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“From the Pastor’s Desk”

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LIVING A RICH AND FULLY SATISFIED LIFE

“And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.” Gen 24:1

In the secular world, the media of late has been exposing some of the hidden secrets of many famous personalities of those in the movie industry, government, and corporate business world. It appears that the “*chickens are coming home to roost*” as the old saying goes. While I do not desire in any way to make a judgment as to whether there is truth in these stories or not...only time will tell.

However, in my devotions in the early part of my day recently I was struck in the reading of what the Scripture said concerning Abraham. In the latter years of his life it declared that the Lord had “***blessed Abraham in all things.***” That is quite a statement filled with great meaning. I dare say that there are some people who feel that such a statement could not be said of their life. Of course, one of the reasons may be because they may not have been as fully obedient to God as Abraham was in order to be blessed to that degree.

I truly believe this is something God wants to do for His creation. In fact, God did not only want to bless Abraham, but He wanted to bless him in such a manner that all the nations of the earth would be blessed by him and his seed. (Gen. 22:18) When Abraham and Sarah traveled to Beersheba, Abimelech, King of the Philistines and Phicol, the chief captain of his host admitted to him that very thing because he said to him: “***God is with thee in all that thou doest.***” What an impression that must have made on these Philistines. No wonder, as a mark of respect he gave to Abraham valuable gifts, and offered him a settlement in any part of his country. He wanted his people to be blessed too.

Then we read Abraham’s obituary in chapter twenty-five of Genesis in which the author tells us that Abraham lived one hundred and seventy-years...which we must all admit is a great deal of years. I know of no one who has lived that long in our time. But then it says, (and I am quoting from the Updated New American Standard Bible): “*Abraham breathed his last and died in a ripe age, **an old man and satisfied with life; and he was gathered to his people.***” Gen. 25:8 (NASB)

Wow! Just think about it...an old man and satisfied with life. What a way to die. What a great finish. A man who in many ways could have been considered a vagabond, journeying here and there in search of a city, “*...which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*” (Heb. 11:10)

*I like what Adam Clarke said in his commentary on this verse: He said, “He knew that earth could afford no permanent residence for an immortal mind, and he looked for that heavenly building of which God is the architect and owner; in a word, **he lost sight of earth, that he might keep heaven in view.** And all who are partakers of his faith possess the same spirit, walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing.”*

I believe Mr. Clarke had the right interpretation on this verse. Because that is the only way any of us can have higher aspirations when we get to a place in our spiritual walk that we quit looking for the things of this earth to satisfy us. I find that so often the things of this life wear with the using. Once the new is gone, we start looking for something else to entertain us. The things of this earth do not give any of us any lasting fulfillment.

Therefore it is vital we set our eyes on higher goals, higher aspirations which are God-centered. Thus, losing sight of the earthly things by keeping our eyes on “*heavenly things*” (the spiritual prospective). As the Apostle Paul said, “*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*” Philippians 3:13

DID ABRAHAM LIVE A LIFE FREE OF PROBLEMS

Now did this mean that Abraham lived a life free from problems? No! He had many problems and challenges. Abraham lived in fear of his life because of the beautiful woman he had married. He was confident that one of the kings would try to have him killed in order to take Sarah for his wife. (Gen. 12) So in order to feel secure in a strange territory he and Sarah tried to perpetuate half-a-lie by declaring that they were brother and sister, rather than husband and wife. God had to rescue Sarah from those who found her very appealing and attractive.

Abraham had problems with Lot’s herdsmen fighting with his herdsmen Finally in order to resolve the conflict they found it necessary that each go their separate ways. (Gen. 13) This nephew was like a son to him. It surely was very painful to find it necessary to let him go.

Sarah, the love of his life, was barren and kept from having children until she was ninety. Even after she was blessed with Isaac, there was conflict in their household because Ishmael was caught making fun of her only son. Abraham found that he had to deal with this conflict and eventually drive Hagar and Ishmael from his house.

Then when God asked him to do the unthinkable...sacrifice his only son by Sarah, whom they had waited most of their life to obtain was no doubt the hardest thing he could ever do. How could a loving God ask him to do such a thing? That was probably one thought that possibly came into his head. If any of my readers have had God ask them to do something that seemed completely foreign and difficult – you may have an idea as to how he must have felt when God asked him to put his only son on the altar. Now we know how the story turned out, but Abraham didn’t know at the time how it was going to turn out.

Incidentally, put yourself in Isaac’s shoes for a minute. I can almost hear Isaac say, “*Father, are you sure this is what God’s wants?*” No, Abraham did not live a life free from problems. He had to walk through several narrow passage ways in which he was never sure how things were going to turn out. But Abraham developed a deep seeded faith that somehow, someday, God would work things out. How do I know this? By what I read in God’s Word. The Scripture said:

*“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: **Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.**” Heb. 11:17-19*

In spite of all the difficulties for which Abraham had to overcome, he kept his eyes heavenward. You can get a sense of Abraham’s daily habits in Gen. 19 after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. When you look at verse 27-29, you will see that he arose the next morning and went to the place where he had stood before the Lord, making intercession for Lot, his family as well as those cities where his nephew had dwelt. Even though he saw the “*smoke of the land ascended like the smoke of a furnace,*” he soon discovered that God spared Lot because “*God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrown.*”

Even in a day when evil was so rampant that God actually had to destroy the cities where Lot dwelt, God found a way to save his nephew through an extension of His grace in spite of the fact that Lot resisted the angels that God sent to save him and his entire family. Abraham’s life ended with this testimony that he was blessed richly and fully with a satisfied life. Because in spite of what one may call a “*narrow escape*” Abraham found God to be faithful. No wonder he lived a full and satisfying life...he served One whom he knew would make it possible....and so can you. Amen