

The Prayer Class

Purpose: *To encourage greater participation and joy in prayer*

The Prayer Class meets in God's Throne Room 24/7

In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence Ephesians 3:12.

Teacher: Abe Funk

Date: July 25, 2024

Lesson: *Abraham Prays for the City of Sodom*

Welcome to The Prayer Class:

Thank you, Father, for loving the world so much that you gave your only Son, that whoever believes in Jesus shall not perish but have eternal life. We pray that many will believe all over the world. Amen!

Bible Reading: Genesis 18:16-33

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? 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?" 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.

Background and Lesson:

The intercessory prayer of Abraham for the City of Sodom is a great follow-up to last week's lesson, about the many unreached peoples of the world. Here is why I say that.

Abraham was called out of the Ur of the Chaldeans, where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers meet and flow into the Persian Gulf in modern Iraq. It was an ungodly culture of idol worshippers and human sacrifice. God had a plan for Abraham and told him to leave his family and Ur and *go to a place I will show you* Genesis 12: 1-4. Abraham had no guide but God whom he had only recently met and knew little about him. He had no written instructions, the law or the Bible—but trusting God, he went. He believed God’s promise to make him a great nation and to bless the whole world through him. At age 75 he had no children, and his wife Sarah was past childbearing years. Yet he believed, and God counted his faith as righteousness Genesis 15:6. After losing his nerve Abraham decided to have a son by a servant—not God’s plan. But at age 100 with Sarah 90, God gave them a son, Isaac, and 2,000 years later as he was promised, the Savior of the world. Wow! What a man of faith.

Abraham’s prayer is as remarkable as the man himself. How did he get to know God so intimately in the short time he had been a believer, that he could challenge God with his plan to destroy the City of Sodom for its wickedness? I think the Psalmist gives us a clue in Psalm 91:14-16. ***“Because he loves me,” says the LORD, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.”*** Did Abraham love God with all his heart body and mind? He did! He followed God not knowing where he would take him. He was willing to give his only son at God’s bidding Genesis 22, and completely believed God’s promises. **How did Abraham pray?**

With boldness: *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.* Many years later Paul wrote, *In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence* Ephesians 3:12.

With persistence: 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.”*

With faith: Finally, Abraham left the results with his sovereign God. *When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.* Abraham was now content.

The world is on God’s heart and must be on mine too. *All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God’s grace in all its truth* Colossians 1:6.

Quote: Prayer is so profound; a lifetime of learning will not reach its depth; yet so simple a child can teach us.

Think About This: What can you learn from Abraham’s prayer of intercession?

A Prayer for You:

Thank you, Father, for inviting me to participate with you by interceding for our lost world. Amen!

My Notes and what To Pray for:

Add your prayer requests here: yourself, family, church family, missionaries, & leaders in government

Note: All Scriptures are from the NIV Bible unless otherwise indicated

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful Colossians 4:2