



As followers of Jesus, we love God...
... we love to worship God...
... we love to worship God with his people...
... we love to hear God's word... to read it and to study it...
... and as we do, on our own and as the church... we feast on God's goodness...
remember our call to worship???

It is my responsibility this morning to lead this church into an encounter with the living God through his revealed Word.

Prayer

Last week we considered the truth regarding...



.. one of the elephants in Genesis 19 – the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah.

This week we want to interact with what the Scripture says about Genesis 19's main character, and then draw application to our own lives... for this passage leads us to precious life-changing truth.



Lot

The first person the two angels meet when they arrived at Sodom was Lot. Look at v.1a – Lot was seated at the gateway of the city.

The city gate was important in ancient cultures. It was there... that the elders and the officials of a town or city... would gather to discuss local affairs, and to adjudicate in legal matters.

There are two possibilities as to why Lot was where he was.

The first, is that Lot had become a leader among the Sodomites.

Is that why Lot was there?

What does the passage tell us?

Look at the response of the men of Sodom in v.9

“This fellow came here as a foreigner, and now he wants to play the judge!”

When I read their response, it sounds to me that the men of Sodom were offended... that Lot was acting like a city official ...when in fact he wasn't.

The second possibility is that Lot wanted to intercept any travelers, in order to bring them to his home – but why?

To save them from what might happen to them at the hands of the men of Sodom.

I think this second possibility better explains what Lot did in v.3 – **“...he insisted so strongly...”** that the two men... finally... went with him to his home.

The passage tells us...Lot didn't just insist... he insisted strongly.

In the culture of that day and time, when someone brought a visitor, a traveler... to their home... in addition to providing them with a meal and a place to sleep... they provided the visitor, the traveler... **with sanctuary.**

Typically, in that time, a city was preferred over the open country, and a home considered safer than the city square.



But life in Sodom... had been inverted... and perverted... as we can see... when the men of Sodom came to Lot's home.

Look at v.5.

Lot went outside to not just speak to, but to appeal to the men.

Look at what he said to them – v.7.

“Don't do this wicked thing.”

I wish Lot had stopped there.

But he didn't.

It would seem that he knew an appeal was not enough – look at v.8.

“Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man.”

“Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them.”

What Lot proposed is the second elephant in the passage.



How are we to make sense of this?

And it is so important that we do so... because the offense of what Lot did was not an anomaly... he was not the only person to have ever done something so tragic!

Think about our own time.

We have all met... we all know people... maybe at one time you were such a person... who gave up on the faith because... you/they met... you/they interacted... your/their life was impacted negatively... by someone who identified themselves as a follower of Jesus and... who said something... did something... didn't do something... that was inconsistent with the teaching of the Bible.

The hurt you/they experienced... was nurtured and grew into bitterness... and that bitterness was manipulated by the adversary... to the point where you/they wanted nothing more to do with Christianity or convinced yourself/themselves to become an outspoken opponent.

That was my story as a teenager.
And it is the story of many people.

The assumption that happens... particularly in our culture... is that the church is a community of perfect people, when in fact the church is a community of people, who were sinners, and who now are in a process of being transformed.

Every follower of Jesus has a before and after component to their life story.

Every follower of Jesus, in spite of being born of the Spirit, has within them remaining habits of sin, that unfortunately can regrettably manifest themselves.

This is why this passage in Genesis is so important to understand.

It will lead us to other biblical truths that reveal the wisdom of God and his great mercy.

But it also reminds us that in this present time there is a great adversary who fights dirty... and who constantly attempts to smear the name of God... and who has ample material to work with... in the bride of Christ – the church.

Let's come back to the story.

Listen to Lot's explanation as to why he offered up his daughters.

Lot's Rationale

"They [the two visitors] have come under the protection of my roof."

I immediately asked... but isn't it a father's responsibility to protect his children? And Lot would have answered – yes. And then he would have quickly added... "but I had given sanctuary to the two men.... how could I turn them over to a certain death?"

