

“GRAPE GATORADE AND GARBAGE COFFEE”

Date: December 5, 2021

Speaker: Danny Clinton



Thought: We all have an incredible capacity to adapt to our evolving context... At least some of us do...

- Me: In some areas I adapt pretty well... but in most, I simply do not... My lovely wife, on the other hand, has always adapted remarkably well...
- Example: A while back I promised I would be here the entire Holiday Series...
- Grape Gatorade (I can't adapt!!!)
- Garbage Coffee (Erin adapted overnight.)

In a similar fashion... Over the years, Christians have become more and more known for not adapting or evolving...

- To me, this is because they, more than any other group, often present themselves as having arrived somewhere... Or achieved something... Saved!
- I think we often find ourselves with this posture because of scripture.

(Vs) Numbers 23:19 – “God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?”

- We've been taught that “God Never Changes.”

(Vs) Hebrews 13:8 – “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

- Then add to that the many verses that call us to be “As God is” ...

(Vs) Ephesians 5:1 – “Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children.”

- And so... It's easy to see how we, as Christians, have in so many ways become unwilling to embrace moments of adaptation and so change... Therefore, creating a culture of... “Christians who feel that in order to be like God they should be cautious of adapting.”

So, let's talk a bit about, “The Adaptability of God.”

- **Note:** Yes, we can have this discussion...

“Scripture says that God is never changing, not that He never adapts.”

Genesis Ch. 18... When God revealed His plan to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah due to the wickedness of those cities, Abraham asked God to spare the people.

- In fact, Abraham engaged in a lengthy conversation to mediate for the cities.
- It all starts when God lays out His plan...

(Vs) Gen. 18:20, 21 – Then the Lord said, “Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, ²¹ 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.”

- **Note:** This is God telling, not asking, Abraham what He’s about to do.
- “The Bible is full of God telling and not asking.”
- It seems it’s His usual opening posture...
- But, don’t get caught up in thinking that means there’s no dialogue to be had. This entire series is about embracing moments.
- I don’t want you to miss these next few moments because they happen really quick and back-to-back-to-back... But, between them lie the entire context for today’s talk and for, what I believe, are some of the most important relational building blocks, and so moments to be experienced with our creator.

First Moment:

(Vs) Gen. 18:22 – “So, the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord.”

- He was just ‘With God...’

The First Moment is: “Authentic Presence with God.”

(Vs) Psalm 46:10a – “Be still and know that I am God.”

(Vs) Psalm 139:7 – “Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?”

- Being with God is never about going someplace that God is.
- Instead... “Presence is all about being conscious and aware of who your standing next to.” This is true of being present with people as well!
- Abraham was standing next to the Creator of all things, and he decided that was enough for him... He was just going to be there!

Second Moment:

(Vs) Gen. 18:23 – Then Abraham drew near and said, “Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?”

- This is such an important building block for life-giving relationship with God, especially when you really start to realize that in so many aspects.

This Second Moment is a: “Risky Prayer”

(Vs) James 4:8a – “Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you...”

- We will talk even more about this in Next Year’s Prayer Series, but just know... “Prayer is often about you drawing near to a God, both on His way and already there.”
- And, this can feel very risky at first... Like A “Trust Fall” with The Lord!
- Abraham knows this though... He knows he’s not drawing near to a God who is distant... He is drawing near to a God waiting, and so, it’s within this risky place of prayer... “he asks the rest of the question in his heart.”

(Vs) Gen. 18:24-25 – “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? ²⁵ 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?”

- He asks... **“God, will you not adapt?”**
- To the “God never changes – Christian” ...What an ugly and even disrespectful question this is!
- And yet, Scripture is full of these invitations...

(Vs) 1st Peter 5:6,7 – “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.”

- **Notice:** That this verse not only quite loudly invites us to bring all our anxiety to God... Anxiety, which can never be packaged up neatly. It also proclaims that when you do not do this you are prideful... “Humble yourselves... casting all your anxieties.”
- Hmm... No wonder never changing, never adapting, never messy, believers are famously called “Self-righteous” throughout scripture.
- This also means for Abraham to draw near and bring this very real concern to God, he was showing a great humbleness of spirit and heart.
- **This sets up the next Moment** – The moment just before God responds... Really ponder the space between Abraham’s ask and God’s response...
- Take a second and... “Ponder God Pondering!”

(Vs) Gen. 18:26 – And the Lord said, “If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake.”

- “God Adapts” ... and, as were about to see, He does so again and again and again!

(Vs) Gen. 18:27-33 – Abraham answered and said, “Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. ²⁸ 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.” ²⁹ Again he spoke to him and said, “Suppose forty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of forty I will not do it.” ³⁰ 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.” ³¹ 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.” ³² 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.” ³³ And the Lord went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.”

- Over and Over God puts on display for all to see His patience, kindness, mercy, and love... He creates space for Abraham just as he is.

This Third Moment is: “An Invitation to Engage.”

(Vs) Psalm 100:5 – “For the Lord is good; His steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.” (Not just Abraham... You and I)

- **Do you see?** - It’s in this way that God is unchanging, in that He is always adapting to the generations He loves. Meeting them exactly where their hearts can receive Him.

If you know this story, then you know that God would not find even 10 righteous people in this wicked city and so destroys it.

- Note: This means God walked all this out with Abraham, despite already knowing how the negotiation would end...
- To me, this fact makes this an even greater example of the way God wants to sit with us wherever we are and whatever we’re asking!
- It also causes me to wonder how many relational moments with God I’m missing because of my unwillingness to adapt... Maybe another way to ask this would be... How much of our relationship with God falls into either the Grape Gatorade or Trash Coffee category?

Where is your next Moment with God waiting? – (Underscore backstage)

- Will you sit with Him? - ‘In Authentic Presence?’
- Will you share the questions of your heart? - ‘Putting forth a Risky Prayer?’
- Will you respond to how He wants to build relationship with you? - ‘Receiving His Invitation to Engage?’