning!
- dd) It is just a reminder that our sin will not stop God from saving folks.
- ee) People need to know that our God is a God Who saves and keeps through grace not works!

4) **SIN WEARS THE EMPERORS CLOTHES**

- a) **Ill. The story of "The Emperor's New Suit"-- Two swindlers arrive at the capital city of an emperor who spends lavishly on clothing at the expense of state matters. Posing as weavers, they offer to supply him with magnificent clothes that are invisible to those who are stupid or incompetent. The emperor hires them, and they set up looms and go to work. A succession of officials, and then the emperor himself, visit them to check their progress. Each sees that the looms are empty but pretends otherwise to avoid being thought a fool. Finally, the weavers report that the emperor's suit is finished. They mime dressing him and he sets off in a procession before the whole city. The townsfolk uncomfortably go along with the pretense, not wanting to appear inept or stupid, until a child blurts out that the emperor is wearing nothing at all. The people then realize that everyone has been fooled. Although startled, the emperor continues the procession, walking more proudly than ever.**
- b) Sin is just like that.
- c) It attempts to camouflage itself, but it never realizes that its camouflage is flimsy and transparent.
- d) In fact, everyone can see through it, except the sinner.
- e) When Abraham is confronted by his sin, he does not repent, but instead he offers up excuses.
- f) Here they are.
- g) They aren't much, but they are the same ones people still use today.
- h) **He Claimed That He Had Acted Out Of Fear - v. 11 –**

- i) It wasn't fear that caused this terrible event, it was a lack of faith!
- i) **He Twisted The Facts - v. 12 –**
 - i) Sarah was his sister, but she was more than that, she was his wife!
- j) **He Hid Behind His Past Failures - v. 13 –**
 - i) He tells the king that this is the way we have always done it.
- k) Abraham's response to being confronted is to attempt to hide behind some very flimsy excuses.
- l) Like the Emperor, Abraham did not even realize that he was fully exposed.
- m) When we sin and are found out, we always try to make excuses for our behavior.
- n) We will either blame someone else, or we will blame the devil.
- o) We may try to pretend that we didn't do anything wrong.
- p) We may plead ignorance.
- q) We may act like we see no wrong in our actions.
- r) There are a thousand ways we can handle sin, but only one way will bring cleansing, restoration and the blessing of God.
- s) Sin must be confessed!
- t) It must be dragged kicking and screaming into the open and it must be exposed for what it is: black, dirty and wicked!
- u) This is God's way –
- v) Pro. 28:13—" **He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.**
- w) 1 John 1:9—" **If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**
- x) What excuses are you hiding your behavior behind this evening?
- y) Whether you know it or not, everyone already sees it for what it is!
- z) You will never get past it until you can see it for yourself and deal with it God's way!

Conc: We all battle sin!

Some more than others, but we all fight it nonetheless.

The question is, who is winning the battle, you or your sins?

If you want to be free you can be! If you want to be a light to the world you can be.

If you want your life to be blessed and to be a blessing, you can have it!

All it takes is you doing what Abraham refused to do: get before the Lord and face your sins for what they are!

If you do, the Lord will forgive you and bless you, He will restore you and use you for His glory.

Does that sound good to you?

If you need that kind of help, it is available in Jesus.

You come to Him and watch Him work on your sin problem!