

Will Not the Judge of All the Earth Do Right?

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[0:00] Genesis 18, and we're picking up our reading in verse 16. When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way.

Then the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him.

For I have chosen him so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.

Then the Lord said, The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me.

If not, I will know. The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the Lord. Then Abraham approached him and said, Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?

[1:24] What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing, to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike.

Far be it from you. Will not the judge of all the earth do right? The Lord said, If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.

Then Abraham spoke up again, Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, What if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty?

Will you destroy the whole city because of five people? If I find forty-five there, he said, I will not destroy it. Once again he spoke to him, What if only forty are found there?

He said, For the sake of forty, I will not do it. Then he said, May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?

[2:42] He answered, I will not do it if I find thirty there. Abraham said, Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, What if only twenty can be found there?

He said, For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it. Then he said, May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?

He answered, For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it. When the Lord had finished speaking with Abraham, He left, and Abraham returned home.

Will not the judge of all the earth do right? If you have not got down on your face and begged God to save you for Jesus' sake, can I ask you to think about that question with me for a moment?

Will not the judge of all the earth do right? Your answer is apparently no. No, the judge of all the earth won't do right.

[4:02] God won't judge me for what I've done, for who I am. As I've thought about this, if you haven't repented, and you haven't fled to Christ for refuge, then you must be assuming God doesn't care about your sin.

But come with me to the cross and see Jesus dying, dying violently, and ask, why is there all this darkness and desolation?

Why is the Lamb of God suffering? Was God doing that just for fun? Or is sin something serious?

Or you're assuming God is just like you. See, you do right, or you do wrong, as it pleases you. Your only standard is your desires, and you think God is that way.

Or maybe you don't think really God will act. And I think that's probably the most common defense that we have as unbelievers.

[5:20] We just don't think it's going to really happen. It's not really going to happen to us. It will work itself out in the end. But somehow, I'll avoid it. I'll avoid the judgment.

Somehow, I'll get around it. But that is sheer madness. Man is destined to die, and then to face the judgment.

Man is destined to die, and to face the judgment, and then the judgment. When a tree falls, where it falls, there it lies. And so you assume God won't act, but He is acting all the time.

You have eyes to see. He is calling men to account. He is judging them. Death is all around. And I just wonder, does it have to happen to you before you'll listen?

Before you'll think? That's your biggest problem. That's your greatest danger. But even now, Jesus and His salvation is offered to you.

[6:32] There's an escape from the coming wrath of God, and it is offered to you. And so I would ask, why would you cling to your sin? There's hell in every sin.

To cling to sin is to cling to hell. We're just saying, there is no sin in heaven. There's plenty of sin, though, in hell.

And so, why would you love them? Why wouldn't you flee? When it doesn't have to be that way. Because even now, God is offering mercy.

He's offering forgiveness. And even now, people are taking it. And they're going from God's enemies to becoming God's friends. This wonderful transfer has happened.

And He's making them righteous through Jesus Christ. And He's preparing them for that day of judgment. And He's already declaring them, judging them, as righteous. And so instead of enemies, they are friends.

[7:36] And in the passage that we have before us tonight, we see what it's like to be a friend of God. We see what's offered to all who believe.

And so I have three lessons today. And the first lesson is why God chose you. This passage has so much in it. It was very hard to narrow it down to some things that we could fit into this time.

But this first lesson is why God chose you. Now, this isn't the main thrust of the message, but it's right there on the surface. And I would be amiss to not pick it up and show it to you.

Look at verse 19. God reminds Abraham why He chose him. Why is Abraham saved? What was God's purpose in choosing him? Look with me at verse 19.

For I have chosen him so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just. So why?

[8:42] For what purpose did God choose Abraham? Well, so that Abraham could direct his children and his household to obey, to keep the way of the Lord. Abraham, as it were, received the Great Commission in a very small and primitive way.

Remember, Jesus said, go and make disciples, teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And so God sends Abraham as his emissary to his family and to his household. And he says, you teach your household to obey my commands, what I have commanded them. So God's grace was never meant to stay bottled up in Abraham.

He's going to be a blessing to the nations and that blessing starts with his own family. And in the same way, God chose you.

Dear Christian, this is a wonderful honor and privilege. God chose you for the very same reason. And we could talk about evangelism and we could talk about workplaces and our friends and there's application there.

[9:56] But since God specifically says children and household, let's think about that. So fathers and mothers, God has chosen you.

And he chose you for many reasons, but one of the primary reasons is to teach your children to obey God. If God has chosen you, then you have a very special call on your life.

The same call that was on Abraham's life to direct your children in the way of the Lord. And that means putting first things first in your family.

