

At Home In A City Of Sin

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[0 : 0 0] Please take your Bibles and open them up this morning to Genesis chapter 19.! Genesis chapter 19. And when you found it, if you would stand in honor of the reading of God's word.

Genesis chapter 19 this morning. The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom.

And 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.

And 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 and 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?

[1 : 0 6] 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. 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 the door down. 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 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.

[2 : 1 0] 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. But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting.

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 him 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.

[3 : 10] Is it not a little one? And my life will be saved. He said to him, Behold, I grant you this favor also, that I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken. Escape there quickly, for I can do nothing till you arrive there.

Therefore, the name of the city was called Zoar. 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. 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 out of Zoar and lived in the hills with his two daughters, for he was afraid to live in Zoar.

[4 : 19] So he lived in a cave with his two daughters, 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 offspring from our father.

So they made their father drink wine that night, and the firstborn went in and lay with her father. He did not know when she lay down or when she arose. The next morning 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 the 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. The grass withers, the flower fades. The word of the Lord endures forever.

[5 : 28] Father God, our sin is dark and it is deep. Lord, it affects every part of us.

It affects our mind. It affects our desires. It affects our will. It affects our flesh. All of it is by nature corrupted by sin, and we just see it so clearly here in our passage.

So Lord, we thank you even for the song that we sang this morning, that our sins are many, but your mercy is more. Lord, we thank you for Christ, who is the Savior of sinners, and the grace that you've shown us in him.

So Lord, help us now, Father, to see our sin clearly, and to see your grace for us in Christ afresh this morning. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated.

The Bible is not shy about the reality of such a thing called sin. We had two chapters in the Garden of Eden, a long time ago now.

[6 : 28] Two chapters in this garden paradise where there was perfect relationship between man and wife, perfect relationship between mankind and God, perfect harmony between all things.

There's no sin, there's no shame, there's no guilt, there's no death. In Genesis chapter 3, comes, sin enters the world, that crucial Jenga piece is pulled out, and the tower comes crumbling down to the ground.

Now, we don't really like to talk about our sin. You know, one of the blessings and challenges of preaching through books of the Bible, like we're doing now through Genesis, is that I really can't pass over passages that are hard or uncomfortable, can I?

We have to deal with God's Word as it stands. We need to open it up and see it as it's written, as uncomfortable as it may be. This passage, as uncomfortable as it may be, is a vivid illustration of the seriousness and the ugliness of sin, but not just sin in general, and not just sin out there.

I hope what we'll see as we go through this together is that this is a picture of our sin. This is the seriousness and the darkness and the ugliness of our sin.

[7 : 47] We need to hold passages like this up like a mirror so that we see ourselves in these passages. It's important that we do this because it's only against this dark, black backdrop of our sin that we can see the light of the grace of the glory of God shine forth clearly in the gospel of Christ.

So let's take a look. Genesis chapter 19. And what we'll see here this morning is three sins of Sodom. Three sins of Sodom. This will be our outline this morning if you're taking notes.

First, First, we see sinful actions here. Sinful actions. And we can think about this in two categories.

Kevin DeYoung was helpful for me in thinking through these two categories this week. The first is social sin. Look there with me, starting in verse 1. Verse 1 says that the two angels came to Sodom in the evening and here's Lot sitting in the gate of Sodom.

Now notice the progression that Lot's made here over the past several weeks. You notice this? At first, Lot lived near Sodom. And then we saw him living in Sodom. And now he's like the welcoming committee at the gate.

[9 : 00] He's there right there, the first thing you see when you come to the town of Sodom. He has fully ingrained himself here in the community. Lot sees these two angels coming, these two men, and he rises to meet them.

He bows himself down. He invites them to come stay at his house, but they politely decline. They say, no, we're going to go stay instead. Lot's head in the town square. It's almost like you can see the alarm bells in Lot's mind as they say this.

He says, no, no, no, no, no, no. Whatever you do, don't do that. He insists, you must come stay with me. So, instead, they turn aside.

They come to him. They go to his house. And what we see happen here is that Lot, just like Abraham before him in chapter 18, Lot plays host to these two men.

