

As God Remembers Abraham He rescues Lot

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- [0 : 0 0] Let's turn again to the chapter we read in the book of Genesis. I'm reading at verse 27.
- And Abram went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord. And he looked down towards Sodom and Gomorrah and towards 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 Abram and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had lived.
- We've been looking at the life of Abram. We've been actually moving very, very slowly, but here and there, looking at aspects of Abraham's life. And just to refresh our minds a wee bit, we remember that if we go back a few chapters, how Abraham and Lot were related.
- Abraham, in fact, was Lot's uncle. And Abraham and Lot's herdsmen had begun to fall out. Abraham and Lot themselves hadn't fallen out.
- [1 : 1 0] But the herdsmen fell out because there wasn't enough grass for the sheep and for the cattle to eat.
- And so there was this dispute between the herdsmen. And Abraham didn't want that. He didn't want a family fallout. And he didn't want a division taking place.
- And very interestingly, remember how it said also that the Canaanite lived in the land. And which was really highlighting the fact that Abram was conscious that he was being watched.
- He was a visitor. He was a sojourner. He was a pilgrim into the place. And he knew that the people would be watching him. And I think it's a very important lesson that we find from Abraham there.
- I think we highlighted that before. Abraham was conscious that the world was watching on. That they were looking on. And he didn't want a division. He didn't want a feud. And he was so noble and gallant.
- [2 : 1 5] And he said, although he was a senior, although he was Lot's uncle, he said to Lot, listen, Lot, you choose. Choice is yours.
- We're going to have to separate because there isn't enough ground for us here. If you go east, I'll go west. If you go north, I'll go south. The choice is yours.
- And it was a great gesture on the part of Abraham. Because the promise of the land had been given to Abraham, not to Lot. And so we find there's great faith and great generosity in what Abraham did.
- And we've always got to remember that the world watches the church. And when you think of all the feuds and all the fights and all the wars that have gone on over the centuries within the church, I often wonder what impact that has had on people from without or looking in.
- And they're wondering what on earth is going on. And I believe it causes serious damage. And it deepens people's resolve against coming to church when they see those within the church feuding and fighting.

- [3 : 26] It's a serious thing. And we've always got to remember that the church ultimately belongs to God. It's not ours. It's the Lord's. Christ emphasizes that over and over and over again. That the church is his. It's his body. And it's a very serious and solemn thing when the body is at war one with another. But anyway, Abraham was very careful that that wouldn't happen.
- And so he allows Lot to make the choice. Now you remember how Lot, he looked up and he looked, he viewed. And he says, right, what's the best? Where's the best? And he looked around.
- And they were up on a high point and a viewpoint. And as he looked out, he saw that towards Sodom, it was all very lush and very green. Kind of like the fertile land of Egypt where they had been.
- And he made his choice based upon what he could see. And we always saw that that was one of the differences seemed to be between Lot and Abraham. While Lot was a good man, he was a man who was very influenced by the world.
- [4 : 33] Abraham always made his choices. Or didn't always, but largely, although he slipped from time to time, he tried to make his choices based upon what God's word was saying to him.
- But Lot made his choice in what he could see. And he moved towards Sodom. Now, it wasn't long, as we read through it, that he pitched his tent towards Sodom.
- It wasn't long until he was actually in Sodom. And when we meet Lot here, he's in the gate of Sodom, which means he now has a prominent place within the city.
- He's what we would call today a counsellor. He had become one of the important men of the city of Sodom. And that's the way we saw this morning when we were speaking to the young folk, that fable about the camel, that's the way that sin works.
- Because Sodom, we're told, was an incredibly wicked place. And it was a place of oppression. It was a place of immorality.
- [5 : 41] It was a place of cruelty. When you read in the scriptures, and particularly in the prophecies, you will discover there that it was a place of absolute injustice. And a place of oppression of the poor.
- And a place where people, there were so many victims. And that's why we're told there was the outcry. It speaks of an outcry going up to God.
- God, the very, the, the, just, there were so many people who had been violated and hurt and abused. And there was so much that was wicked and evil within the city that had reached the point where God said he was going to judge that city.
- And that's how we find that Lot, gradually, he goes in. But he doesn't just go into the city. He becomes a major part of that city.
- And as we said, that's the way that sin operates. We become tolerant. You know, if you look back even over your own life, and we look back over, over our own country, over our own nation, and we see the incredible change in society.
- [6 : 50] And we become very tolerant. We become very accepting of how things are. Things that, you know, when maybe you go back and you say, well, man, that's just so right.
- You wouldn't even think about it. But now these things are the norm. And we're living in a day where, really what it says in the Bible, well, everybody did that which was right in their own eyes.
- And that always happened when the fear of God departed. When the fear of God leaves a people, when the fear of God leaves individuals, leaves families, leaves communities, leaves countries, people will do everything that they think is right.

