

Genesis 19 — Sodom

February 14, 2016

Good morning CrossWinds. If you are new, it is great to have you. As a church we are studying our way through the book of Genesis. Today, we come to Genesis 19, which has Jesus killing cities filled with flagrant homosexuals by burning them to death in flaming tar. All the people who want to be politically correct will be offended this morning.

This is an NC-17 Sunday. I don't usually give movie ratings to sermons, but from time to time, a sermon deserves one. Genesis 19 needs a warning. There is lots of death and perversion in this chapter. If you are easily offended, this chapter will make you uncomfortable. Many people take Genesis 19 and water it down to make it more palatable. We don't do that at CrossWinds. We preach the text for what it actually says. Hold on to your seats. You may have a queasy stomach when we are done.

Another thing you need to know is many people do not believe this chapter actually took place. They believe it was just a wild story, like an ancient version of an action movie. Unfortunately, that isn't the truth. This story is not fiction. It is fact. Jesus said what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah really happened. He said this in Matthew 10:14-15; 11:23-24; and Luke 17:28-32. If Jesus said this really happened, I am going with Jesus.

Sometimes you hear Christians say they love Jesus but they are not the hell-fire-and-brimstone-type of Christians. I need to let the cat out of the bag. If you are a Christian, you are a hell-fire-and-brimstone Christian. There is no other

option. The theme of Jesus coming to judge the earth and what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah is a mini foretaste of that judgment is woven throughout the Bible. If you are a Bible-believing Christian, you are a hell-fire-and-brimstone Christian. The Bible says Jesus will return and when he does he will judge the world like he judged Sodom and Gomorrah.

Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, but on the 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. Luke 17:28–30 (ESV)

One last thing before we jump in — let’s remember the context from last week. Abraham prayed to Jesus and asked him to save Sodom if only 10 righteous people could be found. The two angels that accompanied Jesus to visit Abraham went down to Sodom in search of only 10 righteous people. With that, we pick up the story.

The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth... Genesis 19:1 (ESV)

It was the evening of the same day. Abraham had just thrown an all-you-can-eat gyro buffet for Jesus and the two angels at lunch time in Mamre. It was a late lunch. It was a long lunch. Scholars debate how far Sodom was from Mamre. There are two possible locations for Sodom from Mamre. One is 20 miles. The other is 40 miles. Either these angels were track stars and they ran real fast to get to Sodom by evening or they did something angelic and left one place and appeared at another. I don’t know.

What we do know is they appeared as men. You couldn’t tell them apart from the general population. Recently, a book called Heaven is for Real became

popular. It is the story of a little boy's supposed visit to heaven. He claims the angels have wings. Here in the Bible we find the truth. These angels didn't have wings. They look human form. Hebrews reminds us of what happened in Genesis 18 and 19 and tells us that when we have visitors at church, we should show hospitality because those visitors could be wingless angels. If you want to invite an angel to dinner, invite a visitor, you never know.

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Hebrews 13:2 (ESV)

I want us to notice that Lot was sitting in the gates of Sodom.

What does it mean to have Lot in the city gate? In ancient world, cities had only one gate. The respected men, the elders, who sat at the city gates decided disputes. They also functioned as city security. When someone wanted to gain entrance into the city it was the men at the city gates that met you and screened you, a little like airport screeners. If they liked you with your shoes off and hands in the air, they let you in. Traditionally travelers were merchants. They would be inspected by the city leaders. Then they would sleep in the city square at night and be open for business the next morning.

How did Lot end up at the gates of this wicked city? When we studied Genesis 13, we saw Lot chose to leave Abraham and leave the Promised Land and pitched his tent in the Jordan Valley, next to Sodom. When we came to Genesis 14, we saw Lot moved into the city of Sodom. In Genesis 19, Lot was a leader in the community of Sodom. Little by little Lot had inched his way closer to Sodom and further from God. It didn't happen at once. It was a slow slip one inch at a time.

The same thing happens to us. When you meet someone whose life is completely screwed up you will find it wasn't one big step that ruined them. It was a series of small steps that left them further from God and into destruction, just like Lot.

Application: Big compromises in my life come from a series of small compromises.

Lot saw the two men. He approached them first. He went out of his way to be kind to them, show them hospitality and to have them in his home.

...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." 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. Genesis 19:2-3 (ESV)

Lot was running a little bed 'n breakfast. He insisted these two men spend the night at his house. They wanted to spend the night in the city square, which is where traveling merchants would traditionally sleep. Notice it said Lot "pressed them strongly." That means Lot wouldn't take no for an answer. Lot knew that you could not sleep in the city square at night or bad things would happen.

