

Green Acres is the Place to Be

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. **Laster Family:** Tonight Cold Stone Murrieta till 10:30pm... Fundraiser.
1. Matt & Jessica (Levi, Jesse, Aaron) Heading back to Bulgaria.
 2. **Prayer:** Adoption (lil girl). Ministry opportunities (esp. men & boys). Learn Language. Finances. LEDtoBulgaria.com (refreshed)

II. Slide2 **Intro:** *Green Acres is the Place to Be*

- A. **Abram** is relatable (1/2 truths). **Lot** is relatable (backslide).
- B. **Slide3 Map:** Haran to Shechem (12:5). Shechem to Egypt. Returns from Egypt, via the Negev, stops in Bethel. Lot separates to East (Jordan Valley), Abram to Hebron.
- C. **Main Lessons:** Traveling with Trust. Life Lessons From Lot & Uncle Ab. **Decision Making. Making Choices:** Do you get *paralyzed* in making decisions? Are you afraid to make decisions, especially the wrong one's? Do I buy the car/house or not? Marry her or not? Is there always only one right answer?

III. Slide4 **NEW BEGINNINGS (1-4)**

- A. *The victorious Christian life is a series of new beginnings.* Alexander Whyte
- B. God doesn't rebuke Abram for going down to Egypt. (but it definitely affected Lot)
- C. Abram was a very wealthy man, **but** his **tent** and **altar** were the most valuable things he possessed.
- D. **Slide5a The Altar**, *sacred space* set aside for God. [our devo place]
1. **Altars are for Altering.** What needs altering in your life today?
 - a) **Slide5b** Alter your **soul** from guilt to **innocence**.
 - b) Alter your **mouth** to give thanks, even for things that **didn't go your way**.
 - c) Alter your **heart** from blaming God, to telling others of His wondrous workings in your life.

IV. Slide6 **NEW BURDENS (5-13)**

- A. **Family tests** are the hardest tests of all. **Do you have any family issues? We all do.**
- B. Competition for resources was a regular source of tension in this time period.
- C. (7) **Canaanites** - refers generically to a wide range of people groups.
Perizzites - *perizzi*, is probably generic, like the Hebrew word for Canaanites.
1. **Perizzi** refers to people who dwell in **villages**; this distinguishes them from the city dwellers (the **Canaanites**). Elsewhere, the term *perizzi* occurs with names for distinct ethnic groups.
- D. (8,9) **Abram defers to Lot** rather than assert his seniority over him - an incredible gesture that shows good character.
1. **Ask: What do you think Abram learned** in letting Lot choose 1st? (trust)
 - a) **Slide7 Mt.16:25 NLT** *If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. 25 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.*
- E. **Slide8 Was lot even a believer?** Peter answers that in 2 Pet.2:7,8 *if he rescued **righteous Lot**, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked 8 (for as that **righteous man** lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he **saw and heard**); then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials.*
 [his *standing* before God was **justified**, like Abram]
1. Lot was a true believer, *accounted righteous by God*, just as Abraham was, **but** he lived a **worldly** and **carnal** life.
 2. He had **no altar** or, as we would say today he had *no quiet time whereby to judge matters in light of Calvary*. Hence his terrible decisions.
 3. He never asked if Sodom were a good place to **raise children**, **just** if it were a good place to **raise cattle**.
 4. Lot was weak in his **devotions** (5). Worldly in his **desires** (10). And wrong in his **decisions** (11).
 - a) Lot's **fatal choice** led to the loss of both his **fortune** and his **family**, **and** almost to the loss of his **faith**. Such is the **high cost** of *backsliding*.
 - (1) His life is a **warning** to us, of the folly of trying to live for **both worlds**.

F. **Slide9 Life is made up of decisions.** We make hundreds of them every day - some **major**, most of them **minor**. Each decision changes to a greater or lesser degree the **direction** of travel as we journey towards eternity, and each decision has a bearing on our future.

1. John Phillips, **For the most part decisions are determined by desires. Our desires are determined by her devotions, or lack of them.**

G. **The Test of Self-interest**

1. **Lot** had the right, to choose the **right/East**. **But** to **live by faith** you exercise the right, to **wave your rights &** let **God** chose for you.
2. **Abram** had the right to choose **first**, to choose the **right**, **and** would have actually been considered the fool for **not** doing so.
3. The great enemy of *the life of faith* in God is **not sin**, **but the good** which is **not good enough**. **The good** is always the enemy of **the best**.

