



my grandma time

...doing simple things together!

Week 3, Day 1 --- Job 40-42

Week 3, Day 2 --- Genesis 12-15

Week 3, Day 3 --- Genesis 16-18

Week 3, Day 4 --- Genesis 19-21

Week 3, Day 5 --- Genesis 22-24

Week 3, Day 6 --- Genesis 25-26

Week 3, Day 7 --- Genesis 27-29

Week 3, Day 1 --- Job 40-42

In these chapters God describes some powerful beasts. We do not know if they were real physical creatures or intended to create an image of creatures so large that man would find it impossible to control them. For me, the description of Leviathan is a perfect picture of the dragons of children's stories. When I read this I know where the idea came from.

The point of all this is that no matter how powerful the creature, the creator is always able to control His creation. God is in charge and nothing is a threat to Him. Job recognizes God's power and might and repents. What does Job have to repent of? What has Job done wrong? Job believes after talking with God that it has been wrong for him to question God's will. This is hard for us. Our sin is very clear most of the time. We are unwilling to follow God so we rebel against God's will. Job had no choice.

The last chapter explains why I made some of the comments I did at the first of the book. God tells us that Job's friends have not told us the truth about who God is or what was happening. It is important to understand that God did not have to reward Job with a second life of wealth and prosperity. That God did that is an incredible sign of His love and goodness.

Week 3, Day 2 --- Genesis 12-15

I'm sure whole books have been written about these 4 chapters. Abram, who becomes Abraham, is one of the most important characters in the Old Testament. His descendants will be called Jews, Hebrews, and Israelites. In the beginning of Abram's relationship with God a promise is made and an expectation set. The promise is that Abram will have countless descendants and the expectation is that these descendants will take the blessing they receive from God and pass it on to others. Unfortunately, this rarely happened during the time of the Old Testament.

Abram was not perfect. There were times when he was afraid and he took things into his own hands in an attempt to control what was going to happen. Every time Abram does this it turns out bad. Every time he completely trusts in God the situation turns out well.

In chapter 15 God makes a covenant with Abram. A covenant is a promise. It is like a contract, but with a critical difference. A contract is between two parties and designed to protect the two parties. A contract establishes the minimum expectations for the relationship. A covenant is also between two parties, and is based on the promises that the two parties make for the benefit of the other party. In God's case, the promise that God makes are of much greater benefit to Abram than anything that Abram

can provide back to God. A covenant is a way of expressing in a physical way that each party has the other party's best interests at heart.

For the rest of the Old Testament you'll be following the story of Abraham's family. It is a crazy and mixed up story that gets confusing and discouraging at times. Through it all God will finally bring Jesus to earth and it will all start to make sense.

Week 3, Day 3 --- Genesis 16-18

Impatience and lack of trust always cause us problems. Abram and Sarai try to help God keep His promise and their solution causes great division in their family. This division continues to this day as the children of Ishmael, the Arab nations, continue to fight with the children of Abraham, the nation of Israel. God did keep His promise and as a part of keeping that promise He changes the names of Abram and Sarai to Abraham and Sarah.

When God comes to visit Abraham it is probably Jesus who makes the appearance. He isn't called Jesus because He hasn't been born and given an earthly name. We know now from the New Testament that the physical representation of God is named Jesus. His appearances in the Old Testament are very rare, but there are a few very special occasions when He shows up. Announcing that Isaac is coming is just such an occasion.

At the end of chapter 18 is the first extended prayer in the Old Testament. We might not think about it that way at first, but Abraham is talking to God and He is making requests. Abraham is acting as a priest as he speaks to God on behalf of the people of Sodom. A recent sermon by Tim Keller pointed out that Abraham is exploring something really important in this prayer. Abraham is trying to discover if the righteousness of a few can save many. He doesn't know it, but he is looking forward to Jesus. The truth is that the righteousness of the right one can save everyone. In the case of Sodom there wasn't even one who was righteous and you'll see what happens tomorrow.

Week 3, Day 4 --- Genesis 19-21

It is hard to imagine a place as evil as Sodom. Middle Eastern custom is that foreigners and travelers are given food and a place to stay even if they are your enemies. This was not true in Sodom. Instead, the men of Sodom wanted to sexually assault the angels of God who came to rescue Lot and his family. God prevents this and rescues Lot and his daughters, almost against their will. Somehow Lot and his family had become very comfortable in Sodom. They had become so comfortable with the evil around them that they did not want to leave. Lot did not trust God and never experienced the blessings that God could have provided.

