

Cooma Anglican 5 July 2026 1st Order APBA

Welcome

Hymn TIS 233 - I will sing the wondrous story

**I will sing the wondrous story
of the Christ who died for me,
how he left the realms of glory
for the cross on Calvary.**

**Refrain Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story
 of the Christ who died for me,
 sing it with the saints in glory,
 gathered by the crystal sea.**

**I was lost: but Jesus found me,
found the sheep that went astray,
raised me up and gently led me
back into the narrow way. [Refrain]**

**Faint was I, and fears possessed me,
bruised was I from many a fall,
hope was gone, and shame distressed me:
but his love has pardoned all. [Refrain]**

**Days of darkness still may meet me,
sorrow's path I oft may tread;
but his presence still is with me,
by his guiding hand I'm led. [Refrain]**

**He will keep me till the river
rolls its waters at my feet:
then he'll bear me safely over,
where the loved ones I shall meet. [Refrain]**

Greeting

The Lord be with you. And also with you.

Sentence of the Day

So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herders and mine, for we are close relatives. 9 Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left." Gen 13:8-9

Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your

Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'

Jesus said: 'This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

Lord, have mercy on us, and write your law in our hearts by your Holy Spirit

Prayer of the Day

O God, who for our redemption gave your only begotten Son to suffer death upon a cross, and by his glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of the enemy: grant us so to die daily to sin that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection through the same Jesus our Lord. **Amen**

The Ministry of the Word

Genesis 13(NIV)

¹ So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him. ² Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold. ³ From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier ⁴ and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the LORD.

⁵ Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. ⁶ But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together. ⁷ And quarreling arose between Abram's herders and Lot's. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.

⁸ So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herders and mine, for we are close relatives. ⁹ Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left."

¹⁰ Lot looked around and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) ¹¹ So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company: ¹² Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. ¹³ Now the people of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD.

¹⁴ The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. ¹⁵ All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. ¹⁶ I will make your offspring like the dust of the

earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted.¹⁷ Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.”

¹⁸ So Abram went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he pitched his tents. There he built an altar to the LORD.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Psalm 132:13 - 134:4(NIV)

^{132.13} For the LORD has chosen Zion, he has desired it for his dwelling, saying,

¹⁴ **“This is my resting place for ever and ever; here I will sit enthroned, for I have desired it.**

¹⁵ I will bless her with abundant provisions; her poor I will satisfy with food.

¹⁶ **I will clothe her priests with salvation, and her faithful people will ever sing for joy.**

¹⁷ **“Here I will make a horn grow for David and set up a lamp for my anointed one.**

¹⁸ **I will clothe his enemies with shame, but his head will be adorned with a radiant crown.”**

^{133.1} How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!

² **It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron’s beard, down on the collar of his robe.**

³ It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.

^{134.1} **Praise the LORD, all you servants of the LORD who minister by night in the house of the LORD.**

² Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the LORD.

³ **May the LORD bless you from Zion, he who is the Maker of heaven and earth.**

Galatians 3:15-20 (NIV)

¹⁵ Brothers and sisters, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case.¹⁶ The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ.¹⁷ What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise.

¹⁸ For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on the promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.¹⁹ Why, then, was the law given at all? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was given through angels and entrusted to a mediator.²⁰ A mediator, however, implies more than one party; but God is one.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Luke 12:13-21(NIV)

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

¹³ Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

¹⁴ Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” ¹⁵ Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”

¹⁶ And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. ¹⁷ He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ ¹⁸ “Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. ¹⁹ And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.””

²⁰ “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’

²¹ “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.

This is the gospel of the Lord: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

Sermon - Genesis 13 - Making Decisions

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became fully human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Thanksgiving for Offering

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. **Blessed be God forever.**

Prayers

Let us pray for the world and the church.

Response: Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

The Lord's Prayer

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Exhortation

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we who would come to the holy communion of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ must consider how St Paul exhorts us to examine ourselves before presuming to eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

For the benefit is great, if with a penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy sacrament. We then spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood; we dwell in Christ and he in us; we are one with Christ and Christ with us.

Yet also the danger is great if we receive the bread and cup unworthily. Judge yourselves therefore, that you be not judged of the Lord. Repent truly of your sins, having a steadfast faith in Christ our Saviour. Amend your lives and love your neighbour.

Above all, give hearty thanks to God for the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ, truly God and truly human, who humbled himself to death on the cross for us sinners, that he might make us children of God, and raise us to eternal life.

You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God and walking in his holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to strengthen and comfort you. But first, let us make a humble confession of our sins to almighty God.

Confession

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all people, we acknowledge with shame the sins we have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against your divine majesty, provoking most justly your wrath and indignation against us.

We earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for all our misdoings. Have mercy on us, most merciful Father. For your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake forgive us all that is

past, and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please you in newness of life, to the honour and glory of your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy has promised forgiveness of sins to all who with hearty repentance and true faith turn to him: have mercy on you; pardon and deliver you from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness; and keep you in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hear the words of assurance for those who truly turn to Christ: If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the perfect offering for our sins. 1 John 2:1-2

The Greeting of Peace

We are the body of Christ

His Spirit is with us

the peace of the Lord be always with you

And also with you.