H. (12,13) **Serves as a commentary on Lot's character.**

- I. **Abram** was a **peacemaker** because because we *live by faith*, **Lot** was a **troublemaker** because he *lived by sight*.
- J. **Abram** chose a heavenly city (Heb.11:13-16). **Lot** chose an earthly city (a wicked one).
- K. You can move your **tent** *nearer & nearer* to **sin**, **but** you cannot take your **altar** with you.
- L. **Lot** seemed to develop a taste for **Egypt**. **And though Abraham took Lot out of Egypt, he could not take Egypt out of Lot.**
 1. This scene reminds me of Green Acres growing up...[sitcom 1965-1971] **Eddie Albert and Eva Gabor struggle of Country or city life.**
 2. **Green Acres is the place to be. Farm livin' is the life for me. Land spreadin' out so far and wide, Keep Manhattan, just give me that countryside. New York is where I'd rather stay. I get allergic smelling hay. I just adore a penthouse view. Dah-ling I love you but give me Park Avenue. ...The chores...The stores...Fresh air...Times Square You are my wife/nephew. Good bye, city life. Green Acres we are there.**

V. **Slide10 NEW BLESSINGS (14-18)**

A. (14-17) **All you can grasp in the vision of faith is your own.**

1. (Streams in the Desert) **Look as far as you can see, for it is all yours. All that you long to be as a Christian, all that you long to do for God, are within the possibilities of faith. Then** come, still closer, **and** with your **Bible** before you, **and** your **soul** open to all the influences of the Spirit, **let** your whole being receive the baptism of His presence; **and** as He opens your understanding to see all His fulness, **believe** He has it all for you.
Accept for yourself all the promises of His word, all the desires He awakens within you, all the possibilities of what you may be as a follower of Jesus. **All the land you see is given to you.**¹
- B. Abram **lifted up his eyes** and saw the land. He **lifted up his feet** and claimed it by faith. He **lifted up his heart** and worshiped God.
- C. (18) Abram was often in the region of **Hebron**, and many of the patriarchs and matriarchs were buried there, including Sarah, Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Leah, and Jacob.
 1. **David** was *anointed king* at Hebron, **and** the city was his capital for the first 7 1/2 years of his reign over Judah.
- D. **Where are you today my friend? Are you away from the altar? Have you been out of fellowship? Run back to the cross. Don't forget where Jesus found you. Retrace your steps, confess your drifting, beginning new at the place of beginning.**
- E. **Slide11** Listen to how Paul tells us to live life daily, Gal.2:20 *My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*
- F. **Slide12a Decision Making. Making Choices: Do you get paralyzed in making decisions? Often we are afraid to make decisions, especially the wrong decision. Buy the car/house or not? Marry her/him or not?**
 1. Lifestyle choices. Moral choices. Small decisions big decisions.
 2. Regular decisions generally become habits, and we don't think much about them anymore.

¹ Taken from...Cowman, L. B. (1925). Streams in the Desert (p. 95). Los Angeles, CA: The Oriental Missionary Society.

3. Some some bad decisions blossom into bad habits, like procrastination or an unhealthy lifestyle.
4. We make many decisions every day. Probably hundreds. It starts with deciding whether or not to get out of bed in the morning, what we'll eat, what we'll do, what we'll think about, what we'll say...etc.
5. Many of our daily choices are not that significant, yet it's important to understand that *they do matter*.
6. God tells us in Deuteronomy 30:19 to *choose life*. He's showing us what wisdom looks like, it's life-giving.
7. Lot seemed to run his life in this gear...*I want, I think, I feel. But wisdom always chooses to do now what it will be satisfied with later on.*
8. *Do I buy this house or not?* not necessarily the question. *Do you think Abram could have been successful in going East if Lot picked West? YES.*
It's God with you. It's living day to day, choice to choice. walking with God.

G. *Slide12b* Except from book *WITH*, Skye Jethani.

H. Take time each day, for *a word from Him* (in His book) *and a word with Him* (in prayer).

I. *The life with God posture* is predicated on the view that **relationship** is at the core of the cosmos: God the Father *with* the God the Son *with* God the Holy Spirit.

1. Not surprising then that when God desired to *restore his broken relationship with people*, He sent His son to dwell *with* us.
 - a) Not to send a list of rules and rituals to follow (Life *under* God).
 - b) Not to implement useful principles (Life *over* God).
 - c) Not to send a genie to grant our desires (Life *from* God).
 - d) Not to give us a task to accomplish (Life *for* God).
2. He chose to *walk with us once again as he did with us in Eden, as He did with us in the beginning.*
3. Jesus entered into our dark existence to share our broken world to illuminate a different way forward.