Do you feel the impossibility of the choice before him? If he had agreed and pushed the men out the door... what conclusion do you think the reader would have then drawn?

Maybe Lot hoped that the men would have compassion on his daughters because they knew them. That said... the passage doesn't provide the reader with any more detail as to Lot's thinking process. And maybe, what he did wasn't even thought out... maybe his simply was a panicked reaction.

The men of Sodom at this point turned on Lot – look at v.9.

**"Get out of our way."
"We'll treat you worse than them."**

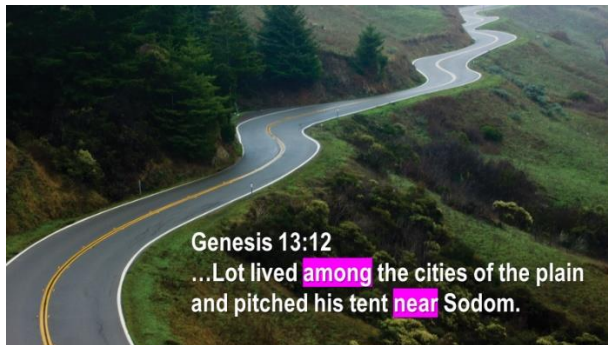
**They kept bringing pressure
on Lot...**

Thankfully, at this point, God through the two angels intervened.

For if the two angels hadn't reached out and pulled Lot back into the house...
...if they hadn't caused the men gathered at Lot's house to be blinded...
...then Lot himself would have been...
...and the men of Sodom would have broken into the house...
...and all within would have been....

Lot experienced two rescues that night.
The first was from the evil intent of the men of Sodom.
The second was from the judgment of God.

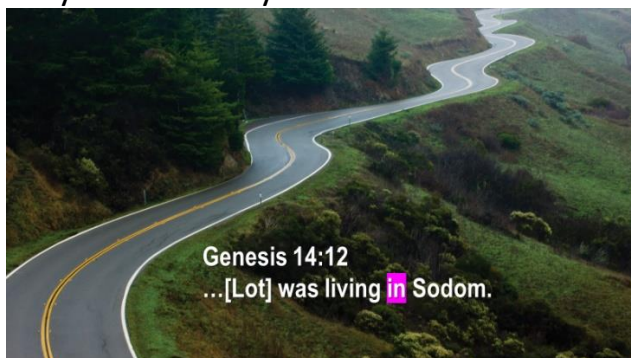
That particular night, Lot did not suddenly find himself in an impossible situation. From the book of Genesis, we learn that his... had been a long and winding road. When Lot and Abram separated and when Lot chose the Jordan valley plain, he first settled...



It is an important question to ask... when Lot separated from Abram, and moved down to the region where the cities of the plain were located, did he not know what the people were like?

Genesis 13:13 states what was common knowledge.... **“Now the people of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD.”**

In Genesis 14 Lot was taken captive by Kedorlaomer.
Do you know why? Because...



When Abram heard what had happened to Lot, he pursued after Kedorlaomer ... and defeated him in battle... and rescued Lot, and all the people of Sodom, along with their possessions.

Wouldn't you think this would have been the perfect moment for Lot to make a change... to appeal to his uncle for help... whether to come back and be a part of Abram's household... or to start over somewhere else.

But no such thing happened.

Lot returned to Sodom, and rebuilt his life there.

Step by step... choice after choice...



... day after week after month after year...

... the indication of the Scripture is that there was a spiritual drift in Lot... and that this drift... went on for 20+ years.

Did Lot do... what we he did that fateful night, when he offered up his daughters... because he had drifted so far from God that his faith was on life-support?
Had Lot become indistinguishable from those he lived among?

To answer that we must jump ahead to the New Testament and read God's assessment of Lot.

Otherwise, we risk drawing wrong conclusions and then making faulty applications to our own lives.

