
Genesis 13 Possessions - 1 Timothy 6:6-11

1. A key word in Genesis 13 is 'live' or 'dwell' (KJV). The ideal of Psalm 133:1 is '...how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!' But in Genesis this does not work:

Genesis 13:6: 'And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together'

Genesis 13:6: 'the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.' (so the land is already full)

Genesis 13:12: 'Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.'

2. At the moment there is a widening gap between rich and poor in our country and locally: the foodbank and the community fridge (at the Anglican Church) serve many people; but many others are able to afford electric cars (which is good for the environment!). Despite Covid, climate crisis and the war in Ukraine, many people have more than ever – but are we happier? Rich people always want more, even via fraud and other unfair practice.

'Money rules the world.' Our society is dominated by money.

The Bible is not negative about money and possessions as such (although Paul comes close in 1 Timothy), but Genesis has a warning message, holds up a mirror.

3. In Genesis 13 Abram is close to God again after his mistakes in the previous story. He worships God and builds altars (vss 3-4, 18). In response God expands his previous promise:

Genesis 12:7: 'To your offspring I will give this land.'

Genesis 13:15: 'All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring for ever.'

Abraham maintains the peace and is generous; the blessing of the Lord accompanies him. He is happy with the poorer part of the land.

4. Abram and Lot are both rich farmers. Their affluence leads to tensions. Richness brings division and rivalry – how modern this sounds! They need to split up. Lot is wrong in many respects:
 - He is tempted by first impressions: the Jordan valley looks good so it must be good (but it is like Egypt, vs. 10!)
 - He is greedy, covetous: the Sodom area looks brilliant so he wants it.
 - He moves to the margin of the promised land
 - He is utterly impolite: as the youngest he makes the first choice; he should have allowed his uncle, the older person, to choose.
 - He is short-sighted: he moves close to Sodom, the bad city, and in chapter 14 we find him living in Sodom
 - He thinks he is in heaven, but he is on the brink of hell.
5. The Bible never speaks out against possessions or money. But they are perishable and need to be handled with care. Life is more than what we possess. We can't buy heaven. The question 'Who are you?' is far more important than 'What do you have?'

Luke's Gospel records how often Jesus spoke about money, and the rest of the Bible also contains plenty of warnings: 'Not by bread alone.' 'Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.' 'The love of money is a root of evil.'⁴

There are also examples of positive use of money, such as the women who made Jesus' mission possible (Luke 8) and the Philippians who helped Paul so that he could be a full-time apostle.

(Earlier in the service we watched a clip about Chiddingfold Baptist Church, which is helped by SEBA to have a full-time minister. Our church contributes to SEBA.)

6. How do you make choices in life? Is 'having' more important than 'being'? Are you collecting or are you growing? What is the will of God for your lifestyle? Is your faith (allegiance to God) really a power in your life?

Or put more simply: do you want to be like Lot or like Abraham? (The latter would inherit the whole earth.)
