

## **Commitment Sunday:**

### **Praying & Giving Humbly (But Boldly!) to Make Jesus Known**

"Illuminate: Learning to Trust and Surrender Through the Life of Abraham"

Genesis 18:16-32

**November 11, 2018**

#### BIG IDEA

It's hard to know where the line is between praying bold prayers and praying presumptuous prayers. We know that God wants people to find Jesus but we also know that he exercises his own sovereign will. So, how should we pray and give as we enter this final moment of our Illuminate Initiative? Answer: Humbly and Boldly!

#### THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

##### *Context:*

This is a famous text regarding Abraham's plea for the salvation of Sodom. It's bold and specific. But it is also humble and beautiful. It is a good example for us to follow as we commit to the Mission to Make Jesus Known.

##### **Genesis 18:16-32**

Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way. <sup>17</sup>The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, <sup>18</sup>seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? <sup>19</sup>For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him." <sup>20</sup>Then the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, <sup>21</sup>I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know."

##### *Abraham Intercedes for Sodom*

<sup>22</sup>So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. <sup>23</sup>Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? <sup>24</sup>Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? <sup>25</sup>Far be it from you to do such

a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"<sup>26</sup> And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake."

<sup>27</sup> Abraham answered and said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. <sup>28</sup> Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." <sup>29</sup> Again he spoke to him and said, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it." <sup>30</sup> Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." <sup>31</sup> He said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it." <sup>32</sup> Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it."

## DISCUSSION & APPLICATION

### 1. It Is Good To Pray Humble But Bold Prayers

God knew more than Abraham. God knew that there weren't ten godly people in Sodom. His plan for destruction was already in place. But Abraham is praying bold prayers. Asking God to relent within a planned destruction is bold! But he also came to the Lord with humility. Verse 27: "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes." Each time that Abraham addressed God, it was clear that he was approaching Yahweh with respect for his position. He was humble, but he was also bold.

The point of this story is relentless prayer for people who need to be navigated to God. Something to remember as we talk about this story is that Jesus had not come yet as an atoning sacrifice for the world. When Jesus came and the gospel story was fulfilled, He literally paid for the sins of the whole world—of every single woman and man—so that people in cities would not have to be destroyed by God as a result of their sin. But God uses historic events in the Old Testament, like this one with Abraham and Sodom, to remind us it is important for us to pray big, bold prayers, believing God will act on our prayers in accordance with his word.

- a. **Would you say you are a person of big belief in what God can do? Do you pray big, bold prayers?**



This Illuminate journey is not about raising \$6.3 million dollars. Any of us who still think that have totally missed the point. This Illuminate journey is about 100% of us going before God and determining what a big, bold, faith-filled, humble, and a sacrificing heart looks like as it relates to our generosity. It is about 100% of us laying it on the line for God and holding nothing back.

- b. As you read the above statement, is this what you are doing for Illuminate? Is this how you have been thinking about your giving and your sacrifice? Are you going to believe that God will use you to navigate people to him in ways he has never done before in your life? Reflect on this and share your heart, thoughts, nervousness, excitement, and prayers with your group.**

## **2. God Will Do More Than What We Ask Or Imagine**

*Ephesians 3:14-21 – For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

Commitment allows us to partner with God as he does immeasurably more than all we could ask or imagine. He invites us to watch him do miracles through us! Allow this passage to be a final encouragement and inspiration as we seek to honor God with our commitments to generosity today.

- a. If someone who didn't know you looked at your financial commitments, what would they say you value?**



**b. If you were to make a commitment to Illuminate over the next two years that was “more than you could ask or imagine,” what would need to change in you?**

**c. Take a moment and pray. What will your commitment be? This is between you and God (or you and your spouse). Be humble. Be wise. Be bold!**

#### PRAY

Lord, help me to know how much to commit to Illuminate. I know you are on the march. I know you are using Ridgewood to bring people to yourself. I want to be a part of that. Help me to give with faith. I trust you. Amen.

#### DIG DEEPER

For further study this week:

- [\*The Legacy Journey: A Radical View of Biblical Wealth and Generosity\*](#) – a book from Dave Ramsey
- [\*The Treasure Principle, Revised and Updated: Unlocking the Secret of Joyful Giving\*](#) – a book from Randy Alcorn

#### NEXT WEEK'S BIG IDEA

A New Advent Series Begins November 18: “Light: Experiencing Christ in the Psalms”

Next Week’s Theme: He Would Be Rejected (Psalm 118)