He is a good, hospitable, welcoming host to these two guests. He makes them a feast. He bakes them bread. He feeds them. He gives them shelter. He gives them food. And all together, he is, I would say, incredibly hospitable to these two men that he just met, isn't he?

[10 : 06] And this is a good thing. This is an important concept for Christians. Christians are called to be hospitable. And that word, when you break it down, it simply means love of strangers.

It's not quite like Southern hospitality, as you might read about in Southern Living magazine or anything like that. You don't have to make a pot of sweet tea and set out the pies and make sure the house is clean.

It's not that type of hospitality. It is simply welcoming others into your life, into your home, providing shelter, providing love and care for strangers.

And Christians are called to do this because we understand that God has loved us. When we were strangers and aliens from the household of God, God has shown hospitality to us.

So Lot here, he's doing what all Christians are called to do. He's going out of his way to love and to serve and to protect and to show hospitality to others.

[11 : 08] That's Lot. But the men of Sodom, on the other hand, are not as hospitable, are they? And verse 4 says, Before they lay down the men of the city, the men of Sodom, young and old, all the people to the last man, they surround the house.

And Lot here, he protects them, he shelters them, but the men of Sodom, they obviously, they don't care about the well-being of these two men, do they? They want to use them for their own selfish purposes.

At a very minimum, this is social sin on a social level. In fact, Ezekiel 16, if you go read in Ezekiel chapter 16, it talks about Sodom, it references this instance, and it says about their sin, that they had excess of food, they had prosperous ease, but they did not aid the poor and the needy.

So that's one issue. But that's not the only issue, is it? Now, it never ceases to amaze me, as you read commentaries, and kind of try to dig down into passages like this, how modern critical scholars and commentators can just twist themselves up, all into different sorts of knots, trying to avoid the obvious meaning of a passage.

Right? And they try to explain it away, any way they can, to get around something that they don't like. So, some scholars will read this, and argue that, well, social sin is the only issue going on here in Sodom.

[12 : 36] It's just sin on a social level. But of course, we see another issue here, don't we? There's also a second issue, sexual sin. Sexual sin.

The men here surround the house, all the men, by the way, young and old, to the very last one, they all surround the house, they cry out to Lot, bring those two men out here, that we may know them.

That's sexual language. They don't want to have a conversation with these two men. They want to get to know them in an intimate way. They surround the place, they bang on the door, they demand that Lot give up these two guests, so that they can have their way with them.

Well, clearly, this is sexual sin. And again, some would argue, well, the sin here, it must be that, well, this is a group. It's a group issue.

It's not a loving, one-on-one, committed relationship, and so that's what's wrong here. It's not the proper context for sexual expression, and we would agree with that, right?

[13 : 41] That is true. Yes, we agree. God has designed sexual expression for a committed, one-to-one relationship within the boundaries of marriage.

That's the context. But that's not all that's going on here. Still, some would say, well, the sin here is that it's forceful. It's aggressive.

It's selfish. They're forcing this on these people that they don't want it. That's what's wrong here. It's aggressive. And again, we would agree. That is true as well.

God has designed sexual expression to be mutual and enjoyable for both partners. It's an opportunity to serve, not to just take. But again, that is not all that's going on here, is it?

And you know, often when you read comments like this, it's ignoring the pretty obvious but uncomfortable truth in this passage, which is this.

[14 : 44] It is also true, alongside all the others, it is also true that the homosexual nature of this sin is wicked. What begs these men, don't act so wickedly, take my daughters instead, which is just a terrible thought, right?

I can't even imagine that. But it is interesting, isn't it, that in Lot's calculations, it would be less wicked to take the daughters than it would be to take these two men.

He understands that in the eyes of God, same-sex relations is especially sinful. Jude chapter 7, Jude verse 7 rather, Jude verse 7, says, Sodom and Gomorrah and the nearby towns indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, it says.

And so we have to ask, don't we, well, what does that mean? What is that unnatural desire? And again, yet again, modern critics will say, well, it was unnatural because these were two angels.

That's the issue. It's unnatural for men to have relations with angels. That's the unnatural disaster. But ask yourself, do you really think these men of Sodom knew that these were two angels?

