**Genesis 23:1-20**

***When We Lose Something Precious***

Introduction

1. Have you ever lost something you really loved or valued?

2. In Genesis 23 Abraham has lost the love of his life Sarah.

Have you ever lost something you really loved or valued?

**I. THE TRAGEDY OF THE LOSS 23:1, 2a**

 ***A. The Eventual 1*** Death comes to all.

 **1.** At first glance, Sarah died at 127. Abraham would be 137 and Isaac 37.

 **2.** It so happens that Sarah is the only woman whose age and death are reported in

 Scripture.

 **3.** To us it is old. Abraham lived to be 185. This may have been sudden, unexpected

 and premature. Death is inevitable. To someone you love, it is always too soon.

 ***B. The Environment 2a***

**1.** During the 20 years, Abraham left Beersheba and came to Kiriath-araba in the land

 of Canaan.

 **2.** *“If we learn to laugh at our troubles, you can be sure we’ll always have something to*

 *laugh at.”*

 *\**Life is filled with loss. No one is exempt. **There is a deeper lesson: God is enough!**

 \*We all will lose someone or something precious: marriage, moves, financial reversal,

 death (maybe sudden and unexpected).

 \*When there is a loss…**God knows all about it, and knows every detail.**

Have you ever lost something you really loved or valued?

**II. THE TENDERNESS IN THE LOSS 23:2b**

1. ***The Loss***

*Abraham came (he must have been away at the time of Sarah’s death) to mourn and weep.*

1. ***The Lessons***

***\****God doesn’t take away natural feelings at salvation. We are not dehumanized. Tears may fall.

***\****With every loss there is a void, an emptiness…in those mentioned above: a marriage breaks up, moves, financial reversal, death.

***\****When there is a loss, expect it to hurt. **Expect pain:** Pain humbles the proud. It softens the stubborn. It melts the hard. Silently and relentlessly, it wins battles deep within the lonely soul. The heart alone knows its own sorrow, and not another person can fully share in it. Pain operates alone; it needs no assistance. It communicates its own message whether to statesman or servant, preacher or prodigal, mother or child. By staying, it refuses to be ignored. By hurting, it reduces its victim to profound depths of anguish. It is at that anguishing point that the sufferer either submits and learns, developing maturity and character; or resists and become embittered, swamped by self-pity, smothered by self-will.

**I have tried and I cannot find, either in Scripture or history, a strong-willed individual whom God used greatly until He allowed him to be hurt deeply.**

**\***Every emptiness is an opportunity for God to fill it with Himself. We come to the end of ourselves and surrender absolutely. ***“Lord fill all the emptiness with Yourself****.****”***

Have you ever lost something you really loved or valued?

**III. THE TIME AFTER THE LOSS 23:3**

 *Abraham stood up from before his dead…*

1. There is a time to get up and go on living. **It will take time, maybe a lot of time!**
2. After an emotional shock, we must go on, because life goes on. **God still has a purpose for you being alive!**
3. No Christian who understands the Word of God is going to spend much time hanging around a cemetery! **Praise the Lord for the strength to live!!**

Have you ever lost something you really loved or valued?

**IV. THE TREASURE FROM THE LOSS 23:4**

*I am a stranger and pilgrim with you…*to the sons of Heth (Hittites).

1. He had left his “home” never to find another here on earth (Heb. 11:13, 16).
2. This world was not their home. There is nothing like death that puts life into perspective.
3. Nothing really matters…wealth, fame, popularity, things, awards.
4. We live as though this is all there is…the death opens our eyes! *Set your affection on things above, where Jesus sits!*

Have you ever lost something you really loved or valued?

**V. THE TESTIMONY IN THE LOSS 23:5, 6**

*Thou art a mighty prince among us…lit. a prince of God.* We all leave a legacy. What legacy

 are you leaving?

1. There is no need to purchase land. He can choose the choicest family sepulcher among them.
2. Abraham was a man of high rank. A man whom God has raised on high. If Christ is reflected through us, others will see it.
3. God did it! **If there is anything in us, God did it! If God did it, it’s all His. If it’s all His, then He is to receive all the glory!!**

Have you ever lost something you really loved or valued?

**VI. THE TRANSACTION BECAUSE OF THE LOSS 23:7, 9, 13, 16, 18**

Abraham is negotiating with Ephron over a piece of land. The land is important.

1. ***The Request 9*** Buy the cave.
2. ***The Response 11*** *I sell it.* Abraham wanted to buy only the cave of Machpelah, but Ephron wished to sell him the field in which it was located. Hittite law required Ephron to be responsible for dues on the entire property if he sold Abraham only the cave, but not if he sold the entire parcel.
3. ***The Reimbursement 13***  *I will give money.*
4. ***The Reply 15*** *400 shekels worth of silver* A shekel was about .5 oz. It was a high price for a small piece of land in those days.
5. ***The Response 16* Sold!** Abraham bought the entire parcel for about 200 oz. of silver.
6. ***The Reward 17-20*** All of this was his. He, Isaac, Jacob and their wives were also buried here.

\*Why spend so much time on buying a cave? Abraham had to buy a cave in the very land God had given to him.

\*Why didn’t he take her somewhere else to bury her? The cave of Machpelah was the place Abraham wanted. He insisted on buying it. Do you remember the Abrahamic Covenant: He was promised a seed (son) and land. He had a son, but he had no land. He would buy this small piece until God gave him or his heirs the land.

\*Abraham wanted to be buried in that land so when the resurrection occurred, he and Sarah would be raised in that land. **That is their hope!**

**\*We have something much better promised.** (John 14:1-3)…What He is preparing and where the church is going is much better. That was brand new to His disciples who were steeped in Old Testament theology.

**\***God never told Abraham that He was going to take Him from this earth to heaven. **He kept telling him that He was going to give him this land.** That is why he and Sarah were buried in Hebron, and so was Isaac and Rebekah and Jacob and Leah.

**\***They had hope of being raised from the dead **in that land.** That is the reason so much detail is given here.

Have you lost something or someone you really loved and valued?

1. At a time of loss, there is another place, a prepared place for prepared people (Jn. 14:6)
2. *I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father, but by Me.*
3. Ultimate fulfillment is not here and not now. It is not in what we see, touch or feel...it is in a Person.
4. If all of our worth and identity is wrapped up in what is lost then we feel hurt, and a failure. My identity is in Jesus Christ. This isn’t all there is. Is all your hopes and dreams wrapped up in the here and now? You will be miserable and you will live a roll-a-coaster Christian life. You will always be hurt and disappointed.
5. **At the end of yourself…FIND HIM!**