It means putting God first in your family. We can't let the world control us. We can't let the world direct us and tell us what's important and what we should do and what we should focus on.

We don't march to the beat of their drum. This word is our drum. God's commands are our drum. Is our drum. And so it's not the school's drum. It's not sports drum.

[11:02] It's not the culture's drum. It's not anything that this world is saying, do this. This is important for your family. You need to think about this. And those things have a way of creeping into our lives through the television, through the internet, through our friends.

But our ears need to be tuned to the Word of God. And from our ears, it comes out of our mouths to our children. This is why one of the reasons God has chosen you and put you in that place with those people, with those children, and with that family.

So parents, how are you doing at this? How are you doing at this? You say, maybe I'm not doing too well.

Well, I don't want to discourage you. And if that's you, don't lose heart. There's a Jesus, a Savior for sinners. There's a Savior for people who trip up and who don't do the right thing.

And so repent and believe. And just thank God that your salvation doesn't stand and fall on how good of a dad or a mom you are. Jesus has done it.

[12:15] And so out of the amazement of God's unconditional love, because He's commanded you, go and lead your families. Perhaps you say, I can't do it.

Or maybe that's easy for you to say. But God chose you. He didn't choose me for your family, for your children.

He chose you for this. And God isn't a hard taskmaster. Remember, Pharaoh was a hard taskmaster. He said, build bricks, and he didn't give them any of the material to do so.

But God has abundantly provided everything you need, dads and moms, in Christ, for what you need to do in order to fulfill this calling. Perhaps He hasn't given you a lot of natural gifts.

You know, we're gifted in different ways and sometimes that can be an excuse. Perhaps you don't have a lot of natural gifts in this area. But I'm not telling you to look to yourself. I'm not telling you to look to your personality.

[13:19] I'm not telling you to look to your family history and your past and your background and what your mom and dad were like. I'm telling you to look to Jesus Christ. Because, you know what, there might not be anything in here, there might not be anything in the past that you can draw on, but in Jesus Christ, He's an overflowing fountain of grace and help for everything that you need.

And you can do it because you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. You can do it because Christ can do it. And God has chosen you and united you to Him.

And so look to Him then. Teach your children. Fathers, lead your children. Be men of God. God. This is one of the very reasons God has chosen you.

Now the second lesson is this. And here we're starting to get to the meat and the current of the passage where we're going. What does it mean to be God's friend? What's an implication of that anyways?

Now remember, the Lord has come and we saw two weeks ago, I think it was, the Lord came to assure Abraham. Abraham. But he's also come to confront Sarah because of her unbelief.

[14:31] He's trying to encourage both of them to believe His promise. But he also comes to bring Abraham into his confidence.

To bring Abraham, as it were, into his deliberations and his plans concerning Sodom and the city of the plains. Now, the Lord comes to open His mind to Abraham.

To say, this is what I'm about to do. What he's thinking. Look at verse 17. Then the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?

And he says it like it's something that would be very unnatural for him to do. Now, if we have a friend, it's very natural for us to tell that friend if we're going to do something big, we talk to them about it.

And God is saying something like that. It wouldn't be quite right. It wouldn't be quite natural for me not to let Abraham know what my plans are.

[15:42] What I'm about to do. And this whole passage has, I mean, I think it can be so, we've heard it so many times we can miss it, but it has the shocking familiarity about it.

And friendship between Abraham and God. The Lord says, Shall I hide from Abraham what I'm about to do? I can't. It's almost unthinkable that I would do that.

Can I keep this a secret? And then, I struggled to come up with the right word to describe this, but Abraham negotiates almost in a way with God.

And you can see why he's called God's friend. Because while Abraham is respectful and he's honoring God the whole time and he's careful, he's talking with the Lord.

and there's this give and take between the two of them. Now, there's this friendship. And I ask, is that just for Abraham?

[16:45] Is that just for, because he's a super holy, righteous guy and, you know, and God did those kind of things for those kinds of people back then? Was it just for him? Well, Abraham was just a sinner.

A sinner just like you are. And just like me. We've read his failures. I mean, you know, he pretended his wife wasn't even his wife.

Husbands, have you done that lately? I mean, Abraham was a sinner. But God justified him. God didn't count his sins against him for Jesus' sake.

And he took Abraham into his confidence, into his friendship, and the same is true of you. Isn't that amazing? If you think about it, that you should have a smile on your face, the Lord would call you his friend, and you are God's friend.

But don't, you don't have to take my word for it, and it's not just my interpretation. Remember, John is talking to, or Jesus is talking to his disciples on his very last night with him, and in John 15, 15, he says, I no longer call you servants.

