

The Choice and Failings of Lot

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[0 : 0 0] Welcome to our service this evening, and as we come together in this act of worship, let us seek the Lord's blessing upon his word. Let us pray.

Amen.

That our times are in thine own hands, that thou art the one who ruleth in heaven and in earth, that thou art the creator God, that thou art the one who counts the number of the stars, who names them every one.

O great is our Lord, and of great power his wisdom such can none. And grant that we may humble ourselves in thy presence, and come to acknowledge our sinnership.

To acknowledge that we sin daily in thought, in word, and in deed. But blessed be thy name, for the provision that thou hast made for us, in and through thy Son.

[1 : 3 8] That he came into this world, and that he took our sins upon himself in his own body on the cross of Golgotha.

And there that he met with what our sins deserved. We give thee thanks today for the open tomb. The tomb that proclaims to us that thou hast paid the ransom price.

That thou hast procured the blessing of forgiveness for thy people. And as we look into the empty tomb, we see that sin has been cancelled.

That guilt has been blotted out. That thy law has been magnified. That thy justice has been honoured. And that the sinner can be saved.

We give thee thanks that at this evening hour that we have that boldness and confidence. Through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ to come unto thy presence.

[2 : 4 7] Knowing that he is there upon the throne of grace. And that he is there to grant to us mercy. And the grace to help us in our time of need.

Therefore that we have that boldness and confidence to come and to lay out our petitions before thee. Knowing that thou art the one who is able to meet out of the riches of thy grace to all our needs.

Lord, we give thanks for that revelation that thou hast made of thyself. As our creator redeemer through the Lord Jesus Christ.

We seek, O Lord, that thou would bless our homes and our families. That thou would bless those among their number who are careless and indifferent.

O that thou may work in their hearts, stir them up, O Lord. And bring them to that place of repentance. To that place where they would seek the mercy of God in Jesus Christ.

[3 : 5 6] We acknowledge that it is the work of thine own hand. Through thine own spirit that will give thee praise. For we acknowledge that without thee we can do nothing.

That we are dependent upon thy Holy Spirit. And we pray that it may please thee to send thy spirit to work among us as communities and as a nation and as a people.

And to bring us to repentance. O that we may sorrow over our sin. That we may come with that pleasing sacrifice unto thee.

That sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. We give thanks that thou art the one who buildeth up thine own church.

That thou art the one who through thy spirit doth gather thy people unto one. And we pray that in these days that we may see thy power in salvation.

[5 : 06] O that we may see broken hearts and broken spirits coming. Confessing their sin. Repenting over their sin. Seeking the mercy of God in Jesus Christ.

Coming to experience thy salvation. And the joy of thy salvation. Remember those who are ill.

And pray that thine healing hand may be upon them. Remember those who mourn over the passing of loved ones. The void and emptiness that they find in their hearts tonight.

But we give thanks for that promise of thy word. That for those that are broken in their heart and grieved in their minds. That thou art the one who can heal.

And their painful wounds that thou doth tenderly abinds. We pray for our young people and our children. And pray that a generation would grow up who would fear thy name.

[6 : 07] And who would be thy witnesses in this world. Remembering all thy servants who proclaim thy truth this evening hour. O may the unction of thine own spirit be upon them.

And may their word go forth in the power and demonstration of thy spirit. In convicting and converting. We pray O Lord that thou would remember us as a nation.

O that thou would have pity and compassion upon us. For we acknowledge O Lord that we have strayed away from thy paths. But may it please thee to turn us again.

To be a nation that would fear the Lord. We pray that thou would be with those who this night may be feeling lonely.

Those who may be feeling depressed. Those who may be cast down in their minds. O Lord may thou lift them up. May thou lift them up through thine own word.

[7 : 10] O the word that contains so many promises. And that all these promises have been sealed for us. Through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

O stir us up we pray thee. Revive thy people. And bring days of awakening among us. We ask O Lord that it may please thee to continue with us.

For the short time that we are coming together at this evening hour. O may thy spirit work. May it open our hearts to receive thy word.

And may thy word find lodgment in our heart. And bring forth fruit in our lives. O Lord grant to us that.

We would indeed be among those who would be waiting upon the Lord. And all that we ask with the forgiveness of our many sins.

[8 : 09] It's in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen. Now we shall read the word of the Lord in the Old Testament.

And in the book of Genesis and chapter 13. And Abraham went up out of Egypt. He and his wife and all that he had.

