



## ***O Brother, Where Art Thou?***

Genesis 20

Pastor Brent Whitefield

**Introduction:** Abraham, hero of faith, has barely managed to rise above the moral standard of his time and place. He is encouraged by the promises of God and yet seeks to secure the blessings through his own venal scheme, passing himself off as Sarah's brother. His carelessness with his wife's virtue is repugnant even to the pagan king, Abimelech, who administers Abraham a well-deserved and divinely-inspired dressing-down. As with the patriarchs, so with us: God is able to use our clumsy or dishonorable attempts at self-preservation or promotion to bring about His divine will. Yet true joy in the journey is reserved for those who, in faith, submit to God's perfect plan, means, and timing.

**01.**

**02.**

**.03**

# THE UNBURDENED HEART

[FORGIVENESS]

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & DISCOVERY

1. What should Abraham have done differently, given the depraved culture in which he found himself?
2. Has God ever used a non-believer to chasten you as He did Abraham?
3. Should we ever expect that God might speak to us in a dream as He spoke to Abimelech?
4. What kinds of excuses do we make for not fully trusting in God and His plan?
5. Given the episodes such as this one in Abraham's career, why do the biblical writers insist on calling him a man of exemplary faith?

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1. 01. Faith that is operative only in times of blessing, plenty, or peace is no faith at all.
2. "Abraham's faith failed him exactly where the faith of many a believer fails—not in any fundamental article of the Lord's covenant, nor in the main and essential characteristics of his walk with God—but in the practical application of the promises of that covenant and the principles of that walk to some or other of the details of the difficulties of his ordinary worldly condition. He forgets that he is to bring the high principles of his loyalty to heaven to bear upon the minutest incidents of his state on earth. He begins to consult and act for himself, instead of leaving all to God. It is this infirmity of faith which occasions so many inconsistencies in his daily walk—which entangles him so often in unworthy schemes of compromise and evasion—which mars his peace, and makes him, as a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." - *R. S. Candlish*
3. 02. Our disobedience can never thwart God's designs, but it can result in self-inflicted heartache and pain, even robbing us of the joy in being part of God's plan.
4. God required faith and obedience on the part of his people to fulfill the promised blessings. At times he had to intervene and protect his people from other as well as from themselves; at times his people lost out because he let their failures and schemes run their course. - *Allen Ross*
5. Abraham's reply confessed to a pattern of mistaken choices which is the essence of every man's with its fallibility in the realm of facts, values, and motives. The confession is marred by an attempt to shift the blame, Adam-like ... It is the language and wry attitude of the pagan; one man of the world might be speaking to another. - *Derek Kidner*
6. 03. In spite of Abraham's cowardly plan for his own safety and profit, God uses him, as promised, to be a blessing to the nations.
7. The entire story of the patriarchs demonstrates that God is the one doing the blessing, quite apart from any strategy on the part of Abraham ... the narrative follows different individuals and nations whose pluses and minuses prove the promise of God that whoever blesses Abraham will be blessed, and whoever curses him will be cursed. God blesses Abraham's family despite themselves, and he blesses those who treat Abraham well despite Abraham's failures. - *deYoung and Gilbert*

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