

The Rest Areas of Life-21 33-34.docx
Genesis 21:33-34

To Know Him and Make Him Known

There are times in life that are simply difficult to tolerate!

There are battles to fight, valleys to cross, long nights of the soul to endure and storms that must be weathered.

All you have to do is read the story of Job, or just live in this world for any length of time and you will know what I am saying is true.

These times are not sent because the Lord wishes to cause us trouble.

He is in the business of conforming His people into His image,

Rom. 8:29

2 Cor. 4:17

The trials of life are the tools that shape us into His likeness.

Therefore, even though they are difficult, they are a blessing in disguise.

Despite how we feel sometimes, life isn't all bad.

We would all have to admit that there are times when the Lord inserts times of peace into our lives.

He allows us to pass by some "still waters" and He causes us to "lie down in green pastures."

I thank God for those times in my life and I know you do too!

Just as surely as the troubles of life are sent into our lives to grow, mature and strengthen us, the rest periods of life are sent for their purpose as well.

This chapter is all about a rest area in the journey of Abraham's life.

The ups and downs that lead to this point.

I would like to point a few uses for these rest areas of life.

When the times of rest come, knowing how to use them properly allows us to extract from them all the blessing that God wants us to get.

I want to preach for a few minutes on The Rest Areas Of Life.

1) FOR INHABITING THE BEST PLACES—vs. 33

- a) The middle part of this passage has to do with a transaction between Abraham and Abimelech, v. 22-31.
- b) This transaction saw seven sheep change hands.
- c) These seven sheep were a testimony that the well belonged to Abraham.
- d) The well became known as "Beersheba", which means "The well of the seven-fold oath."
- e) Wells were of vast importance to men like Abraham.
- f) They needed them to ensure the lives of their flocks, herds and families.
- g) It was by this well of sweet water that Abraham settled down and enjoyed this rest area of life.
- h) When the fur is flying in your life, it is harder to concentrate on your walk with the Lord.
- i) But, we should take advantage of the calm times of life to enhance our relationship with Him.
- j) If we can learn to love Him during the lulls of life, then we won't have to work nearly as hard to find Him during the storms!
- k) What I am advocating is a life that zeros in on God through prayer, worship and the study of His Word.
- l) A life that doesn't wait until everything falls apart to confess its sins and seek His face.
- m) But, a life that is lived in a place of closeness day by day, even when things are good.
- n) A life that finds a place of consistent growth in the things of the Lord is a life that He can use for His glory!
- o) A good example of this truth is the life of Job.
- p) He called on the Lord when things went wrong,
- q) **Job 1:20-22.**
- r) He was able to do it quickly because he had spent time in the Lord's presence when things were going well,
- s) **Job 1:1, 5, 8.**
- t) If we can ever learn to settle down in the best places of His blessings during the good, restful times of life, we will not be so easily blown off course when the adverse winds of trials and afflictions begin to blow against us!

2) FOR INSULATING YOURSELF WITH HIS PROMISES—vs. 22-32

- a) These verses tell of the covenant made between Abraham and Abimelech concerning their mutual interests.
- b) Abimelech was concerned about his safety, Abraham was concerned about his well.
- c) At the end of this summit, Abraham could dwell with safety within the borders of Abimelech's land because he had the promises of this covenant, v. 23.
- d) Use the rest areas of life as times to meditate on the great promises of the Lord!
- e) Let these truths feed your soul.
- f) Then, when the troublesome times do come, you will find that you are steadied by His Word and by His great promises.
- g) For instance, we believe in eternal security, and that is His promise to His children, but under the right kind of pressure, you might begin to feel that you are lost again.
- h) John the Baptist - **Matt. 11:3** - He found himself in a position of doubt that he probably never thought he would see!

