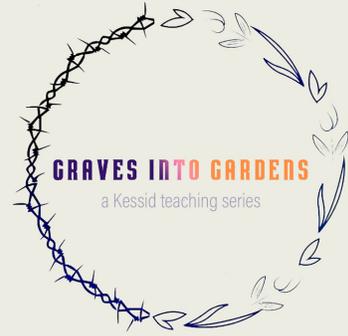


**“THE PLACE WHERE HOPE LIVES”**

**Date:** July 19, 2020

**Speaker:** Danny Clinton



**Our “Graves Into Gardens” series about, “Not just surviving difficult times, but thriving.”**

**If we are going to thrive, we must first develop a powerful hope in God.**

*(Vs) Psalm 10:17-18 – “You hear, O LORD, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more.”*

**“Our God offers the kind of hope that softens our hearts, awakens our vision, and compels us to make the effort to secure the blessings He longs to give us.”**

**Question: If so, many both need and want hope... Why do so few have it?**

- Provocative Answer: “People miss experiencing hope because they avoid experiencing sorrow.”

**Abram/Abraham was a man of both great... “Hope and Sorrow.”**

*(Vs) Gen. 12:1,2 – Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.”*

- Really consider what God is asking here... “Leave it all and don’t look back!”
- Great Sorrow!
- “Go where I go! Be where I am! Follow Me!”
- Great Hope!
- And that’s just from his own internal perspective... This does not take into account everyone watching from the outside!

**If he stays, he’s Faithless... Unwilling to follow God!**

**If goes he’s a Fool... Unwilling to care for what he already has!**

- All Abraham knows for sure is that he loses either way...

**Word of Advice: "Better to lose quietly alongside God, then to win loudly and without Him."**

*(Vs) Gen 12:4 - "So, Abram went, as the Lord had told him... Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran."*

**For the next 24 years, he followed God without many promises fulfilled...**

- He had to look out over the landscape of his life, and wonder, "Where is this all leading? Where is this great future coming from?"

**This is a pretty hopeless place...**

- A very recognizable place now a days; A place of little control or clarity.
- Throughout this entire pandemic, we have all had an hour here or there looking out over this place.

**For me personally, leading a Church in a Pandemic is complicated!**

- A lot of People demanding we "Open in Faith."
- A lot of People demanding we "Stay closed in Wisdom."

**So, no matter what we choose... We Lose.**

- We are either a Faithless Church or a Foolish one. (These are the only offered options.)
- A few times I even heard it said, "If your Church isn't closed, you're at the wrong Church!" #Wisdom. Or, "If your Church isn't open, you're at the wrong Church!" #Faithful
- Side Note: I really want credit for all the things I haven't posted!

**Point is, I'm experiencing most of this for only a few months...**

- For Abraham, it lasted 24 years!
- Over those 24 years, he made some mistakes... trying to "Help God Along!"
- Humorously, He even thought maybe God forgot how old his wife was...
- So, he got another woman pregnant to create an heir and a future for "God's People!" (That's just to name one miscalculation. )

**But... then One Day!**

*(Vs) Gen. 17:1-5 - "When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, <sup>2</sup> that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly."<sup>3</sup> Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, <sup>4</sup>"Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. <sup>5</sup> No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations."*

*(Vs) Gen. 17:15-17 – “And God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. <sup>16</sup>I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.” <sup>17</sup> Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, “Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?” ...*

*(Vs) Gen. 17:19 – “God said... Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him.”*

- Promise fulfilled – Nation started...

### **After looking back on Abraham’s life... Paul says in his letter to the Romans... -**

*(Vs) Rom. 4:18b MSG – “When everything was hopeless, Abraham believed anyway, deciding to live not on the basis of what he saw he couldn't do but on what God said He would do. And so, he was made father of a multitude of peoples.”*

### **As you look out over the landscape of your own life...**

- Perhaps you see Mountains of Hopelessness & Deserts of Despair...
- I say welcome... You just arrived at the place where Hope lives...
- There is so much joy waiting for you on the other side of the despair you’re experiencing...
- “Come awaken us to what you’re doing, Lord!”