



Abram and Lot

Genesis 13:5-18

The sound of a sail snapping in the wind filled the air as a deck hand quickly jumped to tighten the flapping white canvas. He ran down the length of the great ship, his feet pounding on the weather beaten wood planks that covered the deck. The thin little man grabbed the rope that had loosened and pulled with all the strength he could muster to tighten and retie the great sheet.

A few feet further up the deck, a tall man with a head full of long, dark hair and a wavy beard that showed just a few strands of grey, stood at the huge captain's wheel. Mostly, he looked like he was just resting against the spokes of the polished wood, but every few minutes, he would look at his shiny brass compass and then spin the wheel a few inches either way to correct the boat's course. Anyone who saw this man would know that he was the famous Captain Billy Ocean, the captain of the beautiful sailing ship, the Caribbean Queen. They would also know that he was once the roughest, toughest, scariest pirate that ever sailed the seven seas. Or, well, he was until he met Jesus who changed his heart. Now he is known for using his ship and pirate skills to help others and to build God's Kingdom!

A few minutes later, a man with a pointed nose, pointed shoes, and great big glasses, pushed open the door to the ship's hold and popped out into the bright sunlight. He squinted a little as his eyes adjusted and then spied the captain.

"Aye, it's me faithful quartermaster, Ripply Waters." Captain greeted. "Where ye been?"

"Well Cap'n, I've been doin' my job, which be the most important on the ship, if I do say so meself."

Captain shook his head. "Second most important."

Ripply's face turned a bright red. "Says you!" He yelled. "Where would this ship be if the quartermaster wasn't there to make sure that the crew has all the supplies we need?"

"Aye, but where would this ship be if we didn't have a brilliant captain to sail her?" The captain calmly replied, ignoring, for the moment, Ripply's anger.

"I don't know, when you find us a brilliant captain, I'll let you know." Ripply retorted.

"Them's is fightin' words, Ripply Waters!" he said, raising his voice over the sound of the wind.

"Well, I ain't takin' 'em back!" Ripply yelled as he shook his finger in the air.

"Oh, you'll take 'em back or I'll make you walk the plank!" The captain roared.

Ripply sneered. "We don't have a plank. I sent it out to be repaired."

The captain pounded the wheel. "Well, then I'll make you walk...the dog!" he finished quickly.

"We ain't got a dog!" Ripply reminded. "Well, you're the quartermaster, go get us one!" the captain yelled.

Ripply stomped his feet and turned to leave. "Fine! I'll just take the treasure chest and go to the pet store!" He tucked the shiny gold chest he had been holding under his arm and started to march off towards the crew cabin.

The captain suddenly realized what Ripply was holding. He jumped in front of the quartermaster. "Unhand that chest, you scurvy knave! That be me Traysure!!"

"You're treasure? I'm the one what dug it up!" Ripply scoffed as he tried to push past the big captain.

The captain would not take that explanation and reached for the chest. "And I'm the one what steered the Caribbean Queen to the island!"

"Well, the quartermaster always gets a double share so he can buy supplies!" Ripply argued as he stretched the chest away from the Captain's hands.

"Well, the captain always gets a double share so he can buy...captain stuff." The captain continued to argue weakly as he realized he was running out of good reasons to get the treasure.

Ripply turned and sat down on the deck. "Look Captain, let's not quarrel."

The captain stopped reaching for the chest and leaned against the ship's rail. He felt the salty spray from a large wave shower his face and arms. "You're right, Ripply. We've always gotten along just like brothers. Let's share the traysure." He said as he wiped the salty water from his weatherworn face.

Ripply nodded in agreement. "Now you're talkin', Cap'n. I've got an idea - why don't we open the lid and reach inside and each grab a handful of traysure?"

The captain leaned forward over the chest which was now lying on the deck between them. "Great idea! Are you ready? One, two, three!" Ripply flipped open the chest and the both reached inside. They each pulled out a book. The Captain's book had a brown leather cover and Ripply's had a black one.

Ripply's mouth stretched into a big grin. "Woah! This is the greatest treasure I've ever seen! We found us some Bibles!"

The captain held his Bible up to the light. "This is more than just a traysure! This is also a traysure map! This is the Word of God and this will lead us to the greatest traysures the world has ever known!"

"Well, what are we waiting for? Let's open 'er up, Cap'n!" Ripply encouraged.

"Aye, mate! Let's see what traysures God wants to show us!" The captain opened his Bible to Genesis 13 and read the title: "Abram and Lot separate."

Ripply also turned to Genesis 13 and pointed excitedly at the page. "Cap'n, I know this one! Lot was Abram's nephew!"

"That's right! They used to travel together with all of their men and all of their animals and God really blessed them."

"It seems like God blessed them more than they expected." Ripply read Genesis 13:6 out loud. "But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great."

"Aye," the captain agreed and continued reading. "And quarreling arose between Abram's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot... So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers.""

"Captain, that sounds familiar," Ripply said.

"Aye, it's what we just said to each other," the captain agreed.

"So, what happened next?" Ripply asked.

"Well, Abram was older and wiser so he said to his nephew, Lot, 'Why don't split up? You pick the way you want to go and I'll go the other way.'"

"What did Lot do?" Ripply asked.

"Well, the plain of Jordan looked like a beautiful garden, so Lot went that way," the captain explained.

Ripply thought how he would have felt if he were Abram and Lot had kept him from getting the best land. He knew he would not be happy. "Lot picked the better land? Did Abram get mad?" he asked.

"Nope, Abram did not care about land and possessions. He cared about keeping the peace with Lot. Listen to what God promised Abram: He said, 'Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.'"

"What's an offspring? Is that his children?" Ripply asked.

"His children and their children too," the captain replied. "That's when God promised to give him more offspring than all the dust of the earth!"

Ripply thought about how big that family must be. "Wow, that's a big family! I'd like to see their Thanksgiving table! God sure is generous."

The captain nodded and then looked at the treasure chest on the floor between them. "Aye, and speaking of being generous, I want to give you me half of the traysure."

Ripply looked surprised and then replied. "Oh, no, no, Cap'n, you found that treasure. You should keep it all."

"But you did all the work to dig it up, you keep it," the captain argued.

"No, I insist! You keep it," Ripply replied. "I don't want it!"

The captain threatened, "I'll make you walk the plank!"

"We don't have a plank," Ripply reminded.

"You're right. We don't. Let's share the traysure," the captain finally agreed.

Ripply was surprised that his strong captain had agreed with him. "Are you sure, Captain?" he questioned.

"Aye, I'm positive. Our friendship is more important than any old treasure. We'll split it right down the middle, deal?" the captain put out his right hand towards Ripply in an offer to shake hands.

Ripply grabbed his hand and they shook on the deal. "Deal! Well Cap'n, it looks like God blessed us just like Abram and Lot!"

Captain Billy slapped Ripply on the back and laughed a loud, good-natured laugh that echoed off of the wall of the galley in front of them and then blew away in the stiff wind.

"Aye, indeed he did me friend. God always keeps His promises! Let's go find out if Scully has got something cooked up in that thar galley of his." The two men marched off the deck and into the ship's kitchen, once again as good friends.