And lot with him into the south. And Abraham was very rich in cattle and silver and in gold. And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel.

And to the place where his tent had been at the beginning. Between Bethel and Hai. And to the place of the altar which he had made there at the first. And there Abraham called on the name of the Lord.

And Lot also went with Abraham had flocks and herds and tents. And the land was not able to bear them. That they might dwell together. For their substance was great.

[9 : 11] So that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdsmen of Abraham's cattle. And the herdsmen of Lot's cattle. And the Canaanite and the Paranatic who had dwelt then in the land.

And Abraham said unto Lot. Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee. And between my herdmen and thy herdmen. For we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee?

Separate thyself. I pray thee for me. And if thou wilt take the left hand. Then I wilt go to the right. Or if thou depart to the right hand. Then I will go to the left.

And Lot lifted up his eyes. And beheld all the plain of Jordan. That it was well watered. Everywhere before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Even as a garden of the Lord.

Like the land of Egypt. As thou comest into soar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan. And Lot journeyed east. And they separated themselves the one from the other.

[10 : 17] Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan. And Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain. And pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.

And the Lord said unto Abram. After that Lot was separated from him. Lift up now thine eyes. And look from the place where thou art. Northward and southward.

And eastward and westward. For all the land which thou seest to thee will I give it. And to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth.

So that if a man can number the dust of the earth. Then shall thy seed also be numbered. Lord arise walk through this land in the length of it. And in the breadth of it.

For I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent. And came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre. Which is in Hebron. And built there an altar unto the Lord.

[11 : 15] May the Lord bless unto us the reading of that portion of his word. Now seeking his help and blessing. Let us look at words found in this chapter of Genesis chapter 13.

And we can just read from the beginning of the chapter. And Abram went up out of Egypt he and his wife. And all that he had.

And lot with him into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle and silver and in gold. And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel.

And to the place where his tent had been at the beginning. Between Bethel and Hai. And to the place of the altar which he had made there at the first. And there Abram called on the name of the Lord.

And lot also which went with Abram had flocks. And herds and tents and so on. Tonight we are going to look at the character of Lot.

[12 : 20] And that covers a number of chapters in the book of Genesis. But I suppose we can say that the story of Lot begins with his uncle's call to leave his dwelling place.

His uncle Abram or Abraham lived in Ur of the Chaldees. But God called him as recorded for us in Genesis chapter 12.

The Lord had said unto Abram. Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred. And from thy father's house into a land that I will show thee. And Stephen in the New Testament reminded the council that the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham when he was yet in Mesopotamia.

Now in Ur Abraham was an idolater. Which simply means that he bowed down to idols of stone and wood and that he worshipped false gods.

But God called him and God revealed his glory to him. God spoke his word to his heart.

[13 : 37] And so that the Bible tells us that Abram turned from his vain idols to walk before the living God. And this was all by the grace of God.

Because he did not know anything about God. He did not know how to get to God. But God revealed himself to him. And Abraham believed.

Now that is what we call the conversion experience. Hearing God's word and putting your faith and your trust in it. Believing what God has said and taking God at his word.

In the New Testament we read that faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. So here the word of God comes to Abram.

He hears the word of God and he believed. He put his faith in God. We read here in the previous chapter in chapter 12 and verse 4.

[14 : 50] That Abram obeyed. So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken unto him. And the Lord went with him. And Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

Faith always leads to obedience. Through faith always leads to obedience. Here we find that Abram did what God told him.

And he went with all his family to that land that the Lord showed him. He did not know where it was or what it was called. But he listened to God.

True faith always leads to obedience. And obedience leads to blessing. God had promised him that through his seed the whole world eventually would be blessed.

The Lord said to him, And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great. And thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee.

[16 : 01] And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. We know that this speaks of the blessing of the gospel through Jesus Christ, who was according to his humanity of the seed of Abraham.

Now what we notice here from Abraham's life there at the beginning, that it is marked by the presence of two things.

First, we are told that he lived in a tent. And secondly, that he always built an altar unto God. These two things seem to mark the life of Abraham.

The tent speaks of his pilgrim character of his life on this earth. That means that he was not living for down here.

And he was always prepared to move wherever God told him. To move on and to go to the place that he would show him.

[17 : 13] The altar spoke of the fact that he was not counting himself a citizen of this world, but a citizen of heaven. So what we have here characterising Abraham is faith, obedience and blessing.

Faith, obedience and blessing. Now as we come to chapter 13 of Genesis, we'll read about Lot being faced with a choice.