Hymn TIS 693 - O Breath of Life, come sweeping through us

Come as you are, that's how I want you.

Come as you are, feel quite at home.

Close to my heart, loved and forgiven;

come as you are, why stand alone?

No need to fear, love sets no limits.

No need to fear, love never ends.

Don't run away, shamed and disheartened.

Rest in my love, trust me again.

I came to call sinners, not just the righteous.

I came to bring peace, not to condemn.

Each time you fail to live by my promise,

why do you think I'd love you the less?

Come as you are, that's how I love you.

Come as you are, trust me again.

Nothing can change the love that I bear you.

All will be well, just come as you are.

The Thanksgiving

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, Lord, Mighty Creator and Eternal God. Therefore with angels and

archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Glory to you, O Lord most high.

Prayer of Approach

We do not presume to come to your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

All glory to you, our heavenly Father, for in your tender mercy you gave your only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death on the cross for our redemption: who made there, by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; and instituted, and in his holy gospel commanded us to continue, a perpetual memory of his precious death until his coming again.

Hear us, merciful Father, we humbly pray, and grant that we who receive these gifts of your creation, this bread and this wine, according to your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed body and blood; who on the night he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given you thanks, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' Likewise after supper he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them saying, 'Drink from this, all of you; for this is my blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' **Amen.**

Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts with thanksgiving.

After Communion

Almighty and everliving God, we heartily thank you that you graciously feed us, who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, and thus assure us of your favour and goodness towards us and that we are true members of the mystical body of your Son, the blessed company of all faithful people, and are also heirs, through hope, of your eternal kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of your dear Son. And we humbly beseech you, heavenly Father, so to assist us with your grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works

as you have prepared for us to walk in, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be all honour and glory, world without end.

Hymn TIS 592 - You servants of God your Master proclaim

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, as soldiers of the cross;
lift high his royal banner, it must not suffer loss;
from victory on to victory his army he shall lead
till every foe is vanquished and Christ is Lord indeed.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, the trumpet call obey;
forth to the mighty conflict in this his glorious day!
All Christians true now serve him against unnumbered foes;
let courage rise with danger, and strength to strength oppose.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, stand in his strength alone:
the arm of flesh will fail you, you dare not trust your own.
Put on the gospel armour, each piece put on with prayer;
where duty calls, or danger, be never wanting there.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, the strife will not be long:
this day the noise of battle, the next the triumph song.
To those who are victorious a crown of life shall be;
they with the King of Glory shall reign eternally.

Notices

Dismissal

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord: **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

Sermon - Genesis 13 - Making Decisions

How do you make decisions? - Not just about the apparently big things, but also about the small things?

Many think we make about 35,000 decisions every day, although none of the articles I have read have found any valid research to back that up. There is some slightly more reliable information suggesting we make about 200 food related decisions each day, which I could believe.

Irrespective of how many decisions we actually make, two things are obvious: firstly, we all make different decisions, and we all make our different decisions in different ways. Most of us would spend more time on what we consider the big decisions, and hardly think at all about what we think are minor decisions - even though choosing whether a decision is major or minor is a decision in itself! It is complicated!

We have been working through the book of *Genesis*, and today we are at chapter 13. This chapter is a kind of case study of how two different people made a particular decision in two different ways.

The background to *Genesis* 13 is that Abram (the patriarch of the Jewish people, the guy who we normally know as Abraham since God renamed him later), had gone from his homeland Ur to Canaan with his nephew Lot because God told him to. He didn't stay in Canaan long because there was a famine when he went to Egypt. They became very wealthy in livestock, silver, gold and people - family members and farm hands who cared for the flocks, but were basically evicted back to Canaan.

The two families, with all their hangers-on and livestock had grown so large that when they got back to Canaan, they couldn't all live in the same place without stepping on each others' toes, so the herders were quarreling. Something had to be done, a decision had to be made. Today I want to quickly look at how this decision was made, and specifically at Abram and Lot's approaches to the decision, and what we can learn from it. Let's start with Lot.

Lot was Abram's nephew, the son of Abram's brother Haran (different word to the city of Harran). Haran died back in Ur, and it seems Abram looked after Lot, even though he wasn't a direct descendant. In the scheme of things, Lot was younger, and Abram was the elder, the responsible adult, and Abram had priority in decisions affecting both of them. When Lot and Abram got back to Canaan and all the quarrelling started, Abram suggested they should separate themselves a bit, but basically left the decision as to who went where to Lot.

Lot looked around, saw what was the most fertile land and settled there. The fact that he was disrespecting his uncle and elder by claiming the best land, and the fact he happened to pick a location with some unsavoury neighbours, didn't worry him. These neighbours were the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, whom every one ever since knows were very bad to be around, but this didn't faze Lot - he was just blinded by the fertility of the land his uncle was letting him have.

