

Destruction and Deliverance

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[0:00] Good morning. Please turn to your Bibles in Genesis 8-19, our sermon text for the day. If you need a Bible, you're welcome to take one off the back and keep it as our gift to you.

Genesis 19. The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth and said, My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet.

Then you may rise up early and go on your way. They said, No, we will spend the night in the town square. But he pressed them strongly, so they turned aside to him and entered his house.

And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man surrounded the house.

And they called to Lot, Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them. Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, and said, I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly.

[1:14] Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.

But they said, Stand back. And they said, This fellow came to sojourn, and he has become the judge. Now we will deal worse with you than with them. Then they pressed hard against the man, Lot, and drew near to break down the door.

But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door. And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out, groping for the door.

Then the men said to Lot, Have you or anyone else here, sons-in-laws, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place? For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it.

So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, Who were to marry his daughters? Up, get out of this place, for the Lord is about to destroy the city.

[2:26] But he seemed to his sons-in-laws to be justing. As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, Up, take your wife and your two daughters. Who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city.

But he lingered, so the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the Lord being merciful to him. And they brought him out and set him outside the city. And as they brought them out, one said, Escape for your life.

Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away. And Lot said to them, Oh no, my lords, behold, your servant has found favor in your sight.

And you have shown me great kindness in saving my life. But I cannot escape to the hills, lest the disaster overtake me and I die. Behold, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one.

Let me escape there. Is it not a little one? And my life will be saved. He said to him, Behold, I grant you this favor also, and I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken.

[3:32] Escape there quickly, for I can do nothing till you arrive there. Therefore, the name of the city was called Zor. The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zor. Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven.

And he overthrew those cities and all the valley and all the inhabitants of the cities and what grew on the ground. But Lot's wife behind him looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord. And he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the valley. And he looked, and behold, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace.

So it was that. When God destroyed the cities of the valley, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had lived.

Now Lot went up and out of Zor and lived in the hills with his two daughters. For he was afraid to live in Zor, so he lived in a cave with his two daughters.

[4:38] And the firstborn said to the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come into us after the manner of all the earth. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the offspring of our father.

So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. The next day the firstborn said to the younger, Behold, I lay last night with my father.

Let us make him drink wine tonight also. Then you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve offspring from our father. So they made their father drink wine that night also.

And the younger arose and lay with him. And he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. Thus both daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father. The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab.

He is the father of the Moabites to this day. The younger also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ami. He is the father of the Ammonites to this day.

[5:46] This is the word of the Lord. If your first week at Shoreline is this week, you might be wondering, what in the world are they doing reading and preaching on a passage like this?

And I mean no humor when I say that the reason that we're in Genesis 19 this week is because last week we were in Genesis 18. And I say that because in this church we believe that all of God's word is inspired.

All of the word that we have written down in our Bibles is from Almighty God who spoke life into existence. And everything that he has to say in his word is given to the saints for our instruction. And so at this church we believe that the healthy diet of the church is to work through books of the Bible. And when we do that, we don't skip over the parts of the Bible that are a little bit less nice than others.

It would be easier for me to skip over Genesis 19, believe me. We believe God has something for us here, even in this dark passage. Well, I was on a trip to Chicago just this past week.

[7:03] Our whole family went out there. That's where I'm from. I had a wedding. And my mom is a member of the Chicago Botanic Gardens. Just acres upon acres of flowers and gardens and sprawling hills.

And there's always some kind of artistic displays throughout the gardens. And one of them were these giant 10-foot bubbles made out of plastic or something.

And they were awesome. And they were kind of all over the garden area. And there was a sign next to one of the displays about the artists. And here's what the sign said. This is from the artists who made these. They said, I guess it was called evanescent, which kind of means, you know, it's things, a vapor that vanishes is basically what the word means.

Evanescent is an immersive, temporary sculpture that aims to capture the ephemerality, another word for sort of temporariness, fleetingness, the ephemerality and fragility of life through a familiar form, the bubble.

Like the bubble, life is transient, meant to be appreciated in the moment. Now, I assume the artist that created those bubbles meant that to be a purely positive message, urging us to live life in the moment, take it into the full, enjoy each new experience.

[8:14] But as I was standing there looking at these massive shiny bubbles, considering the message that the artist had for us, I couldn't help but feel a sense of grief. Because the thing is, for our secular culture, there's really nothing higher and better than to appreciate life in the moment.