Look at 2 Peter 2:7-8.

2 Peter 2:7-8
...[the LORD] rescued Lot,
a righteous man,
who was distressed
by the depraved conduct of the lawless
(for **that righteous man,**
living among them day after day,
was tormented in
his righteous soul
by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)...

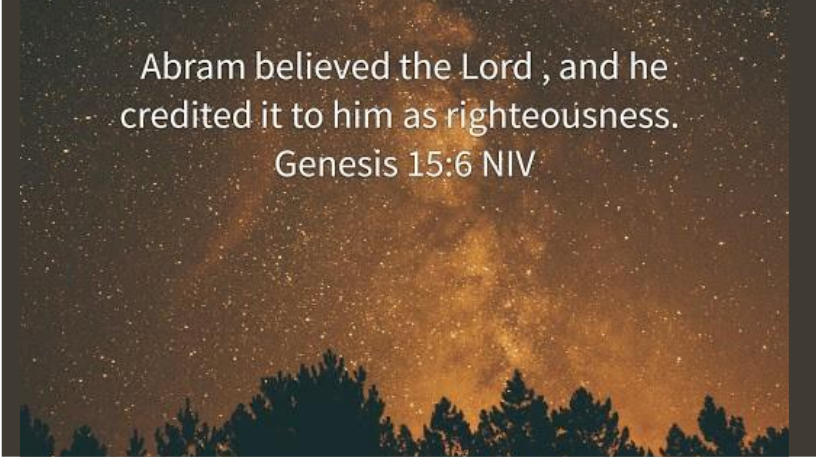
Three times the emphasis is made in these two verses...
...that Lot was righteous.

Do you find it rising up in you... this desire to ask... but... if he was righteous... why did he offer up his daughters as he did?

The answer to that question has two parts to it.

On what basis does the Scripture attest that Lot was righteous?
Was Lot righteous because... **his mind**... was distressed?
Was he righteous because... **his soul**... was tormented?
The answer to both questions is no.

Then on what basis did God say Lot was righteous?
We find the answer in the book of Genesis... in what God said about Abram.



God credited... that is, he gave... righteousness to Abram... without cost.
But on what basis did God do so?
On the basis of faith – Abram believed God.

Romans 1 confirms what Genesis 15 says.

Romans 1:17
For in the gospel
the righteousness of God is revealed
—a righteousness that is by faith
from first to last,
just as it is written:
“The righteous will live by faith.”
[Habakkuk 2:4]

In the gospel... God reveals his righteousness...

God reveals who he is... the holy One...

And it is God’s character which is the measure of what is right and what is wrong;
of what is good and what is evil.

In the gospel... God reveals what has happened to humanity... and what is needed
for humanity to escape enslavement to sin... and freedom from death and the
second death.

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The gospel is not news of how to earn righteousness.

The gospel is the news of how to receive it... by grace through faith in Christ alone.

Righteousness is a gift... freely given.

Lot was said by God to be righteous ... because?

Because ... he believed God.

Then how are we to make sense of his behavior?

There are two biblical words to consider in answering this question.

The first is justification; the second is sanctification.

gotquestions.org explains the meaning of justification.

Simply put, justification has to do with God's declaration... **about** a sinner...
... who believes in him.

A key passage describing justification is found in Romans 3:21–26:

Romans 3:21–26
But now apart from the law
the righteousness of God
has been made known,
to which the Law and the Prophets testify.
This righteousness is given
through faith in Jesus Christ
to **all** who believe.

The righteousness of God is given... to whom?

To all who believe... to all who have faith in Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:21–26
There is no difference between Jew and Gentile,
for **all** have sinned
and fall short of the glory of God,
and **all** are justified freely
by his grace
through the redemption
that came by Christ Jesus.

Are there different kinds of righteousness for different kinds of people?

Is there a righteousness for a good person and another kind for a really bad person?