Lot gave them dinner and baked unleavened bread. This is bread that can be made in a jiffy because it doesn't take time to rise. Lot's meal was not as lavish as Abraham's lunch in Genesis 18. I think the reason is because Abraham got Sarah involved while we don't have any record of Mrs. Lot coming to the rescue in the kitchen. Lot served these guys a meal that is the Hebrew equivalent of Pop Tarts. It was the best a guy can do without his wife. I am sure it would have been better with his wife.

Then everything hit the fan.

But before they lay down, the men of the city, 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? Bring them out to us, that we may know them.” Genesis 19:4–5 (ESV)

It says between dinner time and bed time, all the men of the city — no exceptions, everyone to the last man — surrounded Lot’s house insisting that Lot bring out his visitors so they could know them.

What does it mean for these men to know the visitors? “Know them” is a Hebrew euphemism for sex. For almost all of the last 2,000 years of church history there was no debate that this passage is talking about the men of the Sodom planning a homosexual gang rape of Lot’s two angelic visitors.

In recent years, there is an interpretive push by many liberals in the Lutheran church, the Presbyterian church and other mainline denominations claiming the men of Sodom were not attempting a gang rape. They just wanted to be friendly and shake hands. That is playing origami with the text. Again and again the Bible says that the infamous sins of Sodom, Gomorrah and the rest of the cities of the valley were sexual sin in general and homosexual sin in particular. Let me show you just one verse.

...just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire (*wrong flesh desires*), serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire. Jude 7 (ESV)

Their sins were sexual immorality, which is heterosexual sex outside of marriage, and wrong flesh sexual desires is men desiring men and women desiring women. Sodom was a city where every man in the city of 1,000 to 2,000

people was an active participant in homosexual gang rape of the visitors. This city was a sick perverted place. No men refused to participate.

The angels went to see if there were any good guys in the city. They would spare the place if they could find 10. How many good guys were in the city? Zero!

It says both young men and old men were going to the gang rape orgy. I wondered how young does it mean when it says they were young? The Hebrew word for young is a general word used for elementary-aged boys, junior high-aged boys, high school-aged boys and young men. Little boys and grandpas were all running to Lot's house so they could be part of the gang rape of Lot's visitors. That was their after-dinner entertainment.

I have two sons. I can't even imagine this. I can't imagine telling my sons to hurry up and finish dinner because we don't want to be late for the gang rape of the new visitors in town. Homosexual rape wasn't against the law in Sodom. It was the law. You couldn't call the cops because the cops would be there, and they would be participating. This city, and the other cities of the valley, could not have been more despicable.

Think about this. How do little boys, junior high-age and high school-age boys become excited to run to this kind of stuff instead of disgusted by this kind of sadistic behavior? If you have studied homosexuality you know what happens. Older homosexual men prey on younger uninitiated boys whose sexuality is still forming. That is common homosexual behavior. When older men violate young boys in their formative years it leads to sexual confusion and

helps cement them into a homosexual orientation. That was Sodom. I am not going to dumb this down. You need to know this. It was a city where the men molested all the little boys. This city was corrupt to its core. I can't even get my mind wrapped around this.

While I struggle to understand this, statistically up to a third of you have experienced something like this. Up to a third of adults have experienced some type of sexual abuse from older adults when they were children. The greatest offenders in this area are dads, grandpas, and uncles. Some of you can relate to what this does to a person because of the abuse you experienced as a child completely devastating you as a child and even as an adult you are still struggling with those childhood experiences twisting your mind. This was Sodom. Violating and twisting the sexuality of the children by older men was a way of these cities. Gang homosexual rape of visitors, traveling merchants and their families was their practice. This was multiple generations of brokenness, filth and disgust. Is there anybody who is beginning to understand God's point on this city and why he was going to wipe these people off the face of the earth?

In truth, all the men of the city were not homosexual. Some were bi-sexual. In few minutes we will see there were men in the city engaged to Lot's daughters but all of the men attended the gang homosexual rape. That makes those guys bi-sexual.

In Genesis 18, we saw that the outcry against the city of Sodom was so great that God was going down himself to check it out. While Sodom was guilty of many sins, I think some of the most greatest cries of against the city came

from every traveling merchant that brought his family with him and stayed in the city square at night and he found his wife, himself and his children sodomized during the night. The cries came from the little boys and little girls that were molested and abused by the older adults that should have protected them. That was Sodom.