But guess what? When that pretty shiny bubble pops, you're left disappointed, you're left even depressed until you go off and find the next one, and then you appreciate that one for all of five seconds, until that one too pops, and that's what life is like.

On to the next one, on to the next one. And that is the nature of the pleasures of this world. They satisfy for a moment, and then they leave us disappointed. They're temporary, they're fleeting, here today, gone tomorrow.

And the account here in Genesis 19 of Sodom's epic destruction is a monument to this very reality. It urges us, like Abraham, to choose God as our everlasting portion, rather than the fleeting pleasures of this world.

And so if you haven't already, please turn in your Bibles to Genesis 19. I want you to see the words for yourselves. The title of today's sermon is Destruction and Deliverance, because these are the two preeminent themes in this chapter.

[9:28] And I'm going to capture my main point today, not in the form of a statement, which I've always done, but today in the form of a question. And the reason is that from the outset, I want us to understand that this chapter urges us, it urges you, to self-reflection and to action.

And so here is my overarching question today for you. Are you dwelling under the gathering rainstorm of God's wrath or of his mercy? Are you dwelling under the gathering rainstorm of God's wrath or of his mercy?

In 2026, we've been walking through this very first book of the Bible, Genesis. And for many weeks now, this story has centered on Abraham. Abraham was a man specially chosen by God to be the channel of blessing, of blessing, the fulfillment of promise to this world.

And in this story, Abraham's nephew Lot has been presented as a foil for Abraham. Moses, the author, is intentionally setting up this comparison and contrast between Abraham and Lot.

And so that comes to a head here in chapter 19. So the first thing we're going to do, we're going to walk through the narrative together, and then we're going to spend time at the end applying, with maybe some application sprinkled in the middle.

[10:40] And here's the first thing we see in the first 11 verses, God's investigation of Sodom. Now back in chapter 13, Abraham and Lot were separating because their herds and their possessions become so great, and Lot chose to go towards Sodom.

And Moses tells us right there, sort of a foreshadowing, 13, 13, Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord. Back in chapter 13. Just last chapter, chapter 18, God said, I will go down to see whether they, speaking of the Sodomites, have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me, and if not, I will know.

So the narrative's been building towards this climactic chapter. And here in 19 verse 1, God's messengers, these two angels who had previously accompanied God in chapter 18, they arrive in Sodom.

So they've been sent to investigate the state of Sodom, and to determine its fate. And so if you look at verse 1, they're greeted. These angels are greeted here by Lot, it says, who was sitting in the gate of Sodom.

Now in 18 verse 1, these two angels, who we didn't realize yet were angels, they were greeted by Abraham. And you look at verse, in your Bibles, and the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day.

[12:01] Now there's a comparison and contrast going on. Do you see that? Abraham, we've already seen, he's chosen this tent dwelling, altar building life, right?

With God as his portion, God is the one he worships, not things of this world. And in contrast to him, Lot has chosen the city life, what he thinks is a good life. And he's progressed.

I'm not saying cities are bad, but in the narrative of Genesis, this is what Moses is showing us. Lot has gone from going towards Sodom, to dwelling in Sodom, to right now, he's actually standing at the gate of Sodom.

And in the ancient Near East, the elders of the city would gather, the prominent citizens of the city would gather at the city gates. So he's likely a prominent member of the city of Sodom. Now in these first three verses, we actually see Lot engage in warm hospitality, very similar to how Abraham greeted those angels a chapter earlier.

But we see that Lot's hospitality, it's not nearly as extravagant as the way Abraham just poured out generosity. And certainly the setting of Sodom hinders Lot's ability to welcome in these strangers.

[13:09] Lot knows his city well enough to know that the guests shouldn't remain in the town square, right? But we see what happens even after they come under the so-called protection of Lot's roof.

Look at verse 4. But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both the young and old, all the people to the last man surrounded the house and they called to Lot, where are the men who came to you tonight?

Bring them out to us that we may know them. This is Sodom's hospitality, right? And it's pure evil. That we may know them is a Hebrew idiom with overt sexual connotations.

It would be like saying that we might sleep with them. And you know, in Romans chapter 1, Paul describing ungodly humanity, he says this, for their women exchanged natural relations with those that are contrary to nature, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another.

