Studying Abraham’s middle period has taught us about . . .

- Gaining victory over failure (Gen. 16-17)
- Fellowship with God and Prayer (Gen. 18-19)

In Gen. 18, Abraham asks two questions that give us the theme for chapter 20:

“Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?” (Gen. 18:23)
“Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Gen. 18:25)

Genesis 20 = Three truths about “being righteous” and “doing right” that mature believers need to nail down.

I. BAD AND GOOD NEWS ABOUT SIN (GEN. 20:1-2)

Genesis 12
Appearance and promise (7-8)
“Sister” ploy (11-13)
Sarah “taken” (15)

Genesis 20
Appearance and promise (18:1, 10)
“Sister” ploy (20:1-2a)
Sarah “taken” (20:2)
The “love” card (20:13)
Sin is like a self-deceiving addiction.

- I can’t see it coming
- I can’t see who it’s hurting
- I can’t see that it never works

B. God Uses Even Our Sins To Help Us Grow

Principle: If we refuse to face our sins, we will be tested in those areas over and over again.

“I imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what he is doing. He is getting drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on: you knew those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently he starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts and does not seem to make sense. What is he up to? The explanation is that he is building a different house from the one you thought of – throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up the towers, making courtyards. You thought you were going to be made into a decent little cottage: but he is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it himself.” – C. S. Lewis

II. BAD AND GOOD NEWS ABOUT GOODNESS (GEN. 20:3-13)

A. Being Good Enough Isn’t Good Enough (3-7)

1. God reveals himself generally to everyone (3a)

2. The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. 3Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. 4There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. 5Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. – Psalm 19:1-4

2. General revelation accuses and condemns (3b)

3. General revelation is firm but fair (4-6)

4. General revelation only takes us so far (7)
QUESTION: What about those who have never heard?

- Nobody is outside the sound of God’s voice.
- God never judges anyone unfairly.
- If I want to know about salvation, God will make a way.

B. God Doesn’t Calculate Our Goodness In Comparison With Others (8-13)

1. Morally, Abimelech is “Better” than Abraham

   "Abraham is the saint and Abimelech is the pagan. But Abraham looks like a pagan and Abimelech like a saint.” – Ray Pritchard

2. Relationally, Abraham is Accepted by God

   6 When we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us . . . 10 If, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more shall we be saved through his life! – Rom. 5:5-11

3. Progressively, Abraham has Grown

   - He never repeats the same sin again
   - He enters stage three - maturity

III. GOOD NEWS ABOUT GRACE (Gen. 20:14-18)

A. Abraham is Graced (14-15)
B. Sarah Is Graced (16)
C. Abimelech is Graced (17-18)
CONCLUSION

Abraham asked God, "Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25)

In Genesis 20, God asks me:

Is there a pattern in my life of "the same old sin done for the same old reasons"?
Is God’s justice what I really need?
What if the cross is God’s final answer?