Abraham's nephew had to choose whether he would follow in faith or go his own way. Maybe some of you tonight may be facing that choice.

Whether to follow Jesus Christ and become companion to those who love the Lord, or else to go your own way. I am sure that this was not an easy moment for Lot, because he had a special attachment to his uncle Abraham.

God was good to both of them. For Abraham, we are told, was very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold.

[18 : 40] And Lot, we are told, who also went with Abraham, had flocks and herds and tents. We are told that their belongings and possessions were so great that trouble began to erupt between the herdsmen of their flocks.

We are told that the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together, for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdsmen of Abraham's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle.

And so Abraham said, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen, for we be brethren.

So he came up with a solution that they should part from one another. And he gave Lot the choice. Abraham said, And what we have here is the first step that was to lead to Lot being found in a poor spiritual state.

The first step we can say that led to his backsliding. Abraham had wealth, but his wealth did not have him.

[20 : 10] Lot had wealth, but his wealth possessed him. For we read, that Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Sower.

You know, this is a key version of the whole history of Lot. There are places mentioned here that was to play such an important part in the history of Lot.

Places like Egypt, Sodom, Gomorrah, Sower. What we have here in the experience of Lot is that he faced a choice.

His uncle had said unto him, Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. And Abraham said, If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right, and if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

Lot was faced to make a decision, to make a choice. And he made a choice. He chose for himself all the plain of Jordan.

[21 : 37] And Lot joined east, and they separate themselves the one from the other. We can see that this was indeed a testing time for Lot.

Would he continue with Abraham despite the difficulties, or would he separate himself from his uncle? What we are told is that he looked from the heights of Bethel, another important place in biblical history.

Bethel means the house of God. And from there, Lot looked to the plain of Jordan, and he found that it was like the land of Egypt.

It looked like Egypt, and Lot loved Egypt, and he made his choice. From Bethel, from the house of God, from the altar of the Lord, he made a choice.

Tonight, the gospel is testing you, and what will be your choice.

[22 : 43] Let us for a moment see his downward path. It says that he saw this well-watered garden with a promise of bringing forth great production of crops.

There is no doubt, but that Lot lusted after this land. He saw that this well-watered plain was like the very garden of God, that is, like the garden of Eden.

There was no more beautiful or attractive place than that. He looked, he surveyed with his eyes, and he lusted after this land.

No wonder that the psalmist says to us that his prayer is, Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.

In the garden of Eden, we are told that when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, that she took of the fruit thereof, and to eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

[23 : 58] Oh, how we ought to discipline our eyes. How we must discipline and keep watch on our eyes. Lord, look on the outward appearance, and maybe that is where you are tonight.

Once you valued the things of God. Once, Lot valued the altar of the Lord. But now as he looks out, he sees the well-watered plain of Jordan.

And with his eyes, he lusted after the plain of Jordan. Oh yes, once you valued the things of God, and now you have been drawn further and further away from them.

You know what I'm talking about. There are many ways by which a person can be drawn away. It can be a relationship.

It could be some kind of secret sin. It may be that you are running around this world, and that it's bright lights, and the attractive nature of sin and success, that is destroying you.

[25 : 17] That is luring your eyes, and enticing you away from the things of God. Lord, but you know it's going to hurt you.

Lord thought of what he could be in the country, and what he could do for himself there, in the plain of Jordan. The grass was greener over there. Yes, the lights were brighter.

Yes, the pleasures are greater. And Lord's heart was won. Maybe it is winning your heart tonight as well. Maybe as you look out into the plains of Jordan, into the world, yes, the grass is greener.

Yes, the lights are brighter. Yes, the pleasures are greater. And maybe your heart has been won from the very altar of the Lord. From the very place of the gospel, that your heart has been won by the plains of Jordan.

Then we read that, Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Jordan. Sorry, toward Sodom. He pitched his tent toward Sodom.

[26 : 41] He didn't go straight into the city at all. But we are told that the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.

Lot settled near Sodom. And if you had asked him why, he might have explained to you that Sodom was an exceedingly wicked place, but it does have some advantages.

And I want to enjoy its supposed advantages. But I am not going to get caught up in its life. I'll come as near to the city without entering into this city.

The plains around the city is so fruitful it will produce a great crops for me. A great harvest for me.

You see, Lot is, as it were, playing with fire, which will soon burn him. In the morning we were talking about the power of sin, and the deceptive power of sin.

