

The Sin of Sodom and the Salvation of Righteous Lot – *Genesis 19:1-11*

Introduction – The title of this sermon is meant to be provocative at two points. First, our culture (even much of the compromised evangelical church) is offended at what we call “the sin of Sodom.” And second, after reading Gen 19, it is hard to quickly conclude that Lot was righteous. For both of these provocations, we must let Scripture interpret Scripture and so let’s keep 2 Pet 2:6-10 before us as a guide: “...and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)...” What are we to learn, and be warned of, and be strengthened in, as we live in an age like Sodom?

Overview of the Text – The two angels arrive in Sodom in the evening and find Lot sitting in the city gate (v1). City gates were civic centers where business was conducted and legal proceedings were adjudicated. Lot was most likely a judge and leader in the city. The angels must have appeared as dignitaries, for Lot bows down to them and quickly offers them the hospitality of his home (vv2-3).

After the feast but before they lay down, the men of Sodom surrounded the house (v4). They wanted the visiting men to be brought outside so they could sexually abuse them (v5). Homosexual practice was common among the Canaanite culture (Lev 18:22, 24, and 20:13, 23), and Sodom was known as exceedingly wicked among the cities (Gen 13:13). Lot goes out and pleads, “my brethren,” and, “do not do so wickedly,” but then offers his daughters in place of his guests (vv6-8). Was Lot’s commitment to hospitality that extreme? Were the daughters already compromised to the culture? Was this a sarcastic comment, “why not just take my daughters...?”

The mob outside responds to that in outrage. As wicked as their intentions were, they are highly sensitive to the whiff of judgmentalism in Lot’s tone (v9). People in our culture talk like this all the time. Then the angels pulled Lot into the house, shut the door, and struck the men at that doorway with blindness (a “bedazzlement” – v10-11) like Paul on the road to Damascus. But it did not cool their lust. Temptation and sin blind us (2 Cor 4:4).

Contrasts and Parallels – This story is parallel to the story of the flood. But while Noah and his entire family are saved, Lot’s family will not all be saved with him. It is like the future story of the exodus with God delivering righteous Lot and destroying the wicked city. We also see the parallels with Abraham. The two angels came with the Lord to Abraham, but the Lord did not go with the angels to Sodom. They came in the day to Abraham and in the evening to Lot; one is walking in the light, the other is walking in the darkness. They found Abraham in a tent because he was still a sojourner, but found Lot in a house and in a city and sitting at the city gates. Sarah stood at the door of the tent and overheard promises of a family. Lot stood outside his door and offered his daughters to the destruction of his family. If Abraham is the father of the faithful, Lot is the father of all such as are scarcely saved (Whyte). And so, there are lessons for us and our culture in which we dwell.

The True Sin of Sodom – There is an argument in our age of defending homosexuality (and every other gender-affirming perversion) that says homosexuality was not the sin of Sodom. They try to make the case that it was violent, nonconsensual rape. Or they turn to Ezek 16:49-50 and say that there the Bible explicitly says that the sin was pride, gluttony, idleness, and injustice. And so it was. But they don’t go far enough. Verse 50 says that “they were haughty” (in the sins listed in v49) “and committed abomination before Me.” That word, abomination, is “toebah” and in the book of Leviticus it refers specifically to homosexual activity (Lev 18:22, 20:13). In Deut 22:5 it is an abomination to exchange the clothing (and roles pertaining to it) of men and women. In Romans 1:24-27 we see that homosexuality (and sexual confusion) is a sin that God gives the ungodly over to; it is a sign of His judgment upon a culture of unbelief and rebellion.

Affecting the Culture or Accommodating to the Culture? – But our culture says that my experience, my feelings, my sexual desires inform my Bible what it ought to say; the Bible is placed under the authority of me and my experience. And like Lot, we didn’t just fall into accommodating the culture. Accommodation to the world happens often gradually. First, Lot looked toward Sodom (Gen 13:10-11). It was just a little looking. But it didn’t end there. He makes his home in Sodom.

Peter tells us that Lot was grieved by what he saw, but he made his home there, had success, and when it came time to stand up for righteousness, he was compromised and ineffective. “Lot is the father of all those men whose righteous souls are vexed with the life they are leading, but who keep on enduring the vexation” – Whyte. The number of individuals who will turn away from substantial profits, a life of success and comfort, or of future opportunities for their children in areas such as sports, arts, college admissions, romantic prospects, or high-paying jobs, simply to satisfy a troubled conscience, has always been very small. (Rayburn).

I would commend this congregation for being in the minority among a compromised church nationwide that still accommodates itself to the godless government education institution. This does come at a great cost in time, money, along with social and even vocational opportunities.

But I want to warn this congregation that we are still not free from countless assaults by the world to lure and woo us to accommodate to the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life.

Our Heavenly Citizenship in Our Age of Sodom – Paul said that our citizenship is in heaven (Phil 3:20). He did not mean that we were just to sit around and wait to return to heaven. Just as the Philippians were citizens of Rome and were making Philippi a “little Rome” so we are to make our world a “little heavenly.” We are to influence and not be influenced. We are to be the salt of the earth, not lose our saltiness and be trampled.

We live in an age of Sodom. It is a proud age. It is a materially wealthy age. It is an entertainment-filled idle-age. It is an age confused about true justice. And it is an age of homosexuality and ever-expanding sexual deviancy. What are we to do? We are not to make our home here; we are to make our home in Christ. Christ gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil age (Gal 1:3-5). This is how you are called out of an evil age that you cannot leave. And this is how we instead become leaven that transforms the loaf (Matt 13:33).

The Gospel for Lot and for You – Here is where we began. Peter calls Lot a righteous man. That means God calls Lot a righteous man. But look at how he accommodated himself, how he bungled his duties as husband and father. He was a creep to his daughters. He doesn't deserve to be saved.

And since when does anyone deserve to be saved? Lot was saved in spite of his compromises – and so are you. You all would be as corrupt as the age in which we live – but the Lord died for you. Remember, you don't get yourself all cleaned up before you come to Jesus. Coming is the cleaning. Coming to Jesus is how you get cleaned.

He saved you and has called you out of the corruption of this age trusting in His death and resurrection for you. Lot was “barely saved” in one sense. But it doesn't have to be that way. Now it is possible, by His Spirit, to be in this world but not of it. Now it is possible for us to be in this world as a colony of heaven. We can be the light of the world. We can be the manifestation of the Word of God preached and received and exploding all around our culture for the life of the world.

And that is what we are to learn, and be warned of, and be strengthened in – as we live in an age like Sodom.

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