Abraham trusted God most of the time, but there was one situation where he consistently did not trust God. He was married to a very beautiful woman and he was afraid that men would kill him to take away his wife. His solution was terrible. It demonstrated a tremendous lack of trust in God and lack of love for his wife. The amazing thing is that every time Abraham tells a ruler that his wife is his sister and gives her to him God provides wealth for Abraham through the process.

Abraham and Sarah now have a son and in the chapters to come the direction of the story will change.

Week 3, Day 5 --- Genesis 22-24

Three chapters and three love stories. Each is unique and none of them match up with the romantic tales that we hear today.

In yesterday's reading Abraham was so afraid of the people around him that he lied to protect himself. He demonstrated that he loved himself more than he loved his wife. He also demonstrated that he didn't fully trust God. God loves Abraham and wants Abraham to be able to trust him with everything. God knows that Abraham loves his son more than anything. The question is, does he love Isaac more than he loves God. Abraham passes the test. In Hebrews 11:17-19 we learn that Abraham trusted that God could raise Isaac from the dead. Abraham's love for God was sealed forever on the day on the day he was willing to sacrifice Isaac.

Abraham also loved his wife Sarah. This chapter may not be as much love story as it is an interesting lesson in how to negotiate in the Middle East. It does demonstrate that Abraham is willing to go to great lengths to honor his wife after her death.

Sometimes I think we ought to return to the customs of the past when it comes to marriage. In our country marriage is all about feelings and as feelings shift marriages fall apart. We try out relationships and that doesn't help. Instead we develop all sorts of bad habits that keep us from developing long-term relationships based on commitment to another person. Isaac and Rebekah never met until the day they married. Their love for each other grew even though you will learn that neither of them was a perfect partner. God put them together and they stayed together. That definitely takes love.

Week 3, Day 6 --- Genesis 25-26

The story of Isaac is brief. He is a faithful man and except for lying about his wife just like his father, he is a good man. Isaac inherited a great deal of wealth from his father Abraham and he manages it well. He becomes powerful and wealthy, but has no children. It is kind of funny that God chooses to begin a nation with two couple who are unable to have children. Sarah has one child and Rebecca has two. This would have been very unusual for this time.

Isaac and Rebecca initially lived with the Philistines near the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The dispute over wells causes them to move further inland. They move to a wilderness area that is about halfway between the coast and the Dead Sea.

In these times the birthright was very significant. As the oldest son Esau would inherit the bulk of his father's estate. His family would be the family known as the children of Isaac and Abraham. It was a very significant thing. He traded it all away for a bowl of stew. What's the worst bargain you have ever made?

Week 3, Day 7 --- Genesis 27-29

I am blessed with a wonderful family, but even within our family there are difficulties. Abraham's family had all sorts of issues and those issues became more numerous with every generation. Jesus is a descendant of Abraham, and the amazing thing is discovering who His ancestors were.

The nation of Israel begins with Jacob. Jacob was a coward and a liar. He was also very shrewd and became wealthy by cheating first his brother and then his uncle. First, Jacob cheated his brother Esau

with a very lopsided trade for his brother's birthright. The birthright was a son's place in the will. Jacob traded to go from second place to first place and that meant he got the bulk of his father's wealth. In today's reading Jacob steals Esau's blessing. The blessing was very significant. Through the blessing a father passed on to his son God's plan for the son. The blessing wasn't just nice words. It established what God would do. In Jacob's case the blessing he received meant that it would be through his family that Jesus would come. Jacob's descendants would be God's special people.

In Romans 9-11 Paul explains that this was really God's choice and not Isaac's choice. What still puzzles me is why God would choose a liar and a cheat like Jacob to be the father of His special people.

Jacob needed to leave the area where his family lived and found a good excuse in his need to find a wife. He traveled east to his uncle's territory and there he immediately fell in love with Rachel. It seems that this whole family is full of schemers and Jacob's uncle Laban tricks Jacob into marrying his oldest daughter. Having multiple wives is not God's desire, but Jacob ends up with two wives and endless conflicts as a result.