God says... in regards to humanity – there is no difference... when it comes to our spiritual condition... we have all sinned.

That is... we have all missed measuring up to God's standard of righteousness... we all consistently fall short.

But... justification is offered by God to all of humanity – on what basis?

By grace... through the redemption... brought about by Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:21–26
God presented Christ as
a sacrifice of atonement,
through the shedding of his blood
—to be received by faith.

God doesn't overlook our sin.
He himself paid our sin debt – he presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement.
The life of Christ was given in exchange for ours.
What Christ did... cannot be bought or earned... it can only be received... by faith.

Romans 3:21–26
He did this
to demonstrate his righteousness,
because in his forbearance
he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished
— he did it
to demonstrate his righteousness
at the present time, so as to be just
and the one who justifies
those who have faith in Jesus.

The gift of justification does not excuse or sweep sin under the rug.
Jesus Christ bore in his own body the full consequence and penalty of our sin.

Seven hundred years before Christ came into the world, the prophet Isaiah wrote
of what the Christ would do.

Isaiah 53:4–6

Surely, he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

It was our transgressions... which pierced Jesus...
It was our iniquities...which crushed him...

Isaiah 53:4–6

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

It was our sin ... which was laid on Jesus – and when God did so... he became sin.

The book of Romans confirms what Isaiah foretold.
And here we are left in awe of the wisdom of God regarding justification.

Romans 5: 15, 17-19

If the many died by the trespass of the one man, Adam,
how much more
did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ,
overflow to the many!

The gospel announces the news that our first parents acted on behalf of us all.

By the sin of one man... the many... that is, all of us ... died.
But the gospel doesn't simply announce bad news.
Look at that three-word phrase.... "how much more."
The grace of the one man... Jesus Christ... overflows to the many – that is... it is available to all who would believe in him.

Romans 5: 15, 17-19

For if, by **the trespass** of the one man,
death reigned through that one man,
how much more
will those who receive
God's abundant provision of grace
and of the gift of righteousness
reign in life through the one man,
Jesus Christ.

The trespass of the one man, that is, Adam's single act of sin – opened the door for death to enter into the human experience... and to reign over all of us.

But the grace of God... far exceeded... the impact of the one trespass... for in the person of Jesus Christ, God provided the means for the door of life... to be opened... and righteousness to be gifted... to all who would believe in Jesus.

Romans 5: 15, 17-19

Consequently, just as **one trespass** resulted in
condemnation for all people,
so also **one righteous act** resulted in
justification and life for all people.
For just as through
the disobedience of the one man
the many were made sinners,
so also through **the obedience of the one man**
the many will be made righteous.

Look at the contrasts made.

And look at the impact each contrast makes upon “the many.”

one trespass – one righteous act
condemnation – justification and life
disobedience – obedience
made sinners – made righteous

God declared Lot righteous because Lot believed in God.

But the salvation of God doesn't stop with such a declaration.

Having declared a person righteous by faith... God initiates a life-long work of transformation that involves the cooperation of a person who has been declared by God to be righteous.

The word in the Bible that describes this life-long transformation is...
sanctification.

For the follower of Jesus, when we believe in him and receive him into our life,
God the Spirit, comes... makes his home in us.

God the Spirit within a believer... is active... to make a believer in practice, what
God has declared them to be – righteous.

God the Spirit is the agent by which the followers of Jesus are “being transformed
into the image of Christ with ever-increasing glory – 2 Corinthians 3:18

The followers of Jesus are not those who have turned over a new leaf.

In Christ... for that is our position before God... we become a new person with a
new nature.

While justification is all of God, there is a responsibility which the follower of Jesus
has in regard to their sanctification.

We are not passive agents... but willing participants.

Look at these scriptures.

Colossians 3:9-10

...you **have taken off your old self** with its practices
and **have put on the new self**,
which is being renewed in knowledge
in the image of its Creator.