Before we sit in judgment on them, I want you to realize something. The men of our day are not that different from the men of Sodom. If 500 to a thousand men showed up for the gang homosexual rape, realize there is no possible way that every single man in the city would participate. Many of the men didn't come to participate. They came to watch and participate through the imagination of their minds. This is exactly what many men do today. It is called the Internet. It is called Pay-Per-View. It is called a web site. It is a cable channel. Men, you wouldn't do that sick twisted stuff but you are entertained by watching it. This is exactly what happened in Sodom and it was one of the main reasons God destroyed the city. Men, some of you are watching this sick stuff. This is a wakeup call from God. This is serious sin. Today, God is calling you to repent, to run.

After I learned the twisted sickness of this city, my big questions were, "Why was Lot living in Sodom?" and "Why was Lot raising his children in Sodom?" 2 Peter 2:6-9 tells us Lot was a believer but every day he was tormented by the filthy lives that were lived around him. Why didn't he leave? While it doesn't say, he probably married a Sodomite wife. His daughters were engaged to Sodomite bi-sexual men. Why didn't Lot leave this filthy disgusting

city? I think I know why. What lured him to Sodom is what kept him in Sodom. It was the city's wealth. It was the lavish living. It was the comforts of the city that he valued over the holiness of his life and protecting his family.

Men, this is a warning to us. While we love success. We love comforts. We love to live in a nice place and have nice things. Are we getting success and comfort at the expense of our personal holiness and the protection of our family? This is a great point of application for us.

Application: Don't love the comforts of my culture more than holiness and protecting my family.

Lot loved having cable. He loved high-speed Internet. He refused to live in the woods like Abraham. He didn't care if Sodom was ruining his family and his life. As long as he had cable TV and a big screen with a La-Z-Boy, he was happy.

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." Genesis 19:6–8 (ESV)

If there was going to be a hero in the story, this was the place the hero needed to show up. The hero needed to be a man and step to the plate. As we just read, Lot wasn't that hero.

Lot started off by calling the men of the city who want to rape these guests, "my brothers." Some translations say, "my friends." Lot, why are you calling this kind of people your friends? Would any of you want to call these guys your friends? I wouldn't want to hang out with them.

Lot left Ur with Abraham. He learned from Abraham. He entered the Promised Land with Abraham. He watched Abraham build altars and worship. He saw the consequences of Abraham's sin. He was rescued by Abraham after a coalition of nations conquered Sodom and took everyone captive. Lot knew better. Lot had already experienced God's judgment on Sodom once. Why did Lot keep going back to this place? He went back because the gang homosexual rapists were his friends. These were the guys he spent the afternoon with at the golf course. These were the guys he went with on vacation. These were the guys whose kids played with his kids. How could he call people this corrupt his friends? How could he let his children go to a public school system where it wasn't just teachers teaching this kind of lifestyle but the kids in the school, and the teachers were actively practicing this kind of lifestyle?

Lot had become far too close with sinful people. The Bible tells us that as Christians we need to meet together, worship together and encourage one another. We need each other to sharpen one another in Christ. Lot had nobody to sharpen him. Everyone in his life was grinding down his spiritual edge. There was a lesson for us in this.

Application: Be careful who I have as friends. I will become like them.

Next, we find just how much his sinful friends has dulled the sense of right and wrong in his heart.

Lot begged the men of the city not to participate in gang homosexual rape because it is so wicked. He suggested they rape his young virgin daughters instead. In Lot's mind homosexual rape was really bad but heterosexual rape

wasn't that bad. Hanging out with these sinful guys slid his sense of morality into the toilet. I can't even fathom this. I have a 13-year-old daughter. I can't imagine giving her over to a bunch of men to be gang raped. If somebody tried to touch her I would lose all sense of control and I would introduce them to my friends Smith and Wesson. They wouldn't be around for a second conversation. The point is Lot could no longer think straight. He had spent so much time hanging around wicked folks that his entire morality ladder was in the toilet. His answer should not have been, "You can have my daughters," but it should have been, "You don't touch my guests or my daughters unless it is over my dead body."

There is a lesson for us in all of this.

Application: The more I tolerate sin, the less sensitive I become to sin.

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. Genesis 19:9–11 (ESV)

This is a scary scene. They gave Lot two options. "Either you bring the guys out so we can rape them or we rape you first, then, we when we are done with you, we are going in after them." These guys were going to break down the door.