- i) The promise of His presence is another that comes under attack.
- j) What about His power and ability?
- k) What about His Sovereignty?
- l) What about His ability to meet your needs?
- m) However, I believe that you will immerse yourself in His promises, they will be a help and a comfort as you fight the battles of life.
- n) The whole point is this, so fill your heart and life with His truth during the lulls in the storm, that when the winds begin to howl again, you are insulated by His promises.
- o) You will find that it is a tactic that works wonders!

3) FOR INVOLVING YOURSELF WITH HIS WORSHIP—vs. 33

- a) Abraham used this calm period of life to call on the name of the Lord.
- b) He used this time to deepen his relationship with God.
- c) This certainly equipped him for the battles that still lay ahead.
- d) Why is it that so many people wait until the bottom falls out to call on the Lord?
- e) The best time to worship Him is all the time!
- f) It says far more about your character when you are consistent in worship than it does for you to wait until you are in trouble to call on Him.
- g) Many people treat Him like He was a spare tire!
- h) Pull Him out when life goes flat, put Him away again when the crisis has passed.
- i) Don't wait until some calamity comes to run to Him, be in the business of seeking His face day by day.
- j) Then, when trials do come, you are already close to Him.
- k) That is why church, Bible reading and prayer are so vitally important.

4) FOR INVESTING IN THE FUTURE—vs. 33

- a) This verse tells us that Abraham planted a "grove".
- b) This simply means that he planted a tree.
- c) He is making an investment for the future.
- d) At his age, he might never cool himself under its shade, but Isaac will, and his grandchildren will.
- e) He is looking beyond himself to those who will follow and is making a difference for them while he can.
- f) Use the rest areas of life as times to make an investment in the future of the Lord's kingdom work.
- g) Is there a young person you can mentor?
- h) Is there a life you can impact for the glory of God?
- i) Is there someone's life that you can be a blessing to for the glory of the Lord?
- j) This is what the Lord intends His people to be doing –
- k) **Titus 2:2-5.**
- l) There will come a time when your life will be wracked by the winds of adversity.
- m) When those times come, your focus will be so inward that you will not be able to make a difference for others.
- n) The time to reach out is when things are going smoothly.
- o) Sadly, too many believers live their lives for self, with no concern for anyone else.

5) FOR INVENTORYING HIS BLESSINGS—vs. 1-8

- a) As those peaceful days unfolded for Abraham, he was able to spend the time listening to the laughter of Isaac and Sarah.

- b) He was able to contemplate all that the Lord had done for him and how God had blessed his life.
- c) It was a time for him to inventory the blessings of the Lord.
- d) Being thankful for the blessings of the Lord in the days when life is good is a great way to prepare for those times when it is less than pleasant!
- e) Living in the constant awareness of the Lord's goodness and blessings in your life is a hedge against doubt, fear and uncertainty when the hard days of trials come.
- f) **Note:** God would have us to be a thankful people,
- g) **1 Thess. 5:18**
- h) **Phil. 4:6.**
- i) Friends, don't take the easy days of life for granted!
- j) They will not last forever, but while they are here, use them as times to rejoice in the blessings of the Lord and to prepare for the days that are coming when it may seem that the blessings are few and far in between!

Conc: At this point in his life, Abraham was well aware of all that he had already been through.

He knew what the storm felt like!

He knew how dark the valley could be and he knew how long the night could last.

But, he did not know what lay just ahead!

If he had been able to see the future, he might not have ever chosen to face it.

God in His wisdom, used this rest area time in Abraham's life to prepare him for the trial that was just ahead.

You know, you and I cannot see tomorrow either!

We do not know what is ahead.

I am just glad that God, in His wisdom, plans a few rest areas along the way for us to enjoy.

He gives us the times of refreshment and peace to help us to recover from our past battles and to prepare ourselves for the trials that lie ahead.

Friends, are you using the rest areas of life to their full advantage?

If you are in one of life's lulls, thank God for, and ask Him to help you to use it for His glory.

If you are in the storm this evening, why not come before Him and thank Him for the battle you are fighting and thank Him that somewhere out there, there is a rest area with your name on it!