Men committing shameless acts with men. And you know, it needs to be said, and when we come to a text like this, in light of the present age that we're in, the Bible is actually unequivocal.

[14:16] Kids, that means plain and obvious about God's stance towards sodomy and homosexuality. Okay, the Bible is clear that it violates his good and his beautiful design for gender and sexuality.

Here at Shoreline, we believe this, and this is from the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and his church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage, listen to this, the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

Now notice another key phrase here in verse 4. And if you want to hear more on that topic, I would encourage you to go back to our sermons in 1 Corinthians 5, 6, and 7 to hear more on that.

But in this text, look at verse 4. Notice another key phrase here. Moses says, all the people to the last man surrounded the house. Abraham pleaded with God that he might spare Sodom if even, how many?

Ten righteous were found. Are ten righteous present in Sodom? Sadly, no. That's what Moses is saying. All the people to the last man. They're engaged in this wicked behavior.

[15:34] And so Lot, we see Lot here. Lot is seeking to protect these two men that are now his guests in his home. And so he shuts the door behind him. He comes out to the mob. He urges them not to act so wickedly.

Verse 7. Now this is actually, this is a noble thing I think we're supposed to see on his part. He's trying to protect his guests. But in the very next breath, Lot offers up his virgin daughters instead for the vile men of the town to, verse 8, do to them as you please.

Now this is devastating. We're supposed to see this as devastating. Here we see the compromised nature of Lot's character and just the twisted state of his mind. He would have these men trade sodomy for rape as if that's a less egregious sin.

And so he's seeking to protect his guests and he fails to protect his own daughters. Sodom's depravity has infected Lot's heart. But the Sodomites refuse to trade.

They begin to press hard against Lot, almost breaking down his door, and it's at this point that the angels intervene. The ones that Lot is trying to protect, they actually wield their power to protect Lot and his family by striking the men with blindness.

[16:47] And then we see the extent of the sensuous lust of the Sodomites. They are wearing themselves out, groping for the door. That's how much they want inside. And so here at verse 11, God's investigation via these two angels is complete.

Sodom has proven her utter wickedness, her total lack of righteousness. And you can just sense the ominous nature of this scene, that the rain clouds of judgment are gathering overhead.

And now there's a little bit of a shift here and we move to the next portion of verses and we see God's merciful deliverance of Lot. In verse 13, the angels declare their verdicts to Lot.

Look at verse 13. We are about to destroy this place because the outcry against its people has become great before the Lord. And so they give Lot the chance to warn his family.

So he goes out to these two men that are pledged to be married to his daughters. He warns them of the coming destruction. Verse 14, Now I think there's two things we're supposed to see here.

[17:57] First of all, Lot seems to lack the persuasive power that apparently Noah had because Noah convinced his whole family, his sons and daughters-in-law included, to go into the ark.

Lot seems to lack that sort of persuasion. But at the same time, his sons-in-law are apparently too engrossed in the sodomite culture to believe Lot's warning.

I love how one commentator stated this. He said this, Decadent peoples and decadent cultures essentially lose the ability to take anything seriously. Everything for them becomes entertainment. Does this sound familiar? Lot is warning these men about the judgment of God and it's entertaining to them. Ah, you funny old man. What a funny message you're telling us. But in the next several verses, we actually find Lot himself reluctant to flee this doomed city.

Look in verse 15. As morning dawns, the angels are urging Lot to leave with his daughters. They say, Up, get out of here, go. And what does it say in verse 16? But he lingered.

[19:01] He lingered. Lot believes the angel's warning of destruction, but his heart has become tethered to Sodom.

He's struggling to cut that rope. And so what happens next? Again, look in your Bibles. So the men seized him and his wife and daughters by the hand, the Lord being merciful to him.

They essentially drag Lot and his wife and daughters out of Sodom. Why? Because of God's mercy. Does Lot deserve deliverance?

Does Lot deserve deliverance? This is sort of a tricky question here. Lot does not deserve deliverance. But God in mercy delivers him anyway. But that's not all because Lot's sort of resistance doesn't stop there.

So now, outside the city, the angels are instructing them, escape for your lives, don't stop, don't look back, head for the hills, and Lot thinks that he should enter into some sort of negotiation with them.