But, you know, the funny thing is that today, as we live in a society where everybody says, well, if it's right, just do it. I feel free to do.

There is side by side with that an incredible intolerance. So that everybody says, well, I'm free to do what I want, and yet they're so intolerant of what others do.

[7 : 59] And that is the fruit, that is what happens when the fear of God goes. And the fear of God is going. There is no question whatever.

Well, the fear of God certainly was not in Sodom. And so we find that Lot has been sucked in, he's been drawn in, and even although he has risen to prominence within the city, we've also got to remember that he was still a good man.

In fact, we're told that in 2 Peter. Because when you look at the life of Lot, you say to yourself, poor Lot, and particularly if we didn't read the very last part of the chapter, you would say to yourself, Lot, you really, really plummeted the depths.

But, you know, when we go to the New Testament and in 2 Peter, this is what it says. 2 Peter, verse 4. But if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment, if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly, if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes, he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly.

And if he rescued 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 the lawless deeds that he saw and heard.

[9 : 44] So, that's the New Testament commentary on Lot. And it gives us such a different picture of the man. Because when we look at the Old Testament, we would say that Lot was somebody who had just become so caught up in the world that he didn't care.

But every single day, the outrageous life of Sodom, of just the violence and the immorality and the injustice and the oppression and all the wickedness of that city, it was really affecting him.

And it tormented his soul. And his life was one that lived. He was righteous. He was just. So that he lived in a particular way that his life would have spoken.

So, it's important for us to understand that of Lot. However, he had still been sucked in. And Lot, we see, had the opportunity to actually leave Sodom.

Because, again, we saw that as we've been looking at the life of Abraham. Remember how Sodom had been captured, had been beaten in a fight. The alliance of kings had risen up and had fought against them.

[11 : 02] And they'd captured Sodom. And Lot was amongst those who were captured. And remember how Abraham and his army had delivered them. Lot had an opportunity at that moment to leave.

That should have been his. He should have said to himself, right, whoa, that was close. I'm in the wrong place. I'm living amongst the wrong people. It's time for me to get out.

And, you know, God does that in our lives every so often. He gives us sort of wake-up calls. He challenges us and says, hey, come on. Do you realize where you are?

Do you realize what you're doing? Do you realize how you're living? Do you realize how far away you've gone from me? We get loads and loads of wake-up calls in life.

And it's important that we take them. Well, Lot didn't. We find that Lot went straight back into Sodom. Now, as we say, while Lot was a termed, we know that he was a good man, despite all this, he was never termed the friend of God in the way that Abraham was.

[12 : 13] Then we hear, we find that the angels have come to Sodom. Remember, in the previous chapter, we had seen Abraham intercede, Abraham pleading and pleading and pleading for Sodom.

Remember, Abraham was so concerned. Lots in Sodom. Because the Lord had told Abraham, I'm going to destroy Sodom. And remember how Abraham had worked. And he says, Lord, see if you find 50 righteous people.

Will you, for 50 righteous people, destroy it? The Lord said, no. Then he went down to 45, 40, 30, 20, 10. Lord, see if you find 10 righteous people in Sodom, will you destroy it?

