

Leader's Guide: Abraham's Return to the Land of Promise

Genesis 13

Unedited AI-generated document from a sermon preached by Rev John Vermeer

Opening Question

1. What stood out to you from the sermon on Genesis 13? Was there anything that particularly challenged or encouraged you?

(This open-ended question allows participants to share their initial thoughts. Listen for themes that might connect to later questions. You might share something that struck you personally to get the conversation started.)

Abraham's Return (Genesis 13:1-4)

2. The sermon described Abraham's journey from Egypt back to Bethel as a kind of repentance. What are some signs in your own life that indicate you're moving toward God rather than away from Him?

(Possible answers: Renewed interest in Scripture and prayer; confession of sin; realignment of priorities; seeking community with other believers; worshiping regularly; making decisions based on biblical principles rather than immediate desires; increased peace despite circumstances.)

3. Abraham "called on the name of the Lord" when he returned to Bethel (v.4). How does worship play a role in spiritual renewal and repentance?

(Possible answers: Worship reorients our focus from self to God; reminds us of God's character and promises; places our problems in proper perspective; expresses gratitude for grace; connects us with other believers; provides space to hear from God; demonstrates our submission to God's authority.)

4. Have you ever found yourself, like Abraham in Genesis 12, trying to "force things to happen by one's wit and one's own wisdom" rather than relying on God? What was the result?

(Possible answers: Increased anxiety and stress; damaged relationships; ethical compromises; temporary solutions that created bigger problems; missed opportunities for God to work; learning experiences that eventually led back to trusting God; complications that wouldn't have happened if we had followed God's way.)

Abraham Remains (Genesis 13:5-13)

5. The preacher contrasted Abraham's generosity with Lot's self-seeking choice. How does trusting God's promises enable greater generosity in our lives?

(Possible answers: When we trust God will provide, we don't need to hoard resources; understanding our spiritual inheritance in Christ makes earthly possessions less important; knowing God owns everything changes our perspective on "our" stuff; gratitude for God's generosity to us inspires generosity toward others; trusting God's timing means we can share now and trust Him for the future.)

6. Lot chose based on appearances - the Jordan Valley "looked good" but led to Sodom. What are some examples of choices in our culture that might "look good" but lead away from God?

(Possible answers: Career advancement that requires ethical compromises; relationships based purely on attraction without shared faith; lifestyle choices that prioritize comfort and status over service; entertainment choices that gradually desensitize us to sin; financial decisions based on greed rather than stewardship; pursuing happiness at the expense of holiness.)

7. The sermon drew parallels between Lot's choice and the patterns of sin in Genesis 3 (Eve) and Genesis 6 (sons of God). How can we guard against making decisions based merely on appearances?

(Possible answers: Seeking wisdom from Scripture and godly counsel; examining motives behind our desires; looking at the long-term consequences, not just immediate benefits; praying for discernment; learning from others' mistakes; considering how choices align with God's revealed will; asking if a choice moves us toward God or away from Him.)

God's Renewal (Genesis 13:14-18)

8. Why do you think God chose to renew and expand His promises to Abraham after Lot had separated from him? What does this tell us about God's character?

(Possible answers: God encourages us during difficult or lonely times; God reaffirms His commitments even when human relationships fail; God wanted Abraham to know the promise didn't depend on Lot; God rewards faith and obedience; God is patient with our process of growth; God doesn't abandon His purposes when circumstances change.)

9. The sermon mentioned we need "big picture moments" to encourage us when life gets difficult. What are some ways God provides these encouragements to us today?

(Possible answers: Through Scripture study; worship gatherings; sacraments like communion; testimonies from other believers; answered prayer; creation; Christian community; remembering God's past faithfulness; the Holy Spirit's internal witness; church history and biographies of faithful believers.)

10. Abraham responded to God's renewed promises by building an altar. What are some appropriate responses when God reminds us of His promises?

(Possible answers: Worship and thanksgiving; sharing testimonies with others; acts of obedience; renewed commitment to God's calling; creative expressions like music, art, or writing; generosity; stepping out in faith; confession of doubt or fear that preceded the reminder.)

Application

11. The preacher said, "We find any pursuits without keeping Christ and his word in mind as vanity." How might this truth reshape some of your current pursuits or priorities?

(Possible answers: Evaluating career goals in light of kingdom values; reconsidering how we spend leisure time; adjusting financial priorities; changing how we approach relationships; finding ways to integrate faith into daily activities; discarding pursuits that have no eternal value; bringing intentional Christ-centeredness to existing responsibilities.)

12. How does seeing Christ as "the great heir, the king of kings, the owner of everything" change the way we view our own possessions and choices?

(Possible answers: Recognizing we're stewards rather than owners; making decisions with kingdom priorities; living more generously; finding security in Christ rather than possessions; using resources to honor the true King; seeing everything as belonging ultimately to Christ; living as representatives of the King in how we use what He's entrusted to us.)

13. What is one specific promise from God's Word that you need to "retreat into" during this season of your life?

(This is personal, but some examples might include: promises about God's presence in difficulty; His provision for needs; His purpose in suffering; His power over sin; His sovereignty over circumstances; His acceptance through Christ; His plans for the future; His strength in weakness.)