[17:56] I call you, because a servant doesn't know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything I learned from the Father I have made known to you. Now, as we think about what we heard this morning about Jesus learning, right?

And Jesus, as he communed with the Father, he learned things, and he passed those things on to his friends. And there wasn't anything, any secret that Jesus didn't learn that he didn't pass on to his disciples.

disciples, and so Jesus said, you're not my servants. I just can't call you servants. I have to call you friends. When God opens his heart to you and lets you know what he's thinking and what he's about to do and what his business is, then you are his friend.

And when you're brought into God's family and when you're saved and when the calluses fall off your eyes, you see what God is about and what he's doing in our world.

Now, when you tell your, you know, let's imagine that you're a boss and you tell your employee to go do something, you're not particularly interested in what he thinks about what you're doing.

[19:13] You're not particularly interested in about what, you don't care what he has to say on it. You just want him to go do it. Now, so the CEO tells the employee to pull up the car and he doesn't care what the employee thinks about what's going on.

Now, but if the CEO tells his friend who works for him, his best friend will say, pull up the car and the friend says, well, okay, I'll get right on that. Well, where are you going?

What do you want to do? And the CEO says, well, I'm thinking about going out to eat. And well, maybe you should consider going here or going there. This says they have great food there.

Do you see what I'm saying? It's one of the privileges of being God's friend that he lets you know what he is doing, tells you what his plans are, tells you what's on his heart.

And the way that happens is the Spirit of God takes this word and he puts it there. And he opens it up and he shines it on your mind and he lets you know.

[20:19] Now, he told Abraham his plans concerning Sodom. He's ready to judge Sodom. Doesn't he tell us about an even bigger judgment to come?

He's going to judge the whole world. And so, we aren't left stumbling around, wondering how is this going to end? Where is this all going? What is the point?

We're not scurrying around like scared rabbits every December 21st or all these dates that come up. Because God has opened up his mind to us.

He tells us what it's going to be and how it's going to happen, what he's going to do. So, God has taken us into his confidence. And he has revealed his plans to us in his word.

Now, has he revealed everything that he's planned? Of course not. Of course not. sometimes you have a plan and you like to keep it a secret because it's such a good plan.

[21:28] You want to surprise the person, right? So, parents, maybe you bought something for your child for Christmas and you know they're really going to love it. They've been looking forward to it. But do you tell them, I have this great plan, I'm going to give you this gift and this is what it is?

Well, that would ruin the surprise. And no matter how much they ask, no matter how much they ask for it, no matter how much they ask what it is, you don't tell them because you don't want to ruin the surprise because you love them and you know the surprise is going to make the gift all that much better.

Well, God has his own surprises too. Things in heaven that has not entered into the minds of men, he's storing up for us.

And then sometimes it's none of our concern. Maybe you have children or you had children and maybe you had one that was always thinking about things that were really none of their concern. And so you don't tell them what you're thinking, do you? You don't tell them your plans because it's none of their business, it's none of their concern, they have other things to do, they can't understand it, they can't process it, they're not ready for it, and so you don't tell them that, you don't burden them with that, you don't put that on there and say, well, you just deal with it even though you can't understand it.

[23 : 01] It's none of their business right now. And so God is the loving Father and he doesn't give us more than what we can handle. See, I think if we knew the very day of judgment, we would do all sorts of bad things with that knowledge.

And so God tells us only what we can handle, only what's good for us, because in his heart he has this love for us, and he's not against sharing things with us, but love motivates everything, moves everything.

And so John Calvin in his commentary on Genesis has an absolutely wonderful quote on why God keeps blessing Abraham.

He just keeps blessing him and blessing him, and then right at this point where he's telling Abraham this is what I'm going to do, he opens up his heart to him. Why does God keep doing this?

Listen to what John Calvin says. What's the reason why he pours innumerable benefits, uncountable benefits, upon us, in constant succession, unless that having once embraced us with paternal love, he cannot deny himself.

[24 : 26] He cannot deny himself. God loves us so much that he can't deny himself. He doesn't keep parts of himself closed that wouldn't make us, that wouldn't express his love for us.

he won't deny himself the pleasure of taking us into his confidence, bringing us into his life, and into his thoughts. And that's what's going on in this passage.

God comes down to bring Abraham closer to him. And he's doing that even as he talks about the fate of Sodom, and the judgment of Sodom.

Now that leads us to our third and final lesson. And it's a lesson on how God judges. Because this portion of Scripture is sort of the runway of what's going to happen in the next chapter, which Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed.

So this portion is connected to the next portion. And so the main idea is how does God judge? Is God just? Is he righteous in his judgment?

