

Living On A Prayer - A Plea for Sodom

Introduction:

The Bible teaches us to pray. How the Bible teaches us to pray often surprises our sensibilities. Is it ok to plead with God? Is it right to pray for those who are wicked? How familiar can we be in prayer with the creator of the universe? The story of Abraham pleading for the city of Sodom dives into these questions and directs our prayer life.

Abraham is walking with the visitors he has just welcomed into his camp. Alongside the visitors, the LORD teaches that he will destroy the city of Sodom. As the visitors leave, Abraham continues his conversation with the LORD and pleads for the city. Abraham's concern is that the righteous will be wiped away along with the wicked. The LORD assures Abraham he will not destroy the city if fifty righteous people are found. Through six exchanges Abraham pleads for the righteous of the city down to ten righteous people. At last, there are not ten righteous people in Sodom, at best there are four. (Even these four being considered righteous is a stretch when we continue reading Genesis.) The judgment falls upon Sodom, but not on the four. They are rescued from the impending disaster.

Abraham's pleading teaches us to pray in ways that Jesus also taught us to pray. We ought to pray for our enemies. (see Matthew 5:44) It teaches us to pray with familiarity to the LORD. (see Luke 11:2) It teaches us to pray with persistence. (see Luke 18:1-6) And it teaches us to pray knowing that the LORD hears and answers prayer, sometimes in ways we do not expect. (see Luke 11:13)

Read Your Bible

- **Genesis 18:16-33**

Apply God's Word to Your Life:

Who taught you to pray, and how did they teach you to pray?

What are your initial thoughts about Abraham's pleading?

How do you pray for the wicked, your enemies, for justice or with mercy?

How familiar are you in your prayers with God? Are you formal or informal?

When have you been persistent with God in prayer?

When has the Lord answered your prayers?

Have they been answered in unexpected ways?

Are you still waiting for answers regarding some of your prayers?

Reflecting on the text:

What have you learned about God?

What have you learned about the world?

What have you learned about yourself?

Pray

Heavenly Father, thank you for your servant, Abraham. Thank you for letting us see his example.

Continue to teach us to pray. Encourage, enlighten and strengthen us in our time of prayer with you.

Thank you for your Son, Jesus who saves, redeems and breathes new life into our souls. Amen.