[16 : 01] All they knew was that two new guys had come to town. That's it. We have to be clear where the Bible is clear.

Amen? Church, we have to be clear where the Bible is clear. And while our culture may be very confused on some of these topics, the Bible is not.

Oh, this is not a murky issue in the Bible. We may take issue with what the Bible says. We may disagree with what the Bible clearly says, but we need to understand what the Bible clearly says.

The Bible's not unclear about this. Romans chapter 1 is not unclear at all, is it? Talking about those who suppress the truth about God, here's what he says.

He says, women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another.

[17 : 07] Men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. Friend, we need to be clear on this because the Bible is clear on this. God has designed sexual expression to exist only within the boundaries of one man and one woman in the covenant of marriage.

Anything outside of those good boundaries is sinful and wicked in the eyes of God. Our statement of faith as a church, this is what we confess to believe as a church family.

We have an article in it at the very end that I think really clarifies this issue for us well. This is the understanding of the church universal for the past 2,000 years.

It says, we believe that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman before God in covenant commitment for a lifetime. That God has established marriage as his only intended channel for human sexual expression and procreation.

and that God calls all unmarried people to celibacy and devotion to himself. It goes on. Departures from God's design for human sexuality including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, and all other forms of sexual immorality as defined by scripture are sinful.

[18 : 37] You hear that broad category? Don't stop there. Keep reading. In these matters, God offers forgiveness and restoration for sin through his son, Jesus Christ.

And Christians should always act in the spirit of love towards all people without compromising their loyalty to Christ and his truth.

Friend, we believe any departure from God's design for human sexuality is sinful. But praise God, we also believe there is hope for sinners like us.

We believe Jesus stands with arms open wide, ready and willing to receive and to forgive and to wash clean sinners of all kinds.

the hope that we hold out to the world, the hope that we hold out to sinners like us is the gospel of Jesus Christ. And we don't hold that hope out as those who are superior in any way to any sinner on the earth.

[19 : 48] We call out, repent and believe the gospel of Jesus Christ and you too, like me, you too can be saved. how often when we hold out that hope and that good news, how often is that message not well received, church?

So second, second, we see here sinful attitudes. Look there again to verse 9. See, the men of the city are pressing hard against Lot, they're going to break down the door and just going to go get those two angels, but look here at this act of mercy, the two angels, they reach out their hands, they bring Lot back into the house with them, they shut the door, they rescue Lot, they strike all these men with blindness.

It was a sort of partial judgment here. Partial judgment and partial salvation. But Lot's not out of the woods yet. The men of the city are still, even after being blinded, they're still groping at the door, still chasing after the desires of their flesh.

So these men, the angels here, they give a warning to Lot. They say, have you anybody else here? Sons-in-laws, daughters, anybody else that you have in the city, bring them out of this place because we're about to destroy this place.

What's the warning? Judgment is coming. Judgment is coming soon. It is imminent and you need to get yourself ready. That's the warning. How similar is that to the message that we proclaim?

[21 : 25] We proclaim salvation in the name of Jesus. But we need to ask again, well salvation from what? We proclaim that Jesus is the Savior.

Well Savior from what? Why do I need to be saved? What am I being saved from? Well, we hold out Jesus Christ as the Savior of sinners who saves us from the wrath of God that we have earned for our sin.

We proclaim the bad news. Judgment is coming and we are deserving of judgment, every last one of us. But we hold out the good news that Christ, Jesus, God has made a way of salvation in Christ.

And we have to have both as we proclaim the gospel, don't we? But that bad news is not popular to put it lightly, is it? Look there to verse 14.

And here, I want us to see, we see the first of three sinful attitudes here. These are sinful reactions to this warning. And I wonder if you've ever run into any of these as you talk about the gospel, as you talk about salvation, as you share the gospel with others.

[22 : 39] Three sinful attitudes. The first is from Lot's sons-in-law. He goes out to them, verse 14, and he says, Up! Get out of this place! The Lord is about to destroy the city!

But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting. It's a joke. That's the first sinful attitude towards the warning.

It's all just a big joke. This isn't actually going to happen. Are you kidding me? You're just some religious maniac. That's hilarious. What are you talking about? There's no judgment coming. My life is great.

