

## Grabbed by Mercy and Life Lessons from Lot – *Genesis 19:12-38*

**Introduction** – The story of Lot is a hard story. It confronts us with compromises and the consequences of those compromises. It is the story of God’s uncompromising righteousness, holiness, and judgment. It is a horrifying account of what sin does to people and families. Paul tells us in Rom 6:23 “*the wages of sin is death...*” and Jude 7 says that Sodom and Gomorrah are set apart as examples for us, warnings of God’s “*vengeance of eternal fire.*” But that verse in Romans continues, “*but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord,*” and that is evident in this story as well. And so, in the middle of this dark passage we have, “*And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand...the LORD being merciful to him...*” (Gen 19:16).

**Overview** – Recall, three men visited Abraham and Sarah with surprising and laughable promises that Sarah would soon have a child (Gen 18). These three turned out to be two angels and a theophany, for we are told the LORD visited. Abraham then entered into council with the LORD on how to deal with Sodom, “*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*” (18:25). Then the two angels were sent to Sodom where they found Lot but not even ten righteous; in fact they witnessed the vile abomination of the city (19:1-11). The angels asked Lot if he has any family to warn, for they declare they have been sent by the LORD to destroy the city (vv12-13). His sons-in-law laugh at him, thinking the whole idea is a joke (v14).

This goes on through the night. In the early morning, the angels tell Lot to leave and yet he still lingers, so the angels mercifully take him, his wife and daughters by the hand and drag them out (vv15-16). Once out of the city, the angels tell them to flee to the mountains and not look back (v17), but Lot lingers still – and debates. He’d rather go to a city in the plains, and still the angels show mercy, granting his request (vv18-22). Once in Zoar, the LORD rained brimstone and fire, destroying everyone and everything in the cities (vv23-25). We are told that at some point Lot’s wife disobeyed, looked back to the city, and turned into a pillar of salt (v26). God remembered Abraham (their conversations, his prayers) and delivered Lot from the city (vv27-29).

But Lot doesn’t remain in Zoar out of fear and ends up in a cave, quite a downgrade, with his daughters. Some time passes and the daughters devise a plan to get Lot drunk so they can lie with him and bear children. Lot’s legacy, Moab and Ben-Ammi become two people-groups that would be thorns to God’s people with later carnal seduction (Num 25, Rev 2:14) and the cruelest religious perversions (that of child-sacrifice to Molech, Lev 18:21). “My body, my choice” comes from the culture of Sodom as well.

**Consider the Judgment of God** – During Jesus’ ministry, more than once he warned cities that did not receive Him or His disciples that it would be worse for them than what happened to Sodom (i.e. Matt 10:14-15). In the years after Jesus’ ascension, that generation was warned to learn from the example of Sodom (Jude 7). Jerusalem, in their rejection of the Messiah and persecution of Christians filled with the Holy Spirit of God, sealed their doom as the New Sodom (Rev 11:8).

For us, the culture of Sodom and the judgment God brought upon that city hits very close to home. We hail the same sins as virtues to be openly approved and celebrated. Some Christians warn that we will fall under the judgment of God as well if we don’t stop. But Romans 1 teaches us that we are under the judgment of God.

We know of course that this world will be redeemed, but we must be aware of the times in which we live now and the great meltdown our culture is going through. Just as the angels had such an urgency to get their message out, so the church must have an urgency, pleading with the Lord to revive and cleanse the church and return us to His Word. We must walk as children of the light and have no fellowship with the works of darkness but rather expose them (Eph 5:8ff). This world needs the gospel.

**Consider the Consequences of Compromises** – It seems clear that Lot was saved (2 Pet 2:7), but he didn’t appear to have a strong convictional spine. He moved and raised his family in Sodom. His lingering, his wife’s longing, his daughters’ betrothals to unbelievers, and then their carnal actions, all underscore the consequences of a man’s compromises and lack of conviction. Abraham had saved Lot from Chedorlaomer and Lot still went back to Sodom. When he is removed from the city by the angels he still asks to go to a little Sodom, a smaller version of the city. He had lost his prophetic voice in the city and to his family. The former mocked and attacked him, the latter laughed at him. His wife stopped following him, looked back, and she was lost.

In our day, Christians with dull consciences let the “free” government schools indoctrinate their children. They watch and are entertained by, and then let their children do so even more, vulgar, crass, lewd, lying, deceiving stories and songs. The education and entertainment of Sodom is all around us. One way to know that you are falling prey to these things is when you say, “well at least this isn’t as bad as...”

Jesus warned his generation that they were about to enter a similar day of judgment (Luke 17:28-33). Forty years later, when the Roman army surrounded Jerusalem, Josephus records there was a miraculous breach in the siege and all the remaining Christians in the city fled. And for all of us in all times, “Remember Lot’s wife. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.”

**Grabbed by Mercy** – “We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). And this is the story of Lot as well. Lot lingered, so God grabbed him and got him out of there. Here is the gospel in Genesis: the LORD was merciful to Lot (v16). Here is the effective prayer of the righteous man: “The LORD remembered Abraham” (v29). What had Abraham prayed? “Will you destroy the righteous with the wicked?” (18:23).

Lot’s story ends here. He doesn’t return to Abraham and we know nothing of the rest of his life. But God’s mercy did not end here. From that cave came Moab and from Moab came a young widow one day, Ruth. And that Moabitess married a merciful Hebrew, Boaz. And they became the ancestors of David, and of David’s greater Son, Jesus.

**Grabbed by Mercy** - His mercies are new every morning, and while we cry out for mercy as we should, I think we should open our eyes and see that He is grabbing us by His mercy all the time. He is a merciful God. His grace and mercy run through story after story of man’s rebellion, thanklessness, stupidity, sinfulness, and compromises in these first 20 chapters of Genesis. Therefore,

**Do Not Linger When Mercy Grabs** – God’s kindness leads us to repentance (Rom 2:4). Don’t take mercy as permission to linger. Take it as your invitation to turn and run with God.

**Repent of Little Sins** – If you are lingering in some little sin, kill it now. Don’t pet it. Don’t excuse it. Don’t make light of it. You have no idea how far the consequences of that sin may go – how many it will hurt – how much damage it will cause. JC Ryle wrote, “A small leak will sink a great ship.”

**Pursue Godly Fellowship** – What would Lot’s life have been like if he had stayed with Abraham? What if he had returned to him when things had gone dark? Proverbs says, “He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will be destroyed” – Prov 13:20. We need one another to grow in godliness and stand against worldliness. Stay rooted in a faithful church family.

Are you lingering? Are you compromised? The same God who remembered Abraham remembers you because Jesus intercedes on your behalf before the throne of grace. God is laying hold of your hand, grabbing you with unimaginable mercy. Go with Him.