

051019

I. My Notes... WWC message 5/12 (Mother's Day)

II. Series: Let's Find Out Who We

a. Title: Let's Think About Our God

b. Text: Genesis 12: 1-3; 13: 8-9; 14:22-24

c. Quote: Only God Himself fully appreciates the influence of a Christian mother in the molding of character in her children. Billy Graham

III. Introduction

a. It's Mother's Day. Isn't it nice that Mother's Day always falls on a Sunday

😊 ...? We can come to church and celebrate Mom and Motherhood. Mom's are amazing, giving love – without condition or thought of it coming back, it's part of the job description. Mom's impact and influence the lives of their kids in a very special way. If you had a good relationship with your Mom, then much of your life (the things you do) are a result of that relationship. If there was difficulty between you and Mom -if there was bad behavior and poor choices that resulted in lifelong hurt – then the choices you make and the way you act is in response to that. We are looking for love and acceptance... Moms have been known to do that. Even in their expectations, the intention is what's best for you. In reference to Mothers, Billy Graham said, "Only God Himself fully appreciates the influence of a Christian mother in the molding of character in her children." I hope that there was/is a "praying Mom" in your life or that you are a praying Mom – it truly makes a difference. Thank you, Mom, for being a praying Mom...

b. Understanding who we are as individuals', as believers, can be the quest (mission, search) that defines each of us. An article I read in Psychology Today provided some insight into knowing one's self. "When you know yourself, you

understand what motivates you to resist bad habits and develop good ones. You'll have the insight to know which values and goals activate your willpower. ... Tolerance and understanding of others. Your awareness of your own foibles and struggles can help you empathize with others.” (Psychology Today, 3/9/16). The renowned philosopher Socrates stated, “To know thyself is the beginning of wisdom”. And as believers, we have been told, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and discipline.” (Proverbs 1:7 CSB). It’s not about doing your own thing, going your own way. To truly honor and glorify the Lord, we must choose obedience – to act with awe and reverence toward God and His values, teachings. It is a choice to live and act in a manner that reflects our faith, it is a choice to demonstrate – to live with love as the guiding direction.

- c. Over the last few weeks we have learned about our position, our rights and benefits, due to the connection we have “In Christ” (Eph. 1). And we also discovered that Jesus chose each of us. He chose us to “bear fruit” (John 15), to show God’s love and compassion to those who are lost and questioning their meaning and purpose. This is the tip of the iceberg, if you will allow, so that we can find out what it means to live as a believer (a Christian) in the context of daily life. Our identity as believers (In Him) is defined in terms of what God does in us and the relationship that is developed with us. Our eternal destiny is a result of this relationship and part of who we are. God molds us and shapes us into who He has purposed us to be, so that we can share who He is to the rest of the World. The reason we are identified “In Christ” is so that we can reveal who God is – His kindness and compassion to everyone around us.
- d. The Apostle Paul, in talking about Christian Life, reminded the faithful, “So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without

it.” (Colossians 3:12-14 MSG). Paul is telling believers, to prepare themselves to reveal the goodness of God, to share love that brings all together, and to show compassion throughout their lives. We get to dress appropriately as God’s family members. The garments we wear are available for all to see.

- e. Often, many people deal with insecurity. And many have gotten very good at hiding it. In this insecurity, we have the opportunity – due to our relationship with the Lord – to uncover more than individuality. We have the chance to get a glimpse of ourselves as God sees us. We can move past the lies, the misconceptions, the false perceptions, into an accurate view of who we are. Again, the words of the Apostle Paul...Romans 12:3 (NLT2): “Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don’t think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us.” One of those great benefits of being In Christ, is being able to see things from a different perspective... from God’s viewpoint.

IV. First Thought

- a. Ever been on a diet? Or done something to radically change your life?
- b. Abram had come to trust YHWH when he lived in Ur of the Chaldees (a thriving metropolis, southern Iraq today). And he felt that God was moving him to Canaan (the Promised Land).
- c. It took a high degree of faith and trust to leave his family and come into a full relationship with God.
- d. Genesis 12:1-3 (CSB)

The LORD said to Abram: Go out from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a

blessing. I will bless those who bless you, I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

- e. Trusting God opens the door to some amazing things
- f. Abram was “blessed”, he was acknowledged and told he would be important
- g. It’s the same with us. Our relationship with God brings some amazing results. We are blessed, loved, accepted, and given the guarantee of eternity because of grace
- h. What does it mean to “be blessed”? One of the definitions, “to confer or invoke divine favor upon; ask God to look favorably on” (Oxford Dictionary Online)
- i. The Greek definition of the word “blessed” comes from makários. This means the believer is put in the position for receiving God’s grace, His best, His favor.
- j. Being blessed is about finding contentment during the storms of life. It is about knowing that trusting God is more than just the “right” decision, it is the best lifestyle we can have
- k. Abram was blessed, protected, and guided. It’s the same for you and me.
- l. Abram was obedient to the call of God – he had a choice. You and I have a choice to... live by faith, love wholly and completely, or serve self.