In this crisis moment we do not find Lot praying. We do not find Lot turning to God for help in the crisis. According to 2 Peter, Lot was a Christian,

but his life was pathetic. It was useless. When he died, he hadn't turned anybody in Sodom toward God.

While Lot wasn't turning to God, God was taking the initiative to love and rescue Lot. The angels grabbed Lot, pulled him inside, and bolted the door. At this point, I think the angels were revealing their true identity because they struck all the men with blindness. There is some fun here. The Hebrew word literally means they were blinded as if by a bright light. Have you seen the "Men In Black" movie? Remember the little flashy thing? That is what the angels did. They flashed them and blinded them.

What happens next is comical. I wish I had it on camera. All the men of the city were pressing together to break down Lot's door. Pow! They went blind with a bright light. Everybody was pressing against one another and they knew somebody was going to get homosexually raped. Nobody wanted it to be them. They couldn't see, and they were pressing and touching one another. Can you picture the street fight of the blind men as they swung at each other?

Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, 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." 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. Genesis 19:12–14 (ESV)

Jesus was going to destroy this place. Some of you don't like that God brings judgment. You feel judgment is always too severe. Think about this. God personally sent angels to investigate before destroying this place. Every man of the city was part of the attempted homosexual rape. Homosexual gang rape was

the part of the welcome wagon in this city. The little boys were raped when they were children. What else was God supposed to do? Was he to let every traveler to the city continue to be sodomized? Were more boys to be ruined? Should their cancerous society have continued to spread?

This is what you do when your house has termites. You shut off the house. You put a bug bomb in the house and you kill every last one of them. If any survive they start multiplying and before you know it, you are right back where you started and the entire house is ruined. God was done with these guys and all the pain, sin and suffering they were causing everyone. His judgment was like a bug bomb. It was to get rid of the termites of sin. It was time to get rid of this cancerous society before the entire planet went south and things end up like in the days of Noah when God needed to flood the entire earth to clean things up.

God's judgment on Sodom and the cities of the valley was fair, and it was an act of kindness to protect the planet and keep these people's heinous sin from spreading.

Application: God's judgment is always fair. God's grace through Jesus is unfair.

I meet people that say, "I can't believe God is so unfair as to send people to hell." God is not unfair. Fair is sending everyone to hell. God is so kind and loving that he sent his own son to die and suffer for us so we wouldn't have to go to hell and get what we deserve. God's judgments are always fair and just.

Jesus is what is unfair. That is mercy and grace we don't deserve.

I also want us to notice the small level of influence Lot had on this society. He went to warn his sons-in-law about what was coming, and they didn't listen to him! They laughed at him. Do you think Lot ever had conversations with these guys about God, righteousness, purity and the consequences of sin? While we don't know, I don't think he did. If Lot had these crucial conversations early in his relationship with them and his daughters, he would have gained the respect of these men and they would have listened to him. While we don't know, I just don't think he had talked about this. These guys were bisexuals that were at the homosexual rape. He shouldn't have let them near his daughters. He should have had these crucial conversations early, not at the last minute. I think that is the reason they don't take him seriously.

Application: Have God conversations early or people won't take you seriously.

If your daughter brings home a guy, don't be afraid to talk with him about Jesus up front. Don't wait until they are dating and the relationship is serious before you talk to them about Jesus because if you do, they won't take you seriously. If your son brings home a girl, talk with her about Jesus, righteousness and holiness up front. Why do this sooner rather than later? What is most important is what you talk about first, not last.

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. Genesis 19:15–16 (ESV)

This is amazing. What time did the attempted homosexual rape take place? After dinner. What time is it now? Morning. Where were Lot and his family? Still inside the city! They had a good night's sleep and apparently made

a good breakfast before they ran for their lives. After all, the rest and the extra carbs would help them run faster.

When the fire alarm goes off and it says fire and brimstone are coming, you don't go back to bed and wait until morning. You run! Lot was procrastinating. This is the way Lots always are. They are unwilling to obey God. They hold on to their lives of sin and their old ways until the last minute when God, in his grace, finally rips it out of their hands. This is why Lot was in the mess he was in. How many times did he see a gang rape of a visitor in the city and promise himself he would leave but by morning he talked himself out of it? There was no sense of urgency for obedience in his life. This is why Lot was still in Sodom.

God told Abraham to circumcise himself and his entire household. Abraham did it that very day. God told Lot and his family to run for their lives and they watched Jay Leno and television reruns until morning. The starter pistol went off and all Lot does is sit.