[25 : 43] What can we expect of God's judgment? And so that's what's at the heart of it. The heart of Abraham's prayer to God. He's pleading with God. In all circles around the question of will God do what is right?

Will God do what is right in judgment? Will he do the right thing as far as Sodom is concerned? God is God and this passage is preparing us.

It's giving us the equipment to look at the next chapter where Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed and it's making it clear that whatever happens to Sodom in chapter 19, it's going to be absolutely just.

It's going to be absolutely right. No one will or will be able to say, you know what, God wasn't fair on that. Or he was rash. He didn't think about it enough.

No, the judge of all the earth will do what is right. Well, how can you be sure? How can we be sure? Well, we see how God judges in this chapter.

[26 : 53] God, the first is God has this immediate knowledge of Sodom. Immediate knowledge of the situation before judging. Look at verse 20.

Then the Lord said, the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and I will see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know. Now God says, I've been in heaven. And he's speaking in human terms. He's speaking in terms that we can understand and relate to.

God says, I've been in heaven and I've heard this outcry, this rumor of the wickedness of Sodom. But I will go and I will make sure for myself.

God says sort of the very same thing at the Tower of Babel in chapter 11 of Genesis. It says, God came down and saw. So before God judges, before God judges in Babel, before God judges in

Sodom, before he judges anywhere, he has immediate knowledge.

[28:01] He goes down and he looks at the situation. And again, we're talking in human terms. The truth is clear that God has immediate knowledge, firsthand knowledge, of the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah.

He doesn't judge on rumors. He doesn't judge on reputation. We judge on those things. But God does not.

He doesn't judge on hearsay. He judges on immediate knowledge. And that's good if you have a bad reputation, but it's an unearned bad reputation.

And it could be very bad if all you have is a good reputation. Pharisees had a wonderful reputation, temptation. But they were just whitewashed tombs.

And Jesus saw right into the depths of their heart. God doesn't base his judgment on what other people have said and think. And there are rumors and outcries.

[29:06] He bases it on truth. And then we see that God is not in a hurry to judge. He's not in a hurry to judge.

He's not quick to pull the trigger, on Sodom. He's here and he's willing to be pleaded with by Abraham.

He's willing for Abraham to talk to him. So Abraham says, what if there's 50 righteous people in this city? Will you destroy the city? The whole city? If there are 50 righteous people in it, and God says, no, well, what about 45 people?

God says, if there are 45, I will not destroy the city. The city will be saved. Well, what about 40? What about 30? What about 20? What about 10?

And the whole time God is saying, no, I won't destroy the city. No, I won't destroy the city. I'll hold back. I'll hold back my judgment. He's going to hold it back until it's absolutely clear that his judgment is just.

[30:14] He'll hold it back until it's absolutely clear that the city can't be saved. It's absolutely past redemption. And only when there is no hope left will he judge.

So God isn't some demonic force of destruction. He's not like a 13-year-old teenage boy that takes some sort of delight in blowing up his sister's Barbies.

He's willing to be entreated. He wants to show mercy. He wants to show grace. He's gentle. And it seems like Jesus will never come back.

And we do pray, Lord, come quickly. And we wonder why he hasn't come back. Why hasn't he come back? Well, one reason is because he's patient with the world.

He's patient. And when he comes, he's not coming to save. He's coming to judge. And with the judgment comes the end and there will be no second chances.

[31:34] There will be no going back. And I don't think we can understand how catastrophic it will be. If we understood how bad, how final it would be, we would understand why he's slow in coming.

You know, there's no more Sodom and Gomorrah. There's just ash on a plane. And there's a memory and a name. That's all. And when he comes again, the heavens and the earth will be burned up.

And so it's not a small thing for God to judge. And so he's not in a hurry to do it. But that doesn't mean he won't.

Slowness is not to be confused with someone who procrastinates and who wishes it would never happen. Or that slowness is not the same thing as God saying, I won't judge.

Sodom and Gomorrah have one day left. They have one day. The sun will go down, and the sun will come up, and then fire will come down.

[32:55] God is slow, but that does not mean that his patience will last forever. And God's gentleness and his patience won't make the judgment easier or less.

It will only make it more. You know, some men blow up easily. You know, they lose their temper. But then they're quickly brought down.

You know, they blow up and they cool off really quickly. and, you know, there's problems with that, and with their anger.

But the one you want to be really afraid of is a gentle man who doesn't lose his temper. And he's long-suffering.

And when he finally gets angry, you know he's not going to cool off quickly. Because when his anger is kindled, it doesn't burn less, it burns more.

[33:56] And God is gentle. He's patient with the wicked. But that patience and gentleness will not make the wrath less. It will make it more. That patience and that gentleness will side with God's justice and say they deserve it.

