

Day 41 Devotion

He (Abraham) looked up and suddenly saw three men standing near him. As soon as he saw them, he ran from his tent entrance to greet them and bowed deeply. He said, "Sirs, if you would be so kind, don't just pass your servant" ...Abraham... put the food in front of them, and stood under a tree near them as they ate.... Then one of the men said, "I will definitely return to you about this time next year. Then your wife Sarah will have a son!".... The two messengers entered Sodom in the evening. Lot, who was sitting at the gate of Sodom, saw them, got up to greet them, and bowed low. He said, "Come to your servant's house, spend the night, and wash your feet.... Before thy went to bed, the men of the city of Sodom...surrounded the house and called Lot, "Where are the men who arrived tonight? Bring them out to us so that we may know them intimately (molest them)."As the sun rose...the Lord rained down burning asphalt from the skies onto Sodom and Gomorrah.... When Lot's wife looked back, she turned into a pillar of salt.

Selected verses from Genesis 18-19

When Linda and I moved into African American neighborhoods, we were always welcomed. Neighbors were friendly. Some were stand-off-ish but certainly no more than if we had moved into a white community. There were no violent threats, even in low-income areas. We felt comfortable and enjoyed living among our new friends.

When we had occasion to tell other whites where we lived, often they looked at us in disbelief, as if we were survivors of the Holocaust. Some considered us brave or even reckless. Others wouldn't listen to how positive we found our experience to be. They were doubtful that our neighbors contributed importantly to our lives and gave more to us than we ever could to them. They seemed to think "those people" had nothing worthwhile.

Our welcome contrasts so much from what an African American sister described as her and her sister's experience of moving into a mostly white community. Where were the greetings with a smile? When would there be small talk and getting acquainted? How about a visit and a chance to tell stories about items displayed around the living room? How about being introduced to visiting family and friends?

If those hurdles could have been negotiated, I know these two sisters had experiences to share their neighbors would have enjoyed and been enriched by. And those neighbors surely had some good items to share as well. But the neighbors' welcome wasn't there. The sisters felt a need to move to a new, friendlier place.

Abraham received strangers and received a blessing, his and Sarah's beloved son Isaac. Lot received the strangers, but his neighbors didn't. They reacted with nasty hostility, which led to the just destruction of their city. When Lot's wife looked back her fate was fixed in her inability to move on.

This bible story is rather extreme and dramatic compared to the experience of our sisters. But it puts a God perspective on being unwelcome and on those with hearts of stone. And it explains blessings on those who receive 'others' as our neighbors received Linda and me.

Who is your neighbor?

Rev. Bob Morgan, Honorably Retired

Jesus, you told us to seek and we will find, ask and it will be given, to knock and it will be opened. Bless us to have sacred friendships. Bless the knocking on each other's doors, the seeking and asking from each other that builds trust. Enrich our lives with gifts that can only be found in those unlike ourselves, that the door to your love swing open. Amen

RESOURCES: [Miss Mississippi Finds Trouble, "Freedom Summer" clip 15 - Bing video](#) and from 1:49 to the end of [American Experience:Freedom Summer Season 26 Episode 6 - Bing video](#)