Application: When God tells me do do something, don't procrastinate.

This is why Lot was stuck in Sodom. He loved the life of sin in Sodom so much that he procrastinated running from sin. He procrastinated on obedience.

My favorite part is where Lot and his family kept lingering. They acted like they wanted to keep all their stuff and die in the fire and brimstone. Finally, the angels grabbed them by the hand. They pried their hands off their stuff and dragged them out of the city. They forced Lot and his family to be saved. They

didn't have a choice. They angels were going to save them from death even if they didn't want to be saved from death!

This is a great picture of how God saves us. Imagine we live in a house with our stuff. We love our house. We love our stuff. The problem is the house is doused in gasoline. We know it is going to burn but we chain ourselves to the kitchen sink because we refuse to leave it. The fire is lit and we are dying.

Jesus is the fireman. He comes in. He cuts the chains that bind us to our stuff. He carries us to safety against our will. We are kicking and screaming at Jesus because we want to stay with our stuff and die but Jesus wants to save us and we are too dumb to understand. My friends, that was Lot. That is us. Lot wouldn't leave. Lot was not a righteous man. He offered his daughters up for rape. It was only by God's undeserved mercy that he grabbed Lot and dragged him to safety outside the city. Before we loved Jesus, he loved us. He died for us. He saved us. He called us to be his own. We don't deserve any of it.

And as they brought them 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—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. Genesis 19:17–22 (ESV)

This gets even more amazing. The angels got Lot and family out of the city and told him to run to the hills. I am sure if Lot lived in the city, he was not much of a track star. An uphill run into the hills might have forced him to break a sweat, which was something he hadn't done in a long time living in the luxury of

Sodom. Lot begged not go to safety in the mountains but instead go to the nearby city of Zoar. Zoar is Hebrew for little. This was a little city in the Jordan Valley. You know it is a little city when it is called “Little City.”

Here is where it gets interesting. When you rummage around the Bible you find there were five cities in the Jordan Valley. All were known for the same level of depravity and wickedness. All were slated for destruction that day because of their sin. We read about them in Genesis 14. Their names were Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar. Lot was told to flee to the hills to avoid the destruction of these cities. Instead Lot begged to not run from the life of sin in these cities into the hills but to just downsize on sinful living. Lot said, “Can’t I go to little Sodom? They have homosexual gang rapes but not as many because they are small. The guys are homosexuals and bi-sexuals but there are not as many because it is a smaller city. The people are wicked but the wickedness is less only because it is smaller.”

Lot was saying, “God, I can’t do this backpacking thing in the hills. I am a city guy. I like my cable. I need a big screen to survive. I need LTE for my cell phone. I can’t live in a 3G world. Let me just go to a smaller sinful city.”

Lot was told to run from his sin and to run for his life. Instead Lot proposed just to downsize his sin, not run from his sin.

Application: Don’t downsize on sin. Run from sin.

Some of you are here, and you are living with your boyfriend or girlfriend. You know it is wrong to live together and to sleep together so you sleep together less frequently. You haven’t repented of your sin by getting married or moving

out, you just downsize on sin. Some of you know that media matters. You know you should not watch R-rated movies or listen to the words of some of your music. Instead of repenting and getting rid of filthy albums or refusing to watch R-rated movies on Saturday night, you just watch and listen to media that is filthy less frequently. Jesus doesn't call us to cut back on sin. He calls us to run from sin. Don't be like Lot and just downsize on sin. Run from it.

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. Genesis 19:23–26 (ESV)

Many of people wonder how God destroyed these cities. I don't know. Maybe it was a volcanic eruption. This area of the world is known for its tar pits. In Genesis 14:10 we saw soldiers fell in the great tar pits of this area. Maybe it was a volcanic eruption that sent tar from these underground reservoirs into the air and ignited it on fire with the volcanic magma. Flying magma and burning tar is what covered the cities and burned, then buried everyone. I don't know what took place. What I do know is Jesus was behind all of it. This was Jesus judging sin. John 5:22 says the Father doesn't judge but he has entrusted all judgment to the Son. This was Jesus judging sin. I know the environmentalists are freaking on this one because Jesus killed the plant life. I think Jesus is more concerned with the human life.



Sodom today. The lush Jordan Valley was transformed into a desolate wasteland.