[20:05] Why? He's so afraid to lose his city way of life. Now, they literally, they tell, there's, it's sort of a dark humor here. The angels tell Lot, escape for the hills lest the disaster overtake you.

And he says, I can't escape to the hills lest the disaster overtake me and I die. He's saying, please, just please let me settle in this other city. It's just a little city.

Can I just go to that city? And amazingly, in this further demonstration of mercy, they grant this petty and immature request. And so I want to pause and just ask another question here.

Don't answer out loud. Just consider this question in your minds. Is Lot righteous? Is Lot righteous? Abraham pleaded with God in last week's text, far be it from you to put the righteous to death with the wicked. Shall not the judge of all the earth do what is just?

[21:07] And now here in chapter 19, we find Lot to be this stumbling, bumbling mess of a man with these brief glimpses of good, right?

It's sort of a confusing picture. And I was thinking about this. I could not find it. I looked. I couldn't find any of them. I used to have basketball cards that had this sort of image that if you turned it one direction, you see one image.

If you turn, you know, when the light changes, apparently that's called lenticular. I had no idea.

Someone in this room already knew that. I did not. But if you know, you hold the card one way and Patrick Ewing is shooting a ball and the other image he's stuffing somebody.

That's sort of like the portrayal here of Lot. You hold the image in one light and he looks like this kind of righteous man and then you hold it in the other light and it's just this dark and sort of disgraceful quality.

And that seems to be the dominant image of Lot in chapter 19. But God spares Lot. God spares Lot. So is Lot righteous?

[22:10] The Apostle Peter thinks so. Literally three times he says the word righteous. 2 Peter 2, 7 and 8. He calls him righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked.

For as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard. Is Lot the shining example of blamelessness among a crooked generation?

No. He's not. Noah was. Lot is not. Is he this model of just unwavering faith despite fear and uncertainty? No.

Has he compromised his values? Has he assimilated into the culture of Sodom? Yes. And yet, God has reckoned him righteous by faith.

It is a weak and a wavering faith and yet it's real. And so God delivers Lot from the rainstorm of destruction that he might experience a downpour of mercy.

[23:11] And I just want to pause here and say, brothers and sisters, this is a comforting word for saints that are a lot like Lot. Those whose faith is weak and wavering.

Those who are wrestling with doubts. Those who are struggling to let go of earthly pleasures. Those who are waffling between friendship with God on the one hand and friendship with the world on the other.

Those who in this room think that you've done too much bad to be loved by God. Consider the man Lot. Because let's be real. Each of us is way more like Lot.

We have way more in common with Lot than we do with righteous Abraham at least in these two chapters, 18 and 19. Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death?

How does Paul answer that question in Romans chapter 7? You guys know, thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. He says in Titus 3, 5, He saved us not because of works done by us in righteousness but according to His own mercy.

[24 : 15] His own mercy. Now we're going to talk about that more later but I could not pass up the opportunity right here. And so we come to the end of 22 and Lot, his wife and his daughters have fled the city and then in the next few verses we behold God's wrathful destruction of Sodom.

The sun, verse 23, the sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar. Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven and he overthrew those cities and all the valley and all the inhabitants of the cities and what grew on the ground.

In Genesis chapter 7, the windows of the heavens were opened and rain fell upon the earth. It blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground.

Now on this smaller scale, God promised he would never do that again. He's kept his word to this day. Now on a smaller scale, God is raining down sulfur and fire from heaven to blot out every living thing in Sodom and Gomorrah.

You know, as Rob said last week, he was quoting Derek Kidner, the Lord's judgments are well weighed and perfectly informed. The judge of all the earth is doing right.

[25 : 29] See, God has in total justice, he has brought destruction upon the godless wicked and at the same time, he has brought deliverance to the righteous.

And then we read in verse 26, tragically here, but Lot's wife behind him looked back and she became a pillar of salt. So if the situation is not tragic enough already, the disaster overtakes even Lot's wife.

And we might be tempted to think, man, all she did was sneak a glance back at the destruction.

Like, how cruel is God to do this? But we need to remember a few things here.

First of all, she was given a very clear command by God through the angels. Do not look back.

Right? She violated a very clear command. Okay, so punishment is just.

But I think there's something deeper at play here. I don't think her glance back at Sodom is just this innocent peek back, like, oh, I want to look at the fire. I think it reveals the state of her heart. Her heart is in Sodom.