So God's anger in that final day, will burn the heavens and the earth. And so Sodom and Gomorrah are like a puppet play compared to a full theater production.

It's nothing compared to what is going to be on the last day. And so what should you do? You should flee the wrath to come. It would be madness not to flee the wrath to come.

And God is not in a hurry to judge. And so now is a day of grace. Today is the day of salvation. How long is that day going to last? I don't know. No one knows. But it won't last forever.

I don't know how long it will last, but I'll tell you what, we're a week closer than we were last week.

And someday the calendar pages will run out. And we'll turn the page for the last time, and the sun will come up for that last day, and it will be over.

[35:17] forever. And the Lord will come, and the judgment will be completely just. Not a single sinner will be missed, and not a single righteous person will be thrown into the fire, will be caught up in the fire.

Abraham says it far be it from God to do such a thing to kill the righteous with the wicked. So you know on the last day, there's this great division, left and right, goats and sheep.

Great division, so there'll be no confusion on judgment. It will be completely just. In the morning, Sodom was going to burn, but not one single righteous man burned in that fire.

There was only one man who was righteous and he escaped. So God did right by Sodom. He did absolutely just right by Sodom and God will do absolutely right by you.

And if you're a sinner, that's all of us, but if you're a sinner outside of Christ, Christ, then you know what is right by you.

[36:44] It's not heaven. It's hell. And hell is just and it's fair. And they might say all sorts of things in hell, but no one will be able to say, this isn't what I deserve.

Because God sees your life. He knows your life. He has immediate knowledge of your life. He sees into your very heart, into your motives.

It's all laid before him. So what do you need? If you're a sinner, you desperately need a Savior. You desperately need a Savior.

You need a righteousness from God. Not from yourself, because that's already gone. That day is gone, that ship has sailed, you need a righteousness from God.

You need a totally new righteousness. One that you haven't woven together with your own hands, but one that Jesus has done and perfected for you. So you need a Savior, and Jesus is that Savior.

[37:47] And you see, all who take refuge in Jesus can look on that day of judgment and actually have hope and peace. And we can really say, come quickly Lord Jesus.

Despite that judgment, we can say, come quickly Lord Jesus, because we know, I'm not robed in my own righteousness. I'm not going to be standing there alone. I'm going to be standing with him. Jesus is my life, and Jesus is my death.

You see, when the law came knocking on my door, and justice came for me, Jesus answered the door for me. And God's law, God's justice, dragged him away to the place of punishment, to the place of judgment, and Jesus suffered for me.

And so he said, take me. Take me to that place of judgment. And so I say, flee the wrath to come. There's a cross for sinners. For sinners. There's a cross for sinners. And so run to that cross. Run right there. Run right now. Because that's the place of judgment where there's actual salvation.

[39:05] You see, God judged Jesus on that day. And hell came that day. And punishment and wrath and all the fury of Sodom and Gomorrah and all that fell on Jesus.

And now it's a place of judgment that you can actually go and be saved. So you can cry, oh God, have mercy on me for Jesus' sake.

And you know what? He will save you. He's promised that. And will not the Lord of all the earth, will not the judge of all the earth do what is right? If he's promised it, he will do it.

And so if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

There's a promise for every sinner here. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we would have no hope without Jesus.

[40:06] We would have nothing good to say for ourselves and we have nothing good to say for ourselves and we would have no hope for that future. And on the day of our death, they could really say nothing good about us.

there would be no promise for us, but Jesus Christ is the key to every promise.

Thank you that you have given him to us. You searched us out and you found us. You picked us up. You brought us to yourself. You brought us home. You brought us to Jesus. You gave us hands that would lay a hold of Christ and you gave us feet that would run to the cross.

Our very repentance and faith is a gift from God. We thank you for that. We thank you for Jesus' perfect righteousness. We thank you that you took him instead of us.

[41:09] we know what we deserve. We are only beginning to discover the blackness and the evil of our sin.

So we do know what we deserve and we thank you that your grace has been greater than all of our sin and all of our shame and that Jesus went to that cross to die for us, to obey, to perfect that obedience, that righteousness that we need in order to survive the coming judgment.

Thank you that you call us your friend. Thank you that we can call you our friend and that you love us.

You tell us of what will be. Help us to be content with those things. Help us to be content with what you've told us and look forward with longing and faith for all the good things that you have promised us.

Things that we don't even understand or imagine now. Pray that we would look forward to that day, look forward to heaven because we know you. We know you will do us good.

[42:26] Pray for those who are outside of Jesus who are not ready. I will call them home and have mercy on them. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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