

# Genesis: From Creation to New Creation

## Genesis 18:16-33

"Will God Do What is Just?"— January 29, 2023



### **Introduction**

As we continue to look at the book of Genesis, we need to keep in mind **how** the Israelites are reading this. They had wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, but God had promised them a land. Moses writes Genesis in order to show God's people who God is, so they can move from fear to faith. When we are called to trust God when things seem like they are falling apart, we must know who God is.

We trust God because He is our hope. By His power, He makes all things possible. Yet power isn't everything. If an all-powerful God is evil, then His power is bad news. If we are to trust in an all-powerful God, we must know that God is good.

The Big Idea of this passage: We trust God in hard times by knowing God is good all the time.

This text provides four snapshots of the goodness of God.

### **Sermon Outline**

1. God calls us a friend. Vs. 16-19
2. God is attentive in His care. Vs. 20-23
3. God does what is just because He IS just. Vs. 24-25
4. God is patient. Vs. 26-33

### **Read & Discuss**

#### **1. Read vs. 16-19**

God called Abraham His friend. ([James 2:23](#)) God tells Abraham what He is going to do in Sodom so that Abraham will trust Him. God brings Abraham into the inner circle not just for his benefit, but for the benefit for all the people of God. God desires to bless His people. God wanted Abraham to trust Him, and He wanted Abraham to teach his offspring to trust Him in the same way. Because of Abraham's faithfulness, we are here today.

But when life hurts, it is then that God may not feel like a friend. He may seem distant and cold. In those times, how do we trust God? ([John 15:15](#)) When we struggle with hard things, we must remember that the God of the universe, in Christ, calls you "friend." Before we knew Christ, we were enemies of God. Do you see yourself as God's friend in good times **and** hard times?

#### **2. Read vs. 20-23**

The sins of Sodom were great and varied. Sodom was a violent, cruel, selfish, immoral place. The outcry of the wickedness of that city had reached the ears of God. Unpunished sin does not go overlooked by a good God. God hears. Nothing slips past His attention.

God knows what is happening in Sodom. Moses says that God had to "go down" and see just like he did in Genesis 11 at the Tower of Babel. We might be impressed and intimidated by what others accomplish, but God is neither impressed nor intimidated. Here, Abraham learns that God's judgements are right and just. Do you recall a time when you were on the receiving end of unjust treatment? Are there times when you think that God is distant and He doesn't care? You are not alone. The psalmists' lament saying, "How long, Oh Lord." But God hears the groans of those mistreated and abused. ([Psalm 9:12](#)) He does not ignore the cry of the afflicted. We do not need to avenge ourselves. We can leave it to God. ([Romans 12:19](#)) We should care about righteousness and justice, but we don't carry the burden of vengeance.

**Additional Reading:** *Genesis 11; Psalm 13*

#### **3. Read vs. 24-25**

Abraham knows that Sodom is wicked, yet he intercedes for the city. Abraham knows that God will always do what is right, but he is wrestling with seeing the wickedness of the city and the goodness of God. He doesn't

know how it fits together. What has caused you wrestled with that same thing? We find refuge in knowing Who God is. As we sit together and try to make sense of hard things, we must trust God as He has revealed Himself to us. God is good all the time, and He will always do what is just. We will never look back and doubt those two facts. He is good and righteous in ALL His ways.

Abraham knows that Lot is in Sodom, but he intercedes for the entire city. Why? Before he met God, Abraham was like the people of Sodom – lost in sin and idolatry. However, God called Abraham out of that lifestyle. Abraham had experienced the goodness and mercy of God. This is God's heart for the wicked. He wants those in Sodom to repent. He does not delight in judging those in sin. ([Ezekiel 18:23](#))

Are you easily outraged by injustice toward you and others? Have you taken God's mercy for granted? We all deserve God's judgement, but in His grace we have a new life. Let His love fuel our hearts to ache for the lost. May we pray and give and go to share the gospel. ([Matthew 5:44](#))

#### **4. Read vs. 26-33**

We know from [Romans 8:1](#) that the Christian is spared from God's condemnation, but we still live in a sinful world. We are not free from suffering. Do you remember a time recently when you wrestled with seeing the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the righteous?

Abraham comes to God with bold requests, but he never loses sight of Who God is. Abraham's prayer is confident, but it is also humble. Do you make bold requests in prayer? Because Christ is our great High Priest, we can come boldly. ([Hebrews 4:16](#)) We should ask, seek, and knock, ([Matthew 7:7](#)) but we should never forget who we are talking to. We are talking to God, and He is free in His judgements. What bold requests have you made of God? How has He answered?

Why does Moses include the detail of the "back and forth" between Abraham and God? Abraham is not wearing down a reluctant God. The "back and forth" highlights God's incredible patience. Sodom had already been saved once. The goodness and patience of God is meant to draw us to God. Why is God patient? ([2 Peter 3:9](#)) It is because of God's mercy and patience that we are here today. However, because God is good, He will not sweep sin under the carpet. He will judge all sin. He will always do what is just. We should not squander God's patience. Is there anything keeping you from being close to God?

[2 Corinthians 5:21](#) tells us that God was willing to spare all sinful mankind for one righteous man. Jesus' life, death and resurrection provide us a seat at the table of God. How do we trust God till the end? We must remember that God is good!

**Additional Reading:** *Genesis 14; Psalm 73; Romans 2*

#### **Prayer of Response**

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to confess? From what do I need to repent?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I understand, believe, desire, or do?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to com. If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/>

**Next week's sermon text:** we turn to [Genesis 19:1-38](#) "God's Mercy and Judgement"