[26 : 33] Her heart has always been in Sodom. Now, one commentator writes that Lot's wife is the type of those who look back with regretful longings upon possessions and enjoyments which are inconsistent with the salvation offered them.

I want you to just think about what's going on here. Can you imagine this apocalyptic scene in your mind? Fire is roaring. Smoke is blackening the sky.

Lot's wife is turning to salt. Lot and his daughters are fleeing to Zoar. And now the camera just zooms out and it keeps zooming out and it keeps zooming out and it comes to rest on Abraham.

And we see in the next few verses God's remembrance of Abraham. Now, these chapters are, after all, about Abraham. The whole story is centering on him and it's about the progress of God's covenant promises to him.

And so, Moses is re-centering the narrative on Abraham. And we see Abraham here, he goes early in the morning back to the place, the mountain heights where he had stood before the Lord and pleaded with Sodom and now he beholds the devastation of the valley.

[27 : 45] What in chapter 13 had appeared as this fertile, desirable land, like the garden of the Lord, it said, is now a barren wasteland. It's been brought to ruin by the omnipotent hand of God.

The shiny bubble popped. And Moses concludes the account of the destruction of Sodom with these words. Verse 29, So it was that when God destroyed the cities of the valley, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had lived.

God remembered Abraham. Now if you remember in the flood account in Genesis 6, 7, and 8, there was one little phrase that stood right at the center of the account.

The whole story turned around it. But God remembered Noah. And we talked to that about how God's remembrance of his people combines the ideas of his faithful love and his timely intervention. God remembered Noah and in faithful love at just the right time, he saved him from the waters of judgment. And here, God remembers Abraham and as a result, he rescues Lot.

[29:06] And so we see that Abraham's intercessory prayer that Rob preached on just last week, it prevailed before the Lord. It prevailed. And I want you to consider, God also spares a whole city, the little city of Zoar, because of Abraham's intercessory prayer.

The prayer of a righteous man availeth much, James 5, 16. It's powerful and effective. I want to ask, does this mean that Lot's righteousness had nothing to do with his deliverance?

No, I don't think so, but I think the point is that God's redemptive plan for the whole world, it is centered on his chosen servant, Abraham, and then the offspring that are going to come through the line of Abraham.

Now, speaking of that redemptive plan, we come here to this epilogue, and what the epilogue teaches us is that God's redemptive plan is still needed.

God's redemptive plan is still needed. This final scene in chapter 19 concludes Lot's role in the Genesis narrative, and lamentably, you know, it's not the good image with just the right light, it's back to that disgraceful image.

[30:21] Now, we've already seen in this chapter, there's a lot of parallels to the flood account, and there are many more right here in these closing verses of Genesis 19. If you remember, Noah, after he's rescued from the flood, he gets drunk, and he exposes himself to his sons.

Now, here, Lot gets drunk, and he exposes himself, and far worse, with his daughters. Now, ironically, we see here, Lot's actually afraid to remain in the little city of Zoar, for which he had begged and pleaded.

And so, we kind of wondered, does he expect the same judgment to fall? Maybe. But I think what we're supposed to see is, again, he's just waffling, he's wavering. It's what he asked for, and the angels gave him this promise of protection, and now it's like he's not believing still.

And so, this other bubble pops, right? He leaves Zoar, and here, at the end of his story, Lot, who was once this wealthy, prosperous man, had to separate from Abraham because they had too many possessions, now he takes up residence in a cave.

All of his possessions, all of his worldly possessions are gone. This is all he has left. Every pursuit of this world has failed him. Now, his daughters realize, hey, this is the end of the line for us, for the family line, and they concocted this perverse plan to get their father drunk in order to sleep with him, that they might, verse 32, preserve offspring from our father.

[31:47] Okay, it's a good end to want to preserve your family line. It is a grotesque and ungodly means to do that by incest, and the ends don't justify the means.

Lot's daughters demonstrate that Sodom, which has been utterly destroyed, still persists in their hearts. And Lot, I mean, Lot, for his part, how do you allow yourself to become so intoxicated that you don't even realize that your daughters are coming in and going out?

I mean, he's supposed to be the spiritual leader of the home, and he has become totally passive, right? Just like another man who was passive and failed before, Genesis chapter 3, Adam, in the garden.