I got all the money I need. I'm happy. I can do whatever I want. Some people just hear this and they laugh it off. You're just some religious nut talking about judgment. It's one response.

It's another here in verse 15. Look here. Morning comes and Lot is still there. The sun comes up and judgment is coming. The angels have warned him but he doesn't really seem to be in any sort of hurry, does he?

[23 : 42] The angels go. They're urging Lot, get up, get your wife, get your daughters, get out of here. Judgment is coming. How does he respond? Verse 16.

It says he lingered. The second sinful response to this warning is it's not urgent. I hear you.

This warning may be real. Maybe it is, maybe it's not, but I have all the time in the world. It's not urgent. I can go about my business as usual. I'll get around to it when I get around to it.

This repentance business, sure, I hear you. That's good. I'll get to it. Let me live my life first. The truth is, friend, you do not know when you will meet God.

You do not know when you'll die. You do not know when you will stand before the judge. You do not know when Christ will return.

[24 : 43] And it is foolish to just linger in your sin and to linger with that warning somewhere there in the back of your mind thinking I'll get around to it eventually when I'm ready.

God may be ready before you are. Don't linger. Lot here lingers, but thankfully the Lord is merciful to him.

See, the men seize him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand. They bring him out, the Lord being merciful to him. They bring him out, they set him outside the city and as they brought them out, one said, this warning again, escape for your life.

Don't stop, don't look back. Don't stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you get swept away. They bring Lot out and he goes and he settles in the land of Zoar.

And again, this is a small picture of salvation, isn't it? God's elect is plucked out of the fire, preserved from judgment, kicking and screaming it seems in Lot's case, but God by his grace, he shows mercy to him, he rescues him from the judgment to come.

[25 : 54] This is a picture of salvation, isn't it? But we also see a picture of judgment, the opposite side of the same coin here in verse 23. Lot makes it safely out, and 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 everything that grew on the ground, Sodom and Gomorrah and everyone in them, everything in them, they're all judged for their sin.

the wrath of God is poured out against their sin. It's just a terrible thought. Friend, as we read this, don't make the mistake of reading this just as a history lesson of something that happened way back then in Genesis that has nothing to do with your life now, as if God has maybe somehow mellowed out towards sin now.

He's kind of calm down here in the New Testament. He's not as angry towards our sin anymore. 2 Peter tells us that the Lord turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes and condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly.

Jude, again, says something similar. Again, in verse 7, it says, Sodom and Gomorrah, they serve as an example. by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

[27 : 32] So, we should ask, shouldn't we? Well, an example for whom? An example of what? And I think you know the answer, don't you? This terrible judgment here in Genesis chapter 19, fire and sulfur, complete destruction, all of this is a partial pointer, a picture, is an example of an even greater destruction yet to come upon the wicked at the return of Christ.

We ought to grieve this truth, church. Does that sit heavy with you? Look around yourself and ask, is our nation any better off than Sodom?

Are we morally superior in any way to the men of Sodom? Are we better off than this nation that God poured out His wrath and destroyed with fire?

Billy Graham wrote in a book about the moral decay of this nation. This was years ago. And when His wife Ruth read it, she said, you know, if God doesn't punish America, He's going to have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah.

God will judge America and every other nation of the earth that remains in rebellion against the Lord.

[29 : 13] The wicked of the earth are storing up wrath for themselves by rebelling against the Lord and pursuing their flesh, pursuing unnatural desire, suppressing the truth about God and worshiping and serving created things rather than the Creator.

But you, Christian, like Lot, do not belong to this fallen nation. Praise God. You, Christian, like Lot, by the grace of God alone, are being plucked out of this place.

You do not belong here. You may live in a wicked city in a wicked world, but you are not a citizen of this place ultimately. And when judgment comes, you, like Lot, will be preserved and sheltered in a place of safety, covered by the blood of Christ.

Christ. But, Christian, as you are journeying out, we must not make the mistake of Lot's wife.

Look there to verse 26. This is the third sinful attitude here. The angels gave this command, don't look back. Verse 26, but Lot's wife, behind him, she looked back.