V. Next Observation

- a. Often, people see obedience – serving the Lord, as requiring sacrifice. God doesn’t ask us to give up our self, just our selfish behaviors and desires
- b. We must become relationship builders. In the context of faith, of family, of life.
- c. I have watched those who are Loners live angry, linger in hurt, and feel cheated
- d. We weren’t created to go it alone.

- e. In this country we seem to value individuality – independence. It might be better to live interdependent – united but holding onto to your unique characteristics
- f. In being a relationship builder, it becomes allowing the Holy Spirit to guide and direct all choices that facilitates growth and honors the Lord
- g. Genesis 13:8-9 (NCV)

Abram said to Lot, “There should be no arguing between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, because we are brothers. We should separate. The whole land is there in front of you. If you go to the left, I will go to the right. If you go to the right, I will go to the left.”

- h. Faced with a problem of survival because of their many possessions (v. 6) and ensuing strife (v. 7), sheiks Abram and Lot had to separate, one going one way and the other another. One might have expected that Abram, the recipient of God's promise, would have exercised his right and chosen first. But he magnanimously offered the first choice to Lot. Lot made his choice purely on the human level, satisfying himself with the fat of the land. Abram's decision to let Lot choose first was undoubtedly a choice made by faith, with Abram not looking on things temporal, but on things spiritual, that is, God's promise.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

- i. Blessings are easily seen in good times
- j. Blessings are seen as a result of “right” behaviors
- k. Can you discover a blessing in the middle of a difficulty?
- l. How about when life doesn’t make sense?
- m. Here’s the truth about blessing ... it begins with God. After that it flows to both you and me. It started with Abraham and it goes through you and I, we become people who bless the entire earth.

- n. This is going to be the way God spreads his blessing. Now the big problem is this: humans tend to think, How can I just enhance my own blessedness? Accumulating blessings becomes a way of life.
- o. You may have heard of product placement in movies. Movies actually get paid to insert the names of products into the story somehow. I just read this story this week. A company actually offered pastors the chance to win \$1,000 and a free trip to London if the pastor would send proof that they mentioned a particular movie in their sermon. I won't tell you what the movie was, but it's a good movie. It's connected to faith issues, but we live in such a commercially driven society that somebody is actually offering to pay pastors to do product placement in sermons! A perfect example of how consumed we are with our own blessings! That's not God's plan. God's plan is to give you a blessing so you can be a blessing. (John Ortberg, The Power of a Blessing)

VI. Last Point

- a. Faith - complete trust or confidence in someone or something. Oxford Dictionary Online
- b. This is the way that we are called to live
- c. John 14:21 (Phillips NT)

"Every man who knows my commandments and obeys them is the man who really loves me, and every man who really loves me will himself be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and make myself known to him."
- d. Love, authentic love, in the life of a believer, is shown through the choice of obedience
- e. And the benefit of obedience is the favor – the blessing of God
- f. The faith that brings us to salvation is the faith that results in obedience
- g. Let's look at what faith looks like in life

h. Genesis 14:22-24 (CSB)

But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand in an oath to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread or sandal strap or anything that belongs to you, so you can never say, 'I made Abram rich.' I will take nothing except what the servants have eaten. But as for the share of the men who came with me — Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre — they can take their share."

- i. Abram trusted the blessing that God had put on him
- j. Obedient faith sees that any success, prosperity, joy, or comfort comes from God Himself
- k. Faith grows at every opportunity and is revealed in the life choices we make
- l. Faith testifies of who we (believers) trust and where our focus is

VII. Final Thought

- a. Trusting the Holy Spirit, many call it walking by the Spirit, means living by faith. That can be challenging today. There are so many issues that rise-up to deter or distract believers each day
- b. And the challenges can elicit a wide range of emotions. We can either live by feelings or live by what we know to be truth
- c. Romans 4:3 (NLT2)

For the Scriptures tell us, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith."
- d. Early in the patriarch's life, the Lord chose him to play a crucial role in a great plan to redeem the world from evil. This was done by the promise (covenant) that God made with Abram and his descendants

- e. If I were writing this story, I would have rewarded Abram’s obedience right away. I would have allowed him to settle down in a fertile and beautiful valley in the Promised Land and then given him a gaggle of little Abrams, who would have called him “exalted.” I would have taken his obedience as an opportunity to show everyone that I am a god worth obeying. Fortunately, the one true God is wiser than I am. He waited. The Lord wanted something more than an obedience-in-exchange-for-blessing business arrangement. He wanted a relationship. And relationships require intimacy and trust in equal portions

Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary - Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary – Romans.
- f. Let’s pray
- g. May you discover the blessings of God amid the storms that arise each day. May the relationships you build bring you strength and encouragement along every step of your path. And may grace cause your faith to grow exponentially
- h. Grace first... Grace always
- i. Live simple, Live practical, Love eternally