So we saw in the flood story, again, so many parallels, in the flood story, God wipes out a generation of sinners, but sin is still in the heart, and here, fire and sulfur has consumed Sodom and its surrounding cities, but once again, sin in the heart remains, and it doesn't only remain, it actually multiplies, right?

The result of this incestuous relationship is these two sons, Moab and Ben-Ami, and they become two nations of people, the Moabites and the Ammonites, and you can do a lot of homework from this passage, fascinating to go read about the Ammonites and Moabites.

[33:04] In short, they are two nations that largely oppose or corrupt the people of God, Israel. How greatly, here at the end of chapter 19, is humanity's redemption still needed?

I mean, it's so clear in this storyline. And here today, we can look outside at the world around us, we can read the news headlines every single day, the corruption that's out there, the rage that's on TikTok and Instagram or whatever you want to find that.

We can look inside and we can see the selfishness and the perversion and the prideful thoughts and the lust that goes on right in the heart and we realize today we are desperately in need of redemption.

But I want to tell you something incredible, okay, that comes out of this story. Now this is something that Moses himself would not have even known. Moses is writing generations later, over 400 years later, and he would not have had the insight here.

There is a woman who comes from Lot and his daughter, from the line of Moab. Do you know who that woman is later on in the biblical story?

[34 : 15] It's Ruth. Many of you know this story? Ruth would be a Moabite woman who would buck that Moabite trend. she would worship and serve the one true God, right?

Yahweh. She would worship Israel's God. And Ruth would go on to marry an Israelite man named Boaz. And who comes from the line of Ruth and Boaz? King David. Right? King David comes from that line.

And who comes from the line of King David? But the Messiah and Savior of humanity, Jesus Christ himself. He would bring about humanity's redemption redemption by the sacrifice of himself upon the cross.

And this is what God has done. Now we're going to see this over again in the book of Genesis, that God over and over again, and you see this in all of the storyline of the Bible, God takes evil, wicked acts and he uses them to bring about good.

And not just good generally, but good for you and me. Good for humanity. Good for all those who would repent of their sin and turn to Jesus Christ by faith.

[35 : 17] And so, in light of this gospel, this good news, and in light of Sodom's example, I want to urge anyone in this room who has not to learn from Sodom and repent.

Learn from Sodom and repent. The global flood in Genesis 6 through 8, Sodom's destruction in Genesis 19, they become paradigms, that means patterns, models for how God deals with humanity.

For Noah's wicked generation, a day of reckoning came. For Sodom and Gomorrah, a day of reckoning came. God's patience over their grievous sin, it gave way to an outpouring of his just wrath for that sin.

And you know what? Jesus warns us that a similar day is coming. Just as it was in the days of Noah, Jesus says, likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot, they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building.

In other words, they're just doing life. They're living life, unaware that the rain clouds of judgment are brewing overhead, just doing what they do every day. But on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

[36 : 31] And Jesus says, so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. There is a lot of uncertainty in our lives, but there is something rock solid that you can count on, friends.

Jesus Christ is coming again. He's coming again. Now he came in weakness and in suffering the first time, but the second time he's not coming that way.

He's coming in power. He's coming in wrath. He's coming riding on a white horse, Revelation says, with eyes like a flame of fire. And there will be no mistaking on that day that he is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

And on that day Jesus Christ will preside as judge over the earth and his well-weighed and perfectly informed judgments will fall. And friends, I'm here to tell you that your only hope of escaping that just fury is his own blood sacrifice made for you and me on the cross.

Jesus Christ is himself our ark of refuge to carry us from safety. He is himself our intercessor like Abraham pleading our case before the Father.

[37 : 41] And the fact that he has not yet returned, that is a sign of his patience and his kindness because he wants more people to repent and to enter into the ark, more people to have Jesus as their intercessor before the Father pleading his case.

So friends, don't let another hour pass you by. Christ is merciful. He's merciful. A flow of mercy is gushing forth from the cross and you can receive that mercy. You can be showered forever in that mercy if you turn to him this morning.

I would love nothing more than to talk to anyone that wants to come talk to me about that after this service. Learn from Sodom and repent. Learn from Lot's wife and don't look back.

In that same passage in Luke 17, Jesus urges, remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it.