[30 : 34] and she became a pillar of salt. The sons-in-law said it's not that serious, Lot said it's not that urgent, and Lot's wife, by her actions, third sinful response, she says, it's not really what I want.

Do I really want to be delivered from this city of sin? This is my home. Now, you probably know what the shortest verse of the Bible is.

What is it? Jesus wept, right? John 11, 35. There's one that's not too far off from that, Luke 17, 32. Anybody know what it is?

Remember Lot's wife. Remember Lot's wife. And what's the context? Again, it's the return of Christ.

Here's what he says, just as it was in the days of Lot, they were eating and drinking, they were buying and selling, planting and building, but on that day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all, so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

[31 : 44] On that day, let the one who is on the housetop with his goods in the house not come down to take them away, and likewise let the one who is in the field not turn back. Remember Lot's wife.

Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it. He says something similar in Luke 9 verse 32, no one who puts his hands to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.

You know, when someone is saved by the grace of God, what happens to them is they're brought out of belonging to the kingdom of darkness. They no longer belong here.

They are plucked out and with that they are brought out of slavery to sin. These old patterns of sinful behavior and sinful actions and sinful attitude sinful everything we no longer belong to it.

We no longer belong to this fallen world. But sometimes our eyes can be drawn back and we can say in our hearts, is this really what I want?

[32 : 57] This is the Israelites in the wilderness looking back to Egypt and saying was it so bad there? Church, as we journey towards our final salvation we must keep our eyes fixed on Christ.

Do not look back. Church, we've been warned, clearly this world is one day going to be consumed with fire.

Those who are still in their sins will suffer God's wrath in hell, but those who are in Christ will be plucked out and redeemed by the grace of God. Don't make this mistake of thinking it's not serious, it's not urgent, and don't look back and longing for anything that you've been redeemed from.

We see here in verse 27, Abraham, the sun comes up, Abraham comes out, he gets his morning coffee, he looks down out towards Sodom, and behold the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace.

He had prayed in chapter 18, the Lord had agreed if there were even ten righteous people in that city, he would save the whole place for their sake. Well, he got his answer, didn't he?

[34 : 16] So we see sinful actions, sinful attitudes, and we're left wondering, aren't we? Hopefully this gets a little better from here, right? Hopefully there's a positive end to this story.

I got bad news for you. Third, we see sinful aftermath. If you thought that we were going to get a happy conclusion to all of this, sadly, you're going to be disappointed.

Look there to verse 30. You know, it's interesting, Lot doesn't stay in Zoar long, does he? And we don't have an explanation of why he left outside of, we just know that he was afraid, is what it says.

And my best guess, and this is a guess, my guess is that maybe he realized the people in Zoar weren't much better off than those people in Sodom. And maybe he didn't want to be around if that fire came again.

Zoar probably wasn't too far away, it's possible that they were probably into the same stuff over there, and so we're told that he escapes, he goes to the hills with his two daughters and he thinks, man, wickedness won't find me here.

[35 : 25] I'm just going to unplug, get off the grid, and we will be safe if I can just get away and get away from all the wickedness over there, wickedness won't find me here. But you know the story, you heard it.

Daughters hatch up a plan to get offspring by their father, so they get him drunk, they take turns, they go both get themselves pregnant. And we're told, actually, this is the origin story for two of Israel's enemies, the Moabites and the Ammonites were told, and so the Israelites, they would read this and say, oh, that makes sense, right?

These guys, I can't stand them, that makes sense where they come from. No wonder. But here, we see Lot has been redeemed. He's been given a second chance, he's been given a new beginning.

This is a clean slate and a fresh start for Lot. He's been brought out of a sinful place, he's been preserved from God's judgment, he's been shown God's mercy, and it kind of reminds you a little bit of Noah, doesn't it?

You remember the story of Noah? Noah and his family are preserved from the wrath of God. God destroys all the wickedness of the world, washes it with judgment.

[36 : 39] Noah comes out, they're given this new start, and what happens immediately once Boots hit the ground. Sin still remains. The aftermath of all of it is still sin.

Lot thought that I can just go escape, and maybe I can just get out of here, but we see maybe the location wasn't the main issue, was it? He's isolated out in the hills, nobody else around, but they carried their sin with them.