The Lord said, no. 10 righteous people, I won't destroy it. Abraham, there's huge burden for Sodom. But particularly, his burden was for his nephew, Lot.

Anyway, the angels have come. And we find that Lot meets him, and he invites him to his home. And we find Lot's hospitality just the very same as Abraham's was in the previous chapter.

[13 : 20] And because, and again we saw that, because of the great cry that had gone out from Sodom, that the Lord was coming in judgment. And you know the solemn thing is that on that night, as the angels came, and the following morning, when the sun rose, everything seemed exactly the same.

Nobody in Sodom would have said, you know, this is it. This is the end. Today, it's over. And the Lord tells us that that's how it's going to be when he returns.

It's a very solemn thought. But the Lord is going to come, and everything is going to be just exactly the same. Jesus said that, he said, you know, when I return, when the Son of Man comes, it's going to be like the days of Noah.

It's going to be like the days of Lot, where people ate, they drank, they were given in marriage. In other words, it was just a normal day.

But you see, there is an appointment we all have to keep. And that is the appointment of death. It is appointed unto all men once to die, and after death, the judgment.

[14 : 36] You and I cannot escape that appointment. Now, we have loads of appointments in life. You and I have loads of appointments. I have an appointment for the doctor tomorrow morning at 10 to 10. I got a text reminding me on Friday of that.

If my memory is bad, I'll forget. If I cannot go for any reason, I would phone up and say, we have loads of appointments like that.

We will try and keep them. We might not be able to keep them. And at the end of the day, it's not a massive deal. Don't get me wrong, whether we do or don't.

But this is one appointment that you and I cannot avoid in any way, in any shape or other. And you know something? It's already in God's calendar, in his book, the day you are going to leave this world, the day also he is going to return.

It's all mapped out. It's all marked. And you and I cannot change it. It's an appointment that is inescapable for us. If we forget, it doesn't matter.

[15 : 39] It's not that, that doesn't come into the equation. God's appointments will all be kept. And here was this appointment that God was now going to keep because he had passed the judgment upon Sodom.

And so we find that this city is now ripe for judgment. But you know what God does? He is merciful. Because before he brings judgment, he gives opportunity.

And the first thing that he did was he allowed righteous, just Lot to go in and live among them. Because there is no question if every day Lot, as he lived out his life, it tells us he was righteous and just, which means that's how he lived.

His dealings with people, all his dealings were just. So that if he was dealing in business, his business transaction was a just one.

His word was just. His actions were right and just. So people would see that his lifestyle, his way was different.

[16 : 52] God was bringing one of his representatives to live amongst them. Now that was an opportunity for them to look at another way of living.

But they didn't take it. And then again, as we mentioned earlier, they had been taken captive, the whole city. That was again was a warning. And you know, God usually, at least very often, deals like that before he brings his judgment, is that he gives warning beforehand.

Before the firstborn were slain in Egypt, God gave nine previous warnings. Each plague was a warning of his coming judgment.

Each plague was a judgment before the final judgment. And that's the way God works. He's gracious, he's merciful, he's long-suffering, he gives opportunities.

It tells us in the Bible, but he that being often reprov'd hardens his neck shall suddenly be cut off and that without remedy. That's solemn. In other words, here's somebody and he's eventually cut off.

[18 : 02] But not before. He has been warned and warned and reprov'd over and over and over again. And eventually, the Lord says enough. It's a solemn thing.

But this is what the Word of God shows us. And the Lord says, My spirit shall not always strive with man. And you know, the Lord challenges you and me.

Because it's already what you see. The Lord gives us every episode and every experience in the Word of God for our good. We're not just to come to it and read it and say, Oh, well, that's an interesting part of history.

It's there for our edification. It's there to challenge us. Has God been speaking to us in His providence? Has He come close to us?

Has death come close to us? Have we been shaken at different times? You know, before I became a Christian, there were times like that where I had brushes with death and I remember being shaken and thinking, Oh, I have to mend my ways.

[19 : 06] I've got to be serious about this. I remember being scared and thinking, If I had been lost, if I had gone just now, that would have been it.

