

PRAYER THAT PLEADS FOR THE LOST: ABRAHAM

GREAT PRAYERS OF THE BIBLE | PASTOR MATT ERICKSON | JUNE 2/3, 2018 | GENESIS 18:16-33

"Abraham remained standing before the Lord. Then Abraham approached him and said: 'Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?'"(Genesis 18:22-23)

Learning to Pray from Examples

Examples we can follow

Examples who point us to Jesus

Knowing God's Mind (Genesis 18:16-19)

The opening of God's mind to Abraham

God's goal of righteousness and justice

Entering God's Throne room (Genesis 18:20-25)

Judging rightly

Extending compassion

Bargaining with God (Genesis 18:26-33; Luke 18:1-7)

Prayer as the bargaining of two partners

Prayer as unveiling the character of God

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When have you felt burdened by the situation of people who are far away from God? How did you deal with that?
2. We begin a new series at Eastbrook this week entitled "Great Prayers of the Bible." We want to examine some notable prayers in the Old and New Testaments in order to see what we can learn about prayer from them. This week we look at Genesis 18:16-33, where Abraham prays to God about Sodom and Gomorrah. Ask God to speak to you through His Word, and then read that passage aloud.
3. This passage follows Abraham and Sarah's encounter with God where God confirms His promises to them. Afterwards, we receive an inside view into God's inner dialogue. Why do you think God wants to reveal His plans to Abraham (verses 17-19)? Why is judgment coming down on Sodom and Gomorrah according to verses 20-21?
4. Beginning with verse 23, Abraham converses with God. To what does Abraham appeal in order to ask God to have mercy on these cities?
5. Do you think that Abraham had to convince God to be merciful? Why or why not?
6. As the bargaining continues, Abraham and God go back and forth about the number of "righteous people" necessary to hold back God's judgment upon the cities. The number ten (verse 32) is the minimum number of people required for a "minion," or Jewish community, to exist for transactions to be valid. Everything beyond that is only in terms of individuals. What might this reveal about God's willingness to be merciful?
7. What are you learning about prayer through this study? If you are on your own, write it down and pray about it. If you are in a small group, take time to discuss this with one another before putting it into practice through prayer together.

TAKE IT FURTHER:

Join in with other activities related to Eastbrook's Summer of Prayer here:
www.eastbrook.org/summerofprayer.

You can also access the "30 Days of Prayer" daily devotional during the month of June at Pastor Matt's blog: www.mwerickson.com.

Read a book on prayer, such as:

- Philip Yancey. *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.
- Ronald Dunn. *Don't Just Stand There, Pray Something.* Nashville: Thomas Nelson