[27 : 51] Well, here is another example for us in the experience of Lot. Maybe tonight you can sympathise with the Lord to your own sore experience.

You see, he probably promised himself that he would not be drawn into Sodom. He was going to skirt around his boundaries. But what this reminds us is that we are not to play or promise ourselves anything.

For sin is powerful. It is far more powerful than us. Sin is powerful.

Yeah, he pitched his tent toward Sodom. Maybe he had promised himself that he would not get involved within the city of Sodom. And yet, we read that he entered into the city.

We are told that Lot dwelt in Sodom. The New Testament says that Lot was vexed or distressed with the filthy conversation of the wicked for that righteous man dwelling among them and seeing and hearing vexed his righteous soul from day to day with unlawful links.

[29 : 14] And the move from being at the boundary of the city of Sodom unto Sodom may have been gradual. But whatever he promised himself as he pitched his tent before Sodom, now he is found inside the city.

Oh, remember, my friend, that sin is powerful. That sin is deceitful. And that sin is alluring. Lot found this out to his own heart.

Lot found this out in his own experience. That whatever he had promised himself, he found out that sin is powerful. That sin is deceitful.

And that sin is enticing and alluring. And what we find here is that Lot found himself very lonely in the city of Sodom.

His choice was unbelievably bad. Whatever it promised to him, Lot found himself now miserable and lonely as he vexed his soul every day.

[30 : 24] This man had no one in his home that could sympathise with him. For his wife and daughters were not distressed in any way. His daughters married men of Sodom.

And his wife so longed for the city that she refused to break with it completely even at the time of the destruction of the city. Oh, how different to his uncle Abraham who received the Lord's blessing.

The man of faith, obedience, received the Lord's blessing. The Lord said to him, Lift up now thy dyes and look from the place where thou art northward and southward and eastward and westward for all the land which thou seest to thee will I give it unto thy seed forever.

And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth so that if a man can number the dust of the earth then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it for I will give it unto thee.

Then Abraham removed his tent and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre which is in Hebron and built there an altar unto the Lord. The Lord gave him earthly blessings with a heavenly promise.

[31 : 52] In the book of Hebrews chapter 11 we are told regarding Abraham for he looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God.

there in Hebrews 11 it testifies truly if they had been mindful of that country from which they came out they might have had opportunity to have returned.

But now they desire a better country that is unheavenly wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God for he hath prepared for them a city.

Ah, what about his nephew Lot? Do you know what happened to him next? Well in chapter 14 we are told that he got caught up in a battle.

Five kings attacked the king of Sodom and Gomorrah and Lot got caught up in the middle of it and we are told that they took Lot Abraham's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom and his scoots and departed.

[32 : 55] Maybe there is someone listening tonight and you are getting caught up in a lot of trouble that is not of your own making.

You could never have anticipated. And you know this the sad thing is that often people make excuses. For instance one could say well Lot was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Now that is just an attempt to justify the situation. Lot could have himself said I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Trying to justify his own situation.

The true lesson for us is that if we do not want to be in the wrong place at the wrong time we should avoid being in the wrong place in the first place. So many of us go into the wrong place.

Not against our will but willingly. And what happens is that we get caught in something that hurts that brings hurt. Abraham had to rescue Lot for we are told that he brought back all the goods and also brought again his brother Lot and his goods and the woman also and the people.

[34 : 15] There is where we find recorded for us that meeting between Melchizedek king of Salem who was also a priest and Abraham. However what we find out is that regarding Lot is that after being rescued that he went back to Sodom again.

Now we may be extremely fault finding here with Lot. We may criticise Lot but let us look at ourselves. how often have we returned to our old sins.

He returned for it was still well watered garden with the promise of producing great crops. After being rescued by his uncle he returned back to Sodom.

Abraham. However we are later told in chapter 18 that Abraham had a visit from the Lord and in verses 17 we are told that the Lord said shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him.

And the Lord said to him because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and because their sin is very grievous I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it which is coming to me and if not I will know.

[36 : 08] and the men turned their faces from thence and went toward Sodom but Abraham stood yet before the Lord. The sin had got so bad in the city in which Lot loomed Sodom and the neighbouring city Gomorrah that God came down to see what was going on because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and because their sin is very grievous I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it which is coming to me and if not I will know.

In other words what we have here is God saying that he is going to judge them. Now as we have just seen Abraham had already intervened in Lot's case he had rescued him but now he intercedes for him.

Abraham asked would thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked. Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city would thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein.