Ephesians 4:17-24

You were taught with regard to your former way of life,
to **put off your old self**, which is being corrupted by its
deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your
minds; and **to put on the new self** created to be like God in
true righteousness and holiness.

Romans 13:12-14

The night is nearly over; the day is almost here.
So let us **put aside** the deeds of darkness
and **put on** the armor of light.
Let us behave decently, as in the daytime,
not in carousing and drunkenness,
not in sexual immorality and debauchery,
not in dissension and jealousy.
Rather, **clothe yourselves** with the Lord Jesus Christ,
and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

Titus 2:12-13

[The grace of God] teaches us
to say "No"
to ungodliness and worldly passions,
and to live
self-controlled, upright and godly lives
in this present age,
while we wait for the blessed hope
—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior,
Jesus Christ. . .

Lot was justified by God... as are all who believe in the LORD.
And in regard to his sanctification, even Lot could not undo... through the long years of his spiritual drift.... what God had done in him.

However, Lot was a miserable man.
The scripture tells us that his mind was distressed, and his soul was tormented on a daily basis by the lawlessness in which he lived.
Lot's compromises over the years he lived in Sodom... did not bring him joy or soul satisfaction.

And yet... Lot stayed...
This is the insanity of sin.
It makes fools of those who give it sanctuary within them.

Maybe Lot's wife... who was from Sodom... played a role in his spiritual lukewarmness.
Maybe he made compromises for her... to keep the peace.
Maybe his love for her smothered his love for God.

Maybe Lot's business was rooted in the commerce of Sodom... and if he were to leave, he would lose it all... and he couldn't imagine being poor.

Whatever the reason, remaining in Sodom, eventually brought Lot to that place where he was faced with those two impossible choices, of which neither had a good outcome.

Lot needed rescue... and rescue is what God gave to him.
The LORD brought Lot out... of Sodom.

Here followers of Jesus we take hope... even if we are foolish; even if for a time or extended time we hold on to sin habits, even if we make compromises as Lot did, even if we are stubborn and resist the prompting of the Spirit to say no to sin and yes to God... the grace of God is greater than our sin.

The love of God will not let us go.
Do you see how precious this truth is?
The LORD is committed to breaking in us the power of cancelled sin!!!



If we are to follow Jesus and to remain true to him... and to finish well...it will demand that you and I, in the words of 1 Timothy 1:18 – “fight the good fight,” and “hold on to faith and a good conscience.”

The word of God exhorts us, Hebrews 10:35, to not throw away our confidence because it will be richly rewarded.

It exhorts us.... because this is the pressure that is daily brought upon us – to throw our confidence away.

The Scripture urges us, Hebrews 10:36, to persevere and not shrink back.

God has given to us his Spirit that we might finish the race.

We are given grace... but we must run, we must fight, we must hold on, we must persevere.

Because sin is deceitful, and because the work of sanctification is progressive and life-long, in addition to the working of his Spirit within us to transform us, God has placed his people in local churches.

God does so with great intention.

The church is a community of redeemed sinners who are being... transformed, not who are transformed, but who are being... transformed...into the likeness of Jesus.

God intends for you and I to encourage one another, as Hebrews 3:13 says...

“...so that none of us may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.”

God’s desire for us, as Hebrews 10:24 says...

“... is to spur one another on toward love and good deeds...” and “to encourage one another...” by “...meeting together.”

To follow Jesus, we need his church... we need other believers.
On our own... in isolation... we will lose our spiritual passion.

Satan will oppose us... until we draw our last breath.
Trials will come into our lives... until we draw our last breath.
We will know sorrow and disappointments... until we draw our last breath.

But Christ loved us even when we were his enemies and gave his life in exchange
for ours... and nothing can separate us from his love or snatch us out of his hand.

We are those, as Hebrews 10:39 says... who have faith and are saved.
This is why we can sing... it is well with our souls!