

Apply The Word

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Message Info

Title:

From Loss to
Fulfillment

Speaker:

Peter Privitera

Date:

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Scriptures:

Genesis 23:1-20

Theme: Faith learns that our losses are God's means of fulfillment.

Introduction: When we consider the story of Abraham, it can be easy to overlook the fact that he and Sarah were married for over 100 years. Over that time, they experienced great highs *and* lows together. It should come as no surprise, then, that Sarah's death in Gen 23 is a time of great sorrow for Abraham. Yet we also see that the Lord is at work through Abraham's time of loss.

Genesis 23 unpacks the tale in 3 parts:

1. Faith learns initiative (1-7)

Though Abraham is in great sorrow, he also takes the initiative to solve a problem he's never faced before: he needs to have land of his own.

He faces a challenge: how can he, as a sojourner, obtain land to bury Sarah's body? So he appeals to the Hittites to buy a cave for burial.

He will incur great personal cost to treat Sarah's body with respect, which illustrates the Christian hope in the resurrection of the dead.

2. Faith learns perseverance (8-6)

The Hittites appear to show favorable generosity to Abraham, but all is not as it seems. They are actually engaged in formal negotiations that will benefit themselves at Abraham's expense.

At first, they do not offer him what he needs for full burial. Later, Ephron offers him not just a cave for burial, but also requires him to purchase a field as well. The cost Ephron charges far exceeds what a fair burial purchases would entail. Yet Abraham does not haggle. Instead, he pays the great cost in order to bury his beloved wife.

Abraham pays full price, before witnesses, overpaying and using their standard of measurement. He goes the full distance to accomplish what needed to be done.

3. Faith learns to see (17-20)

The purchase of the land reminds us of the Lord's repeated promises: "I will give this land to your offspring" (12:7; 13:15, 17; 15:18; 17:8). Sarah's burial becomes the occasion of the first, partial fulfillment of those promises.

We also see the foretaste of a promised future land: Revelation 21:1-4.

Questions:

1. Who or what have you lost?
2. What has the Lord done in and for you through loss?
3. Are you weary of trusting and obeying the Lord through loss?