That be far from thee to do after this manner to slay the righteous with the wicked. That the righteous should be as the wicked. That be far from thee. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?

Two particularly important questions that Abraham asked. Well thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked and shall not the judge of all the earth do right?

[37 : 44] And the Lord answered to Abraham and said if I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city then I will spare all the place for their saith. And Abraham answered and said behold now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord which am but dust and ashes per adventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous will thou destroy all the city for lack of five and he said if I find there forty and five I will not destroy it.

And Abraham went on to say thirty and then to say twenty and then to say ten and the Lord said I will not destroy it for ten sakes.

Well in chapter nineteen we read that Lord also had a visit from two angels and there we are told that Lord sat in the gate of the city that means that Lord had become one of the elders in the city one of the political and business leaders of the city and the angels warned Lord to flee from the city and told him that because of the wickedness of the city the Lord was going to bring judgment by destroying the city what we read then is remarkable or is it remarkable we read that Lord lingered and had to be literally dragged out of the city because if he had lingered any longer he would have been destroyed with the city Lord lingered and that is a great lesson for us all you are hearing the gospel tonight the gospel that tells you that sin must be punished and yet you may linger while you have been offered deliverance through the

Lord Jesus Christ yet you may linger but by the mercy of God Lord was delivered but the angel had to take hold upon his hand and the hands of his family and literally the word snatched them away here was indeed a man who was like a brand plucked from the burning and Lot moved then to a place called Sower which means insignificant and what of all he ended up in a cave as a drunken man committing terrible sins with his daughters if Peter did not tell us that Lot was a just and a righteous soul I imagine we would all have him lost Paul writing to the church says regarding the children of Israel that there were examples for us that we should not lust after evil things as they also lost well

Lot is an example for us he is held out for our recognition for let him that thinketh he stand to take heed lest he fall but he is also an example for us of the long suffering and the mercy and the grace of God many lessons for us here in the life of Lot in Sodom Lot had no tent he had no altar he was living for the here and self his life was completely captivated here is something that is particularly important for us to realise we here see here a life that is totally captivated by the present world here is a life that shows little mark of being a true believer but for the spark that we are told by Peter that

[41 : 48] Lord vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds all salvation is of the Lord and tonight however far you have gone in sin whether you are not saved at all or whether you are a backslider whether you have erred from the path of faith whatever your circumstance the grace of God and Jesus Christ is sufficient to save you or to restore you Isaiah said all we like sheep have gone astray we have turned everyone to our own way but the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all when Christ died to save you from the slavery and the bondage he gave himself tonight you can have new life by coming to that cross where the Lord Jesus Christ gave himself where he suffered and died for sin where he paid the penalty for the sins of all those who will trust in him we can draw near an empty tomb that proclaims that sin has been cancelled that guilt has been blotted out that justice of

God has been honoured and that salvation is provided for sinners oh it is by grace we are saved and it is by grace that we can be restored when we have erred away from the path of faith it is by grace alone that we can enter heaven it is by grace alone that we can enter into the presence of almighty God tonight we are in the valley of decision we are in the place of choice the place to act out our responsibility concerning the gospel whether we come as an unsaved person or as a backslider in the faith the choice is the same it's a call to trust in the grace of God through Jesus Christ Christ and although Lot had fallen away far far far away yet he is restored how by the grace of

God through Jesus Christ and if we are going to be saved if we are going to go to heaven if we are going to appear before God if we are going to appear there as people who have been redeemed it is all by the grace of God through Jesus Christ well tonight will you not make the choice will you not bow down will you not humble yourself and come and trust in the grace of God through Jesus Christ may the Lord bless our thoughts let us pray eternal and ever blessed Lord we give thanks unto thee tonight that we are saved by grace through our Lord

Jesus Christ that it is not our own works or our own merits or our own achievements that gives us salvation but thy grace through thy son Jesus Christ through what he suffered when he died upon the cross of Golgotha and when he rose again from the grave and when he ascended to thy right hand all we give thee thanks for the provision that thou hast made for us in him and whether tonight oh Lord we are as a people who are unsaved or as a people who have erred from the path of faith that same grace that can bring us to know thy salvation in Jesus is the same grace that can restore us back into the path of faith and so we ask oh Lord that we would indeed ponder our meditation this evening and that we laid upon our heart by thy spirit that we may examine ourselves to know whether we are in the faith we pray oh

Lord that thou would continue with us during the coming week and now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever more Amen