

THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY CHILDREN'S MEETING LESSON

DATE: November 27, 2016

SUBJECT: GOD'S CALLING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: God Called Abraham (3) - God Visits Abraham and Destroys Sodom and Gomorrah

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 18:1-33; 19:1-3, 12-26

AIM: To see that we should be separated from sinful things in order to escape God's judgment. At the same time, we should have a heart to care for others and pray for others so they can be saved from God's judgment.

MEMORY VERSES TO CHOOSE FROM: 1 Timothy 6:11a (But you, O man of God, flee these things, and pursue righteousness,...); 1 Corinthians 15:33 (Do not be deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals.); James 5:16b (...The petition of a righteous man avails much in its working.); Matthew 5:37 (But let your word be, Yes, yes; No, no; for anything more than these is of the evil one.); James 2:23 (... "And Abraham believed God, ..."; and he was called the friend of God.)

SUGGESTED SONGS: 11 (Oh, Be Careful); 9530 (Speak Truth); 192 (We are Different); 9410 (I Believe the Promises); 64 (Every Promise in the Bible is Mine); 176 (God Uses Helpers); 7619 (Who is on the Lord's Side?); 3405 (I Am With You); 9307 (Oh, Yes, I Can! I Can Choose)

CRAFT IDEA: (1) Helping Hands Craft. Have each child trace their hands onto colored construction paper. Write their name on the handprints and cut them out. Swap one or more hand prints with another child. Glue the handprints onto construction paper. Write "Helping Hands" or other key phrases such as pursue hospitality, pray for one another, care for one another, help a friend, etc. (2) Prepare paper cutout of a city and glue on red-orange cellophane or tissue paper for fire.

BACKGROUND: Abraham obeyed God's calling, left his country and all that he knew, and went into an unfamiliar land. God made a covenant with Abraham. Ask the children if they remember what were the promises God made to Abraham. (God promised He would give the land to Abraham and to his seed and that He would become a great nation; his seed would be like the stars of the heavens.) When God appeared again to Abraham when he was 99 years old, He more specifically promised Abraham that he and Sarah would have a son in their old age whom they would name Isaac. Abraham laughed when God told him that Sarah would have a son. On another occasion, Sarah laughed to herself upon hearing the news that she would have a baby.

CONTENT:

God Visits Abraham, and Abraham and Sarah Take Care of Their Visitors. One day God came to visit Abraham at his tent. He brought two angels with Him. Abraham hurried to care for his visitors. He provided water and prepared food for them and they ate. They asked Abraham about Sarah, and Jehovah told Abraham that Sarah would have a son. Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent and when she heard this she laughed to herself because she and Abraham were already very old. Jehovah asked Abraham why Sarah had laughed and said, "Is anything too marvelous for Jehovah? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." Sarah denied that she laughed because she was afraid. But God knows all things, and said to her, "No, but you did laugh."

God Tells Abraham His Plan to Destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. After eating, Abraham's three visitors got up and looked down upon a city named Sodom; and Abraham walked with them to send them away. Jehovah decided to tell Abraham of His plan to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because of their wicked ways. The two angels began to head towards Sodom and left God and Abraham alone. Abraham and God then had a conversation. Abraham asked God if He would destroy the righteous people along with the wicked people in the city. "What if there are fifty righteous in the city; will You still destroy and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it?" Abraham was concerned for the righteous people. He told the Lord that the Judge of all the earth should do justly and not destroy the righteous with the wicked. Abraham was especially concerned for his nephew Lot and Lot's family who lived in Sodom. He talked to God about this as a friend to

friend. God promised Abraham that He would not destroy the city even if there were fifty righteous men. Then Abraham went on very respectfully asking God questions, reducing the number of righteous people from 45 to 40, 30, 20 and asked God if He would still destroy the city. Finally, Abraham questioned the Lord once more, “Oh let the Lord not be angry if I speak yet once more. Suppose ten are found there?” The Lord assured him that for 10 righteous ones He would not destroy the city.

When the two angels reached Sodom in the evening, Abraham’s nephew Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. They visited Lot at his house and the angels asked Lot what other family members he had in the city. The angels told Lot that the city was going to be destroyed because the people of Sodom had sinned greatly in the eyes of God. Lot went to tell the two men who were going to marry his daughters, but they did not believe him and thought he was joking. In the morning, the angels came to get Lot. He lingered and did not want to go. The angels had to urge Lot, seize Lot’s hand, and also take his wife and daughters by the hand and remove them from the city. Once outside the city, the angels warned them saying, “Escape for your life. Do not look behind you. Escape to the hills, lest you be destroyed.” Lot asked God if he could escape towards the small city of Zoar instead of the mountains. When Lot reached Zoar, Jehovah rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire out of heaven. And He overthrew those cities and all the plain and all the inhabitants of the cities and whatever grew on the ground. But Lot’s wife ignored the angels’ warning. She was behind Lot and she looked back towards Sodom and became a pillar of salt.

SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM: *Note to serving ones: Please pray and fellowship over which applications to cover. Please do not try to cover all the applications. It may be sufficient, especially for younger grades, to cover just **one or two** applications.*

- **Being a friend of God.** God considered Abraham a friend (James 2:23). Friends spend time together and learn one another’s likes and dislikes. Today, we can be friends of God. We can get to know Him by reading and memorizing His word. There we find out what the Lord loves and hates. By talking to Him we open our heart to Him so that we learn to have the same heart.
- **Praying for others.** We should pray for one another. 2 Cor. 13:7a says, “Now we pray to God that you do nothing wrong....” Abraham’s lengthy questioning about 50, 45...all the way to 10 righteous people in the city was probably out of his concern for his nephew Lot. God sent His angels to rescue Lot. We can ask God, even ask persistently, to help our friends and family members to be separated from sinful situations and be saved from God’s judgment.
- **Staying away from evil situations.** Even though Lot did not agree with the sinful ways of the people of Sodom, he still remained there. He even had a hard time leaving. Today the world is so evil and so corrupt. We sometimes accept degraded things as being okay. Perhaps people around us are cursing, cheating, lying, watching inappropriate movies, calling out, answering back, disobeying, etc. It is easy to become passive just as Lot did. We must stand against the evil condition of today’s society and in our schools and separate ourselves to keep ourselves from its influence.
- **Being careful in our speaking.** Lot learned the hard way about the importance of being sincere. When he told his future sons-in-law who were going to marry his daughters that they should leave Sodom because Jehovah was going to destroy the city, the Bible says that it seemed to the men that Lot was joking. Lot may have had a habit of joking and so the men did not believe him when he was telling them the truth. We should practice to be sincere in our words so that people can trust what we say.
- **Taking care of visitors.** Both Abraham and Sarah grasped the opportunity to give hospitality. Abraham and his wife prepared food, water, and a place to rest for their three visitors. They happily shared what they had. Lot also offered the angels a feast and a place to stay. We can help our parents take care of guests. For example: cleaning up the house, preparing the meal, setting the table, offering guests something to drink, hanging up their coats, or asking if they need anything to make sure they are comfortable. Romans 12:13b tells us to “pursue hospitality.”

Adapted from the Church in New York City’s Children’s Meeting lessons: 12/12/93; 11/28/99; 11/27/05