Sin still remains. You know, sometimes I think we can fool ourselves into thinking that the solution to our problems is just a change, right? So we move jobs, we move cities, we change our location, we change our circumstance, we change our surroundings, and all of that may be good.

I think you would agree. it was good for Lot to move on from Sodom, right? But we need to recognize that unless the heart is changed, nothing changes.

Sin still remains. Unless your heart is changed, you'll bring your sin with you to your new town, and your new job, and your new relationship, and your new church, and your new neighborhood, sin must be dealt with on a heart level.

[38 : 13] Which just shows us that all of this from beginning to end, it shows us our need for a redeemer. It shows us our need for Christ.

Church, the bad news is that all of us are sinners, and we see the ugliness of our sin here on full display, don't we? And we believe that our sin has earned us the wrath of God.

That's the bad news. The good news of the gospel is that Christ Jesus came to save sinners. Jesus came to change us from the inside out, and by his spirit to give us a new heart that's no longer bound with shackles and chains to sin, that's free to love him and obey him and to seek him and pursue him with all of our heart and all of our mind and all of our soul and all of our strength.

Christ came to bear the full wrath of God against our sin. Do you realize God poured out his wrath against Christ in your place? This picture of judgment in Genesis 19, the wrath of God, we see that and we say, oh, that's mean.

Do you understand Christ bore the wrath of God for you? So that by faith in him we would be washed clean, made new, no longer called sinners but saints, no longer belong to the kingdom of darkness but belong to the kingdom of God.

[39 : 48] It's sobering when you read a passage like this to see the weight of our sin and the severity of God's judgment against wickedness but church, I hope you see it's against this black backdrop that we see the grace of God towards sinners in the gospel shine so clearly.

Have you heard the warning? Have you heard the invitation this morning? Come to Christ. Come to Christ and be saved.

Do not turn back. Fix your eyes on Christ. God's such a terrible story of sin. You might wonder, maybe you'll get a happy ending.

No. You might wonder, can it get any worse than this? And actually, yes, church, it does. I want to point you to Matthew chapter 11 as we close.

Jesus, in Matthew chapter 11, he condemns the surrounding areas of Chorazin and Bethsaida. And listen to what he says. He says, woe to you, Chorazin, woe to you, Bethsaida, for if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

[41 : 13] But I tell you, it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you. You hear that?

It will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for Sodom than for you. Why? The English Bishop J.C.

Ryle explains, he says, it will prove more tolerable to have lived in Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom than to have heard the gospel in England and at last die unconverted.

Do you get it? As wicked as the men of Sodom were, Jesus says, it will be more tolerable for these great sinners on the day of judgment than it will be for you who have heard the gospel again and again and again and again and have yet refused to repent and believe.

so hear it again, non-believer. The invitation to you, turn to Christ.

[42 : 28] Would you come to Christ in faith? Would you escape the wrath of God that you've earned for your sin? Would you look to Him in faith and trust that He has borne your penalty on the cross?

Would you come to Christ? And Christian, here's your call. Again, I'll quote from J.C. Ryle in a sermon called Christ's greatest trophy.

He urges us, believer, he says, tell the young, tell the poor, tell the aged, tell the ignorant, tell the sick, tell the dying, tell them all about Christ.

Tell them of His power and tell them of His love. Tell them of His doings and tell them of His feelings. Tell them what He has done for the chief of sinners. Tell them what He is willing to do until the last day of time.

Tell it to them over and over again. Never be tired of speaking of Christ. Say to them broadly and fully, freely and unconditionally, unreservedly and undoubtedly, come unto Christ as the penitent thief did.

[43 : 39] Come unto Christ and you shall be saved. Father, as we consider such things as this, judgment against our sin, Lord, who can stand before a holy God?

None of us on our own right. We are all sinful. Lord, it's only by your grace in Christ, only by Christ Jesus alone, that can a sinner be counted righteous in your sight.

We praise you, Lord, for salvation from the judgment to come. And we pray, Lord, would sinners turn to Christ Jesus in faith and be saved. And we pray, Lord, that this church be a beacon of gospel hope to the lost and dying around us.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.