Abram's approach was different. The first thing you will notice is that this episode is bookended with Abram building altars to God. In verse 4 he called upon the name of the Lord at the altar he built in Bethel, and at the end, he built an altar at Hebron. By bookending this chapter, it shows that Abram was focussed on God - he called on his name - no doubt seeking God's guidance, he worshiped God at the altars, and he made thanksgiving sacrifices at the altars. But nowhere in this chapter does it suggest that Lot had any similar relationship with God.

Did you notice how Abram made the decision to move away from Lot? Back in verse 6 it says that the land could not support them while they stayed together, and this gave them a sensible economic reason to separate. But Abram gives a different reason in verse 8: He said 'Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herders and mine, for we are close relatives.' Abram was more concerned about relationship than economics. He was more worried about his relationship with God, and his relationship with his nephew, and their peoples with each other.

Abram had learnt the insignificance of the economics question from his first departure from Canaan. Then he left the land where God told him to go because of a famine, or in other words, he didn't trust God enough to provide for him and his people during a famine, so he took matters into his own hands. He moved away from where God had told him to go, and despite getting very wealthy, actually had quite a hard time in Egypt with Pharaoh taking his wife. Now he was back where God had promised him, and he realised the insignificance of the economics question when the God of all creation is providing for you.

Abram understood that God had promised him the entire land of Canaan, so it didn't particularly matter where in Canaan he lived. The fact that Lot bagged the most fertile bit was neither here nor there because God would provide for Abram no matter where he lived in the promised land, fertile or not-so-fertile. Trusting God and being obedient to him was vastly more important.

Secondly, Abram's relationship with Lot, and his people's relationship with Lot's people, were important to Abram. He could have decided that being together in

the promised land was more important than those relationships and stayed put, putting up with the quarreling. However, after our relationships with God, relationships with people are important, so separating, while staying in the promised land, was the right thing to do.

So, not only was Lot more focused on his own economic benefit, relationships did not seem to be of much consequence to him. He did not seem too fussed when he showed disrespect to his elder Abram, whether he lived close to the positive influence from his uncle, or to the unhelpful neighbours Sodom and Gomorrah.

Finally, after the lands had been chosen, after Abram settled in the land of Canaan, and Lot settled in the fertile valley near Sodom and Gomorrah, God said to Abram: "Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. ¹⁵ All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. ¹⁶ I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. ¹⁷ Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you."

God was reaffirming the promise that he had made in chapter 12: when he said: "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

He didn't get a new promise because of his obedience, God simply reaffirmed the old.

Lot, as we shall read in the coming weeks, suffered the consequences of his decision, kidnapped by kings invading Sodom and needing to be rescued by Abram, stuck in Sodom as God was about to destroy it - and needed to be rescued by Abram. He ultimately had to hide in the mountains out of fear of Zoar. There he fathered the nations of Moab and Ammon through his daughters' subterfuge. These nations were sometimes allies and sometimes adversaries of Israel - helping and then opposing from time to time. God ultimately blessed at least one branch of Lot's line, Naomi in the book of Ruth was a Moabitess, and descendant of Lot, grandmother of King David, and therefore an ancestor of Jesus.

So what do we learn for our decision making from Abram and Lot?

Firstly, we need to get our priorities right. It is not just about economics. Your relationship with God, your obedience to him is far more important, and our relationship with others should be second. What you decide when it doesn't

affect your relationship with God or other people should not be a big decision. You might think that where Abram lived in Canaan was a big deal, but he was happy to leave the decision up to his nephew Lot - and praise God whatever the consequences, trusting God by faith.

Secondly, both Abram and Lot made some bad decisions, and kept on making bad decisions. They had just left the land where God had told them to go and went to Egypt where Abram was deceitful about his wife, and he did that again with Elimelek. Despite these failings, God was faithful, keeping, and re-stating his promises to Abram and his descendants, and even as we have heard, bringing Lot's descendants into that promise through Ruth.

This doesn't mean that all decisions we make are minor, because God will just forgive us and continue to bless us. There are consequences for bad decisions, but God is faithful. Human relationships can be broken through poor decisions, but God is always faithful, and always keeps his promises, and provided we repent, will always forgive our bad decisions, our sins.

Ultimately, like Abram, our godly decisions must come out of worshipping God. Abram built altars to worship and thank God and he made decisions in obedience to God. So too, must our decisions begin and end in worshipping God, be in obedience to his word, and conscious of the impact on our relationships with God and people. Until Jesus returns, we live in a sinful world so we will not always get them right, but even when we fall short, as Abram and Lot did, we must have faith in God and his promises, even as we suffer consequences for our foolishness and disbelief.

The most important decision we must keep making is to have faith in God's promise of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who died on the cross for the forgiveness of all our bad decisions and for every time we fall short. We must have faith in God's promise of eternal life for all who trust in him, no matter how often our decisions fall short. Is that your faith, and the basis for your decisions?

Amen