Terrifying thought. God was gracious and long-suffering and merciful. And so it's important that we take these things to heart.

But anyway, we find that the time has come where God is going to deal with Sodom. But you know, one of the wonderful things, there's a few wonderful things in here, is that there's so much we could look at, but what I'm wanting to hone in now is Lot's deliverance out of Sodom.

We could work our way through this chapter and it's full of so many different things. And we see actually there are aspects of it where we see how Lot's living in this place has distorted completely his own sense of morality and right and justice and even although he's still a good man because his offering of his daughters to the men is just, you cannot even begin to understand that.

And you think to yourself, he really has become partly warped through this very city. Those who you would give your very life to protect. However, we're coming to this point and this is what I'm homing in on tonight.

[20 : 35] The angels say to Lot, look, time is up. God is going to destroy this city. Get out of here.

Get your family and go. That's what, really what is being said here. And we find that Lot lingered. Lot was hanging on.

And that shows us, yes, we read that he was a good man, he was a righteous man, but the world had such a grip of him. The world still had such a hold of him that he knew he had to get out but he lingered, you know.

The world is powerful. It's alluring and you know, you and I have no idea its influence on us. It's much more powerful than we realize.

And we're influenced it far more than, influenced by it far more than we realize. And Lot probably, as he looked back afterwards and reassessed the situation, hadn't realized just how much influence the world had on him.

[21 : 43] But anyway, here is the point and I love what it says here. He's told, escape for your life. And then these wonderful words in verse 22, escape there quickly for I can do nothing till you arrive there.

I love that. Here's God's judgment coming on the city. And God cannot bring the judgment on the city until Lot is safe.

Now, I know that throughout history and throughout every lifetime and throughout our own times, good people have suffered alongside bad people.

The righteous have suffered alongside the unrighteous. But God will often and does from time to time make very clear distinctions between those who are his and those who aren't.

But you know, one of the wonderful things is, and this is something that a lot of people don't take on board, is that the Lord withholds his judgment because of his people.

[22 : 57] There is a movement throughout this land, there always has been, that is very, very, very, very against the Christian. There is a movement not just in our land, but in our island, that is so opposed to Christianity in any shape or form.

but you know, one of the amazing things is that the very Christian that people would like out of the way, the very word of God that people want removed, is the word of the God that they don't believe in or want.

It's the God who is withholding his judgment because of his people. Jesus tells us that, that the Lord would have come long ago and brought his judgment except for the sake of his elect.

God preserves people often because of his own people. And that is something that those who hate the Christian don't realize.

But the word of God shows us. There was a king in the Old Testament in Judah, Josiah, and Israel had turned, Judah had turned to idolatry.

[24 : 14] And the Lord said, you know, he said, I'm going to destroy Judah. And I'm going to bring judgment on them because of this. And Josiah wept before God. He was broken-hearted before God.

And the Lord said to Josiah, you know, he said, I have seen your tears. I've seen your broken heart. And because of your tears and your broken heart, he said, I'm going to take you to your fathers in peace.

In other words, you're going to die in peace. You won't see the evil that I'm going to bring on this city. Oh, it's going to come. But it won't come in your time.

And you know, this is, it's a solemn thing that the very people that those who hate the Lord would want removed are often the reason that the Lord doesn't send his judgment.

judgment. And that's one of the very clear pictures that comes out of here. God is not going to send his judgment upon Sodom until Lot is well clear.

[25 : 21] And that's an amazing thing. But you know the other thing that I love here, and with this we conclude. We're skipping over so many things that we could actually look on.

And it's in verse 27. Abram went early in the morning. Here is, I'm not going to look at Lot's wife, all these things, all part of the chapter, just homing in on certain things. God rained down the fire upon Sodom.

Sodom was absolutely obliterated. And in the morning Abram stood where he had been praying. He went to the very spot where he had been pleading and interceding for Sodom.

Abram went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord. It was a vantage point and he looked down and all he could see, Sodom and Gomorrah and the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace.

