

# PRAYER

## GENESIS 18

The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 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." Then the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, 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." (17-21)

So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? 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? 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?" And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake." (22-26)

Abraham answered and said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. 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." Again he spoke to him and said, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it." 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." 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." 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." And the LORD went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place. (27-33)

REALNESS IN CONVERSATION WITH GOD

## PLEADING

Often, we approach prayer as if there is some sort of perfect formula; a set of steps or actions that we can take to commune with God. If we just say the right things in the right order with the right cadence and voice, we'll achieve success.

Scripture paints a different story. Abraham literally had a conversation with God. They spoke in real ways, with Abraham passionately pleading with his Lord. Jesus gives us similar examples, often sharing with his Father his real feelings and emotions.

CONVERSATION WITH GOD IN EVERYDAY LIFE

## A PERSONAL STORY

For me, some of the most real times of prayer were when it could truly be said that I was "crying out" to my God, often in times of struggle or despair. One prominent time in my memory is from years ago while I was a single man battling loneliness.

One failed relationship after another, I remember tearfully crying out loud, "God, if this is what's in store for me, I don't even want these desires anymore. Please, just take them away."

Perhaps my heart was in the wrong place, but God heard me nonetheless. In time, he answered my prayer. He gave me a contentedness that was, quite honestly, rather baffling to those around me. And in that, I found him as the source of my joy.

OUR HOPE

## JESUS

Some, I think rightly, believe that the man Abraham ate and talked with was the per-incarnate Jesus. This Jesus chose to spend intimate time with his friend, Abraham. This same Jesus is interceding on our behalf even now. We can partake in the same.