While Lot and his daughters ran to Zoar — the place called little Sodom — Lot's wife dawdled behind. It says she looked back and became a pillar of salt. When I grew up, I thought this was very harsh on God's part. Maybe she was running full speed and she glanced behind her for a moment to see what happened and God transformed her into sodium chloride? This week, as I studied, I came to the conclusion that this was much more than a momentary glance. She was dawdling behind. Why was she so far behind the rest of the family, especially the non-athletic Lot? She was refusing to leave even after the angels dragged her out of the city.

The Hebrew word for "look" in this passage carries the meaning of having a look to acquire. She was refusing to leave her stuff. She had to have her stuff. Luke 17 sheds more light on what happened.

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. Luke 17:31–33 (ESV)

It says when the day of judgment comes, don't try to pack your stuff and take it with you. Don't go back to your house to get your stuff. Just run. I am picturing Lot's wife was either carrying a pile of stuff with her when she left so she was incredibly slow as she drug her stuff out of the city or she was trying to go back and get her stuff. As a result, she lost her life and was turned into a pillar of salt. I don't know if this was supernatural transformation into salt or just the massive



The traditional pillar of salt that is called "Lot's Wife."

salt deposit of this area encrusted her in the destruction when she died. What I do know is she refused to obey God and leave her old life behind, and it cost her her life.

Application: When God calls me to leave something, let it go. I can't take my old life with me.

Some of you know exactly what I mean. You became a Christian but an old friend who is a bad influence keeps on calling. Whenever you hang out with him or her you walk back into trouble. God is calling you to run and let the friend go. You can't take him or her with you. Maybe before you came to Christ you went to the bar every weekend. God is calling you to run from that life and let it go. You can't take it with you and be saved. It will destroy you if you keep going back.

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. Genesis 19:27–29 (ESV)

Why was Lot saved? It wasn't because he was a righteous man. He was following God but his morality had slid into the gutter. He offered his daughters for gang rape. He was saved because of two things — God's undeserved mercy and God's gracious response to Abraham's prayer.

This is the only way anyone can be saved. Nobody is righteous. There were no good guys in Sodom. There are no good guys in this room. There are no good guys on the planet. The only way anyone is saved is by Jesus being the

firefighter and bursting into our house that is on fire where we have chained ourselves to the sink and he sets us free and saves us against our will.

He does this in response to the prayers of those who walk with him, just like Abraham.

The one big action step I want each of us to take this week is write down the name of one person in your life or in your family that is either like Lot, and has grown far from Christ, or they don't know Christ and for the next week pray for him or her each day. Pray God would be the firefighter and break into his or her life, save this person from sin and rescue him or her from destruction. Tell God you are listening to the Spirit's prompting and are willing to do whatever the Holy Spirit prompts you to do so this person will know Jesus. Maybe that is inviting this person to church. Maybe that is taking him or her to lunch. I don't know. Just tell God you are listening and willing to do whatever he says to help answer your own prayer.

There were a lot of good application points. Let's quickly review what we learned.

Applications

1. **Big compromises start with little compromises.** That is what happened in Lot's life and it can become the same way I ruin my life.
2. **Don't love the comforts of my culture more than holiness and protecting my family.** It is so easy to value money, fame, glitz and success more than holiness and good parenting.
3. **Be careful who I have as friends. I will become like them.** Lot hung out with the homosexual rapists and his morality ladder slid into the toilet. If I call

that kind of people my close friends, chances are I will become more like them over time.

4. **The more I tolerate sin, the less sensitive I become to sin.** Be careful what I allow as sin into my life when it comes to media and habits.
5. **God's judgment is always fair. God's grace through Jesus is what is unfair.** Don't let somebody tell you God is so unfair to judge or let people go to hell. Hell is, by definition, fair. What is unfair is God sending his son to save us from what we deserve.
6. **Have God conversations early in a relationship or nobody will take you seriously.** It is easy to push God conversations off. Don't have them as a last-minute thought. Have them first so people know Jesus is important to you and you aren't afraid to talk about him.
7. **When God tells you to do something, don't procrastinate.** Lot had to literally be dragged out of Sodom to safety because he putzed around on repentance. Don't let that be you.
8. **Don't downsize on sin. Run from sin.** God calls us to leave our sinful lives behind us, not just to sin less frequently.
9. **When God calls you to leave your old life, let it go.** You can't take it with you. Don't be a Mrs. Lot and keep going back to your sinful lifestyle when God tells you to let it go. It may cost your life.
10. **The only reason anybody is saved is because of God's undeserved grace.** That grace usually comes in response to the prayers of his people.

That is the only reason Lot was saved. It is the only reason any of us are



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