Jesus wants us to contemplate the fate of Lot's wife and learn from her unfortunate example. And what's the lesson to be learned? I think it's this, that you might think you've escaped God's judgment, but in reality, your heart is tethered to Sodom.

[38:58] You don't want to give up the things of this world. Those shiny, attractive bubbles that you keep chasing, whether that's career advancement or financial security or sexual permissiveness or the freedom to express yourself however you want.

You don't want to give those things up. You keep chasing the bubbles and they pop and chasing the bubbles and you keep going after that convinced that that's the good life. That's where it's found. Rather than in the all-satisfying God who made you to be in friendship with Him.

That the call of Jesus Christ is the call to give up those fleeting pleasures, their illusion of ultimate fulfillment and instead to seek after Him. And in Christ is found true pleasures forevermore.

The good life is found being tethered to Jesus Christ, not to Sodom. As the old hymn goes, I have decided to follow Jesus.

No turning back. Learn from Lot's wife and don't look back. Now at this point you might be wondering, well Mike, are you suggesting that I can lose my salvation?

[40:06] And I want to say emphatically, no. I'm not suggesting that. At this church, we uphold the beautiful doctrine of eternal security and that means that for those whom Christ has chosen before the foundation of the world, those who have repented of their sin and turned to Jesus Christ by faith, He will indeed sustain to the end.

No one can snatch them out of His hand. I think Lot's wife is an example of someone who never had genuine faith in God. She thought that maybe she was safe by association with her husband Lot, but she did not make her faith her own.

And in the end, this becomes apparent. But what about Lot? What about Lot? Because it really seems like the line between Lot and his wife is awfully thin, doesn't it?

What do we learn from Lot's confusing example? And I want to suggest two different things here. Here's the first thing we learn from Lot. Don't assimilate. Don't assimilate.

Lot's examples shows us the ability of genuine saints to be deeply influenced by the godless culture around them. Is Lot rescued in the end? Yes. But man, I feel like he's the one that Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 3.15.

[41:20] If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. And so you might ask, well Mike, if we're saved in the end anyway, then why does it matter whether we assimilate into the culture around us?

And that's a great question, and I cannot give you a satisfactory answer right now, but I at least want to give you two, and there are way more things that could be said. Here's the first reason why we should not assimilate into the culture around us.

Assurance. What do I mean by that? The more and more like the godless culture around us that we become, the more precarious our position becomes.

Now again, I am not suggesting that we can lose our salvation, but I am suggesting that our assurance of salvation, like knowing that we belong to Christ, and I believe that Jesus wants us to have assurance because he gave us an entire letter about it, 1 John, all about knowing that we belong to Jesus.

Our assurance has to do to a degree with whether we see the visible evidence of salvation in our hearts and actual lives. That's why Peter says in 2 Peter, to be diligent, to make our calling and election sure.

[42:37] Be diligent. How do we do that? Well, he talks about increasingly looking more and more like Jesus, growing in the attributes of Christ. That's how.

We should seek to grow in our assurance. Here's the second thing. Witness. The more like our godless culture we become, the less useful we become to Jesus' kingdom purposes.

He wants holy vessels, useful for the master, ready for every good work. That's in 2 Timothy. Jesus desires for us, John 17, to be in the world, but not of the world. He's not taking us out of the world.

He's keeping us in the world so that we can maintain this holy distinction, looking like Jesus. And when we look like the holy, loving Jesus Christ, the world sees that and says, whoa, Jesus is alive.

He's actually right here and here and here and he's in this church and the world sees it and they're drawn, they're compelled to it. At the very least, it forces them to make a decision. We pray a decision to believe. Some will reject the gospel, but it forces a decision when we maintain the distinctiveness, salt and light in the world.

[43:44] We want to be compelling the world. So, I don't have time for this, but man, I wanted to talk about what are ways that we are prone to assimilate into the godless culture around us and there are so many.

I could talk about the prosperity culture that exists in this world and just our thirst for comfort and security. I could talk about entertainment culture, right, and how we dull ourselves and escape from the hard realities of life.

I could talk about the death culture that we have that's been growing and oddly, it puts death at arm's length by making it this cozy, funny kind of thing. I could talk about sports culture and how much sports has become the god we worship, whether on the screen or playing sports.