Everywhere was burning. Abram had no idea what had happened to Lot. And I'm sure as Abram looked there, he thought, oh my, I thought there would be ten righteous.

[26 : 38] What has become of Lot? But we're told. So it was, verse 29, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow.

In other words, God heard Abraham's prayer. prayer. Because the heart of Abraham's prayer for the saving of Sodom was to save Lot.

God says, yeah, you might not know, Abraham, the outcome, but the outcome is, I've heard your prayer, I've answered your prayer, I've saved Lot, but I've destroyed the city.

And I believe that that's how it's going to be so, so often. We might be praying and praying for people, people in our families, people that we love, people who are precious to us.

We don't know, and in this world, we might never know the outcome. And then in glory, we'll see, wow, God answered that prayer. And I believe that he will, and that he does.

[27 : 53] We might not see it, but you know, when God gives us a spirit to pray, for somebody or for something. I believe that he has given us that for a particular reason.

God doesn't play games with us. And I believe if he gives us a spirit of prayer for somebody or for something, it is because he intends to answer.

We might not see the answer, but I believe it will be like it was here, that God remembered Abraham and saved Lot.

I find that one of the most encouraging pieces of scripture. And I believe that that has been replicated over and over and over and over again.

God is merciful. When Abraham was praying, he said, God is righteous. Will not the judge of all the earth do what is right? Yes, he will.

[28 : 57] He is a just God. We have to leave these huge decisions to himself. But one day we will see, wow, God was right.

God did this. This is not, I prayed and prayed about this and I, oh, I never thought, but it's happened. I believe that will be one of the wonders of glory.

Where we see that the Lord over and over and over again remembered and saved. You make sure tonight that you pray for yourself and that you ask the Lord to remember you because we see he is a God who delights in mercy.

He's a God who loves to save. That's why Jesus came into this world. Jesus tells us that. He says, I came in here to seek and to save those who are lost.

Are you lost tonight? Well, if so, you're in the category that Jesus came for. He didn't come for the righteous. He said, I came for those who are straying, those who are wayward, those who need me.

[30 : 10] I'm here for you. That's what Jesus is saying to you tonight. Will you go to him and will you ask him, Lord, please save me.

Let us pray. Lord, our God, we ask that you will bless us. We ask, O Lord, that you will encourage us through your word. Help us to realize that you are a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God.

We give thanks, Lord, even for the encouragement that we have here of how you answered Abraham's prayer, the heart of that prayer, in saving Lot. And we pray, Lord, that you will encourage your people who have prayed in so many different ways, for so many different things, and for so many different people.

O Lord, you are the God who does right. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? We pray that you will bless us, bless the youth fellowship tonight, and then meeting at Bayhead and the panel there, and we ask, Lord, that your blessing will follow there.

And we ask that you will be with us throughout this week, and that you will guide us and keep us in everything that we do. Wash away from us all our sin, and forgive us in Jesus' name we ask it.

[31 : 20] Amen. Our concluding singing is Psalm 34, verses 5 to 10. Psalm 34, and that's from the Scottish Psalter, Psalm 34, verses 5 to 10.

Tune as Wetherby. So on page 247, verse 5, they looked to him, enlightened were, not shamed were their faces.

This poor man cried, God heard, and saved him from all his distresses. The angel of the Lord encamps, and round encompasseth all those about that do him fear, and them delivereth.

O taste and see that God is good, who trusts in him is blessed. Fear God is saints, none that in fear shall be with want oppressed. The lions young may hungry be, and they may lack their food, but they that truly seek the Lord shall not lack any good.

Psalm 34, 5 to 10, they looked to him, enlightened were. They looked to him, enlightened were, not shamed were their faces.

[32 : 50] the sperm mankind bought her and saved him from all his distresses.

The angel of the Lord encamps, and round encompasseth all those about that do him fear, and them delivereth.

O taste and see that God is good, who thrust in him is blessed, fear God who sins, and that in fear shall be with want oppressed.

The lions young may hungry be, and they may lack their food, but they that truly seek the Lord shall not lack any good.

Now may the grace, mercy, and peace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen.