

**The Journey of Faith**  
**(4) Refreshed by Jesus Christ**  
**Genesis 14:1-24**  
**June 19th 2022**  
**Preacher: Pastor Roy Summers**

**Introduction**

**Introduction—The Trials of a believer's Life**

We are learning from our studies in the life of Abraham, that a believer's life can be described as a long series of tests, one after the other. The Lord sovereignly allows these trials into our lives, to refine our faith, to bless those around us and ultimately to glorify his great and holy name.

Sometimes Abraham handles the tests full of trust in God, but at other times he reacts more out of fear, than out of trust in the Lord.

What test are you passing through at this moment, I wonder? May the Lord strengthen you through his Word so that you can glorify his great name through it by trusting in him, and him alone.

**Today's test is recuing Lot!**

The test Abraham faces in Genesis 14 was forced on him by his wayward nephew Lot. Abraham himself was enjoying a season of peace and tranquillity. The famine of Genesis 12 is a distant memory, the hassle between his herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen has been resolved, and we read, "Abram moved his tents and went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron where he built and altar to the Lord." (13:18)

"Time for rest, conflicts all over!" Perhaps Abraham thought like this! Alas it was not to be, for Abraham is compelled to go into battle and rescue Lot. And this test would turn out to be the most dangerous and life-threatening trial Abraham has ever faced so far. Have you ever settled down for a season of well earned rest, only to find yourself in the greatest struggle of your life?

But notice with me that Abraham is prepared for this very moment. He's been following Jerusalem's Twitter feed and he knows that international trouble is brewing, so he has trained 318 men in his household to bear arms (14:14). That may seem a tiny army perhaps compared to the Big Boys in the area, but Abraham is doing the best he can. Moreover, he has made alliances with three local men, the brothers, Mamre, Eschol and Aner, (verse 13). And he's even worked out some military strategies just in case a war breaks out - he'll attack at night, if the need arises, and he'll divide his army into two divisions, to attack on two fronts. (verse 15). "I may be at rest NOW but I must prepare for FUTURE battle." Are we ready for spiritual trials, both as individuals and as a church? Satan does not like any church that sticks to the Gospel: "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8)

Let's learn this morning from Abraham, first, that,

### **#1 Faith keeps no record of wrongs**

Why did Abraham have to risk his life to save Lot? Well one day Lot was caught up in the local geo-politics of the region and became a Prisoner of War. A POW was "as wretched a fate as could befall men in ancient times," according to the Bible commentator Richard Lenski. Lot became a wretched POW.

Here's how it happened: Four kings led by Kedorlaomer had defeated an alliance of five kings and every year those four kings led by King Kedorlaomer exacted tribute of some kind from the five subdued kings. Perhaps they asked for hundreds of pounds of gold or tons of grain each year. This humiliation went on for 12 years; in the 13th year the five subject kings had had enough and decided to rebel. In the 14th year, the victorious four kings led by King Kedorlaomer decided to quell the rebellion, they attacked the five rebellious kings, beat them, and in the process took Lot, his possessions and family as war booty. And then, "One who had escaped came and reported this to Abraham the Hebrew..." (verse 13)

Don't worry about the details, all we need to know is that Abraham's nephew Lot has become a POW and Abraham now has to make up his mind what to do. And this is where we learn our first lesson, that Faith and love keeps no record of wrongs. What would you do, if cousin Lot had become a POW?

Lot has wronged Abraham, remember? Chosen the best land for himself, and left the poor stuff for Abraham? Abraham could have held a grudge against Lot, closed off his heart to him, unfriended him on Facebook, he even taken a page from “cancel culture” and written him off.

What is more Abraham could have justified his refusal to help by arguing that it was Lot’s own fault for getting himself into this mess. True! The moment young Lot left the side of older uncle Abraham he made one mistake after another. Remember, he chose to graze his flocks in the lush Jordan River valley knowing full well that evil people lived in that valley? At the start he lived at a distance from these evil people. But next thing we hear, Lot’s decided to pitch his tent near the city of Sodom (13:12), and before long he’s moved right into the wicked city (14:12).

When Abraham heard of Lot’s plight he could have argued in his mind “Lot’s only got himself to blame for this mess. If he hadn’t lived in Sodom he wouldn’t have got caught up in this conflict.”

But Abraham doesn’t hold grudges from the past or judge Lot for his present mistakes, “Here is a nephew in need and I shall help him!”

Has someone let you down, hurt you, in some way, disappointed you? Ask the Lord to fill your heart with divine forgiveness, ask him to help you to forgive just as he in Christ Jesus has forgiven you. If we let unforgiveness fester, it can so easily result in hardness of heart, which spreads to others: “a root of bitterness that defiles many.” (Hebrews 12:5). “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” (Colossians 3:13)

Abraham held no grudges against nephew Lot and was ready to help him the moment he was in need. That’s the first lesson we all may learn from Abraham.

In the second place, please note with me that....

## **#2 Faith is courageous**

Everything is stacked against Abraham in this attempt to free Lot. He’s a tiny player on the global stage; we’re talking Superpowers compared to Microstates. And the victorious 5 kings have just demonstrated their superior power by overtaking 6 nations

before subduing the 5 rebel kings! (verses 5-7). And what if Abraham is killed in the conflict, what happens to all God's promise to bless the world through him? This is a risky adventure however you look at it! Humanly speaking there is no chance of victory! But Abraham trusts in the God who is the maker of heaven and earth! And with God's help the odds are changed and God's promises become true: "Five will chase a hundred (that's a ratio of 1 to 20) and a hundred will chase ten thousand (that's a ratio of 1 to 100)" Leviticus 26:8. And sure enough, God won the battle, that day. "Abraham recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions together with the women and the other people." (14:16)

Faith is courageous! Very courageous!

I have been deeply impressed with the courage of Franklin Graham, the son of the evangelist Billy Graham. He's come to our country on a four city Gospel-preaching "God Loves you" tour. Liverpool, South Wales, Sheffield and in July 16th London. A few years ago, Franklin was banned from certain venues in this country, because he faithfully preaches the Gospel, just as his father Billy did. But western culture has changed since the days of his father Billy, and all sorts of lies and slander have been spread about Franklin, which were never spread about Billy.

Did Franklin give up? Stay in the USA? Not at all! Courageously, he won a legal battle, courts found that the venues had discriminated against him and he has come back to preach the Gospel in the UK, and thousands have heard the Gospel. That's courage fuelled by faith in God! Faith is courageous!

What does courageous faith look like for you and I? It takes courage to give money to the Lord's work—especially in an era of rising costs! Do you give to the Lord's work here? We support 4 workers and a number of missionaries. It may take courage to sign up to our CWA—"never been before, I'm nervous." It takes courage to answer God's voice and fulfil some calling on your life, some ministry in the church! It will take courage for MPC to plant another church, if that is what the Lord us calling us to do! "We're just recovering from the pandemic, let's take it easy for a few years!" But there are so many communities around us who must hear the Gospel!

### **#3 Courageous Faith will be refreshed by Jesus Christ**

Warfare is an exhausting business, right? Abraham and his men must have been wacked by the fight—and can I suggest fearful too? For in rescuing Lot he has made new enemies, not least King Kedorlaomer. Put yourself in Abraham's shoes! Yes, he's rescued Lot, but now he's exhausted and in danger.

Well, the Lord brought into Abraham's life, just at the very moment of weakness and fear, the strange figure of the Melchizedek, who was both the king of Salem (Jerusalem) and the priest of God. And Melchizedek brought out bread and wine— just what Abraham and his army needs after winning a battle! And then Melchizedek spoke these comforting words to Abraham: “Blessed be Abram by God most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most high, who delivered your enemies into your hand.” (19-20) And then in a vision, God said to weary Abraham: “Do not be afraid, Abraham, I am your shield (In other words, I'll protect you against your new enemies), Your very great reward.” (15:1)

God rewarded Abraham's courageous faith with bread and wine and assurances of his protection.

Why do I say that Abraham was refreshed by Jesus Christ? Well, we've already noticed the “bread and wine” haven't we? Melchizedek gave this as provision for tired soldiers, but we see a hint of the bread and wine of communion here, don't we? Melchizedek was a Priest and a King, well you weren't allowed to be a King and a Priest in the OT, but Jesus is both a Priest and a King - and more! He is the only one who is Prophet, Priest and King. In Hebrews chapter 7 we are told explicitly that Melchizedek is a type of Christ. So we can say, without doubt, that after the battle, Abraham was refreshed by Jesus Christ.

### **Conclusion**

Brothers and sisters, let's never hold grudges, but freely forgive since we have been freely forgiven through Christ.

And when God calls us to some humanly risky adventure, let's trust in the mighty power of God in the full assurance that the Lord Jesus will draw near and refresh us with us presence, his word, his forgiveness and his everlasting love.