I could talk about the therapeutic culture and how everything becomes self-referential. Self-care is paramount. There's no moral accountability. I could talk about the individualistic culture that we're in.

It's all about me and so many of these bleed together. I could talk about the AI culture that we're currently in. Lots of things coming from them. There's secular sources tell us the detriment of it.

[44:53] But man, there are some spiritual detriments to relying so much on AI. Speed and efficiency becomes paramount. Keeping relationships at arm's length, I mean, all kinds of things. I don't have time to go into these.

The one thing that I want to ask, though, are we mindlessly absorbing our culture's desires, our culture's values, or are we thoughtfully filtering the content that we're taking in?

Whether from the glowing rectangles in our pockets, I think Dave's called our phones that before, or from the screen, or from wherever, the world, billboard, are we thoughtfully taking in the content, holding it up to the standard of God's word to determine whether it's actually good content or needs to be filtered out?

We've got to be intentional. Parents, we've got to be intentional with our kids, helping them understand what we're taking in. Okay, but if there's something I want you to remember more, here's something else we learned from Lot.

Stand in awe of God's mercy. Look, we've already seen from Abraham, from Abraham, the patriarch, how undeserving he was to be chosen by God.

[46:03] That's what grace is. How much more this foolish, bumbling, mess of a man, Lot, right against this backdrop of God's fierce judgment, is this blazing light of God's mercy, rescuing the undeserving lot.

Man, and just like Abraham, in these chapters, I think we see Abraham as the man of righteousness, and we're not supposed to see him and say, that's us. That's Christ. He's our intercessor.

Righteous, perfectly righteous, and because of him we are saved, even though we don't deserve it. Stand in awe of God's mercy, that he would pay for our redemption by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Okay, here's the last thing I want us to learn from Abraham in this story. Okay, I said first and foremost, Abraham is a Christ figure, but look, when we become in Christ, we get the Holy Spirit, we become like Christ to then live out his mission in the world, and what does Abraham do?

He stands in the gap, and Rob talked about this last week, so I'm not going to say much, but we see Abraham standing in the gap between God and Sodom and Lot, pleading in intercession, and that's what we're called to do, saints, and the first way we do that is persevering in prayer.

[47:16] Persevering in prayer. Do you realize that we actually can partner with the Almighty God in the advancement of his kingdom? Like, in the way that this world is going on, it's continuing on, we can partner with him in that.

That should baffle us. And so what does that mean? That means husbands, intercede for your wives. Parents, intercede on behalf of your children every single day.

Bring them before the Lord. Their salvation, their flaws, bring them before the Lord. Members, intercede on behalf of one another in this church. If you're a member, you have a membership directory, pray through that.

Intercede on behalf of community members, that's all of us. Intercede on behalf of your coworkers and your neighbors and the lost who are around you. Sailors, on behalf of your crew, persevere in intercessory prayer.

On behalf of saints near and far. Jordan was interceding on behalf of the church around the world. We can do that because God is there. And we care about our brothers and sisters around the world.

[48:18] Okay, here's the last thing. Engage in evangelism. This is another way we stand in the gap. Okay? We are God's spokespeople to this world. And we can engage in the good work.

We have the life-giving message of the gospel of Christ. There are people right now standing under the gathering rain clouds of God's judgment. And we have the message that says, you don't have to stand there.

You can stand over here under the rainstorm of God's mercy. We have the good news, church.

Let's take that to the world. That they can experience grace.

Like we have experienced already and get to experience forevermore. Please go with me in prayer.

Lord, what a chapter this is. Genesis 19. It's dark. It's intense.

And it communicates a needed message for our world. How desperately we need a Savior. How wrath is coming. Just wrath because you're a holy and good and righteous God.

[49:16] But we don't have to stand under that wrath because Christ already bore it on the cross.

We can stand under a storm of mercy and grace that was unleashed there on Calvary.

God, I pray that you would awaken us, the saints. You would awaken us, God, to burn with passion for your name and for the lost who are still standing there under the storm of wrath.

God, help us to carry the good news of the gospel all around us. God, help us to be distinct and holy like you in the midst of an increasingly godless culture.

God, that you might continue to work your purposes in this world. And God, let it all be for your glory. You alone are worthy of all the glory and all the praise and all the honor and we stand now and sing for your worship, Lord.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Would you stand with us?