

Scripture Reading: Genesis 19

“4 Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. 5 And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally." 6 So Lot went out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him, 7 and said, "Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly! 8 See now, I have two daughters who have not known a man; please, let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish; only do nothing to these men, since this is the reason they have come under the shadow of my roof." 9 And they said, "Stand back!" Then they said, "This one came in to stay here, and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them." So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door. 10 But the men reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. 11 And they struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary trying to find the door. 12 Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city--take them out of this place! 13 For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of Jehovah, and Jehovah has sent us to destroy it." 14 So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, "Get up, get out of this place; for Jehovah will destroy this city!" But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking. 15 When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, "Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city." 16 And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, Jehovah being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. 17 So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed." 18 Then Lot said to them, "Please, no, my lords! 19 Indeed now, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have increased your mercy which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die. 20 See now, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one; please let me escape there (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live." 21 And he said to him, "See, I have favored you concerning this thing also, in that I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken. 22 Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there." Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.”

"The Foolishness of Lot"

On our church calendar and in my blog posts for January we followed the Book of Proverbs.

In that Book of Wisdom we are taught to seek wisdom and avoid foolishness.

- We are to be wise men & women and not to be fools!

And of course as we read through some of the problems that fools have, like needing a rod on their backs or being like a dog returning to its own vomit,...

- We think to ourselves, “I would never be like that!”

And as we take a look at some of the details given in our text about the life of Lot, we can certainly see that he was a foolish man in many ways.

And of course again, if we are honest, we say to ourselves that we would NEVER do such things!

- Well Lord willing we won't do such things but that does not mean that there are not lessons to be learned from the life of Lot.

This is something that the Apostle Paul made clear to the Saints at Corinth:

As the Apostle begins his discussion of our fellowship around the Lord's Table in chapter ten he makes two very important points about the Old Testament: He relates the Old Testament Saints to us by showing that they ate and drank Christ...

- **AND Paul teaches us that they, with all their warts and blemishes, are there as our examples!**

I Corinthians 10: "1 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud..."

- **I need to pause right away because we should not miss that Paul addresses them as 'our fathers' speaking to a Gentile audience there in Corinth: That is why when we study the Old Testament we do not see Ancient Fathers, or see Jewish Fathers, but see OUR Fathers:
It is the history of OUR family!**

"1 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."

- **Here we should see that the glorious New Testament truth that we are all one in Christ is clearly foreshadowed in the Old!**
- **When it came to eating the manna, or drinking the water that God provided there was neither male nor female, slave nor free, young or old nor even Jew or Gentile since they came out of Egypt as a mixed multitude.**
- **But as we can see with Lot in our text, Paul quickly points out that these folks had some problems!**

5 "But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness."

- **Now we should know their story well and be teaching it to children!**

And if we do we can certainly point to much foolishness in their actions as we see in the life of Lot...

Grumbling about a lack of water just days after God had parted the Red Sea and brought them over on dry ground and slaughtered the Egyptian army!

Or how about turning back to the idols of Egypt at the very foot of the mountain where God was giving His Laws & Commandments to Moses!?

Remember the ten spies who caused the people to cower in fear before the enemies that God had promised to destroy...

- **And of course their then going forth into battle in the flesh after God had told them to turn back to the wilderness!**

And then you have all the foolish and faithless things they did over the next forty years and if you are like me as you read all of this you keep thinking, "how could they be so stupid!"

- **Then I quickly remember how the Apostle Paul uses them to instruct ME!**

6 "Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 7 And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." 8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; 9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."

So Paul reviews all of these foolish actions from the history of Israel and then says to the Saints at Corinth, beware lest you fall!

- **What! Does the Apostle Paul not believe in the perseverance of the Saints!?**

Well of course he does because Jesus promised that He would lose none who were His and we will see in the life of Lot a classic example of how God protects His own even in the midst of much foolishness.

- **With that said, we need to realize that Paul is giving us a real warning just as the angels gave to Lot's wife!**

Does that mean that I can lose my salvation if I do the wrong things? **NO!** What it means is that if you are thinking about ignoring the warning or not taking it seriously, as Lot's wife did, then you could well be an apostate who has never truly trusted Jesus!

We talked about this a bit in our mid-week Bible study and I used a different example to understand these warning... We were discussing how each of us is a member of the Body of Christ and that we cannot cut ourselves off from the Body and expect to live... I gave an honest warning to the young people that **IF** they cut off one of their fingers and put it in a drawer for a few days all they would have in the end is a dead finger. Yes, it is a real and true warning but one that should **NOT** have troubled any of them **UNLESS** they were actually considering cutting off one of their fingers to see what happened!

In the same way Paul has taken us back to a time where we see many people making very bad choices and gives us our warning, followed by a great hope:

12 "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. 13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. 14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say."

- **So with all of that in mind let us turn back to our text and see what we can learn about our frailty and God's faithfulness!**

And as we do so we must remember that the New Testament refers to righteous Lot and it does so in the midst of similar warnings that we just saw with the Apostle Paul:

II Peter 1:4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; 5 and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; 6 and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; 7 and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked 8 (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)-- 9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, 10 and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority."

- **Truly God does know how to sort things out and that is one of the major lessons to learn from the life of Lot!**

Last week we saw the first great tension in this regard when righteous Lot bravely confronts the men of the city to protect his guests...

- **However he goes on to offer his virgin daughters up as a sacrifice!**

As is always the case with the works of the flesh it does not turn out well and the Angels step in and protect Lot and confound the evil men...

As Peter said, the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations!

Then we see a quick series of actions as the destruction of this wicked city approaches...

“12 Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city--take them out of this place! 13 For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of Jehovah, and Jehovah has sent us to destroy it."

The destruction of the city is set and God in His mercy is willing to save all who belong to Lot...

Here we should pause and ponder how the foolish actions of Lot have brought him to a point where this gracious offer would only save he and two daughters.

We should remember that when Lot first moved toward Sodom it was because his household and the household of Abraham needed more room!

At some point Lot moved into the city which means he either lost or sold most of his possessions and servants. His association with the world has reduced him to a very small household and again his life is a grand picture of the warning that the Apostle Paul had given earlier to the Church at Corinth.

I Corinthians 3:14 “11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”

- **Abraham built mostly with gold, silver and precious stones and became a blessing to all the nations of the earth!**
- **Lot used a lot of wood, hay & straw & these fires of judgment leave him very alone. Even his own wife is turned to stone as we shall see next week.**

Back in the City we see another action by Lot that demonstrates his righteousness... He pleads with his family to come with him...

“So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, "Get up, get out of this place; for Jehovah will destroy this city!" But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking.”

- **Lot had not over the years taken his faith very seriously and now that he desperately needed those he loved to believe him they assumed he was just mocking them!**

15 “When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, "Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city.”

Those instructions seem pretty clear but from the next verse we see that Lot still struggled with simple obedience!

16 ‘And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, Jehovah being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.”

Here again we see clearly that God knows how to save those who are His and that even those who are near them, like Lot's wife can be blessed as well.

So the Angels get Lot out of the city and again give him some pretty simple instructions...

17 “So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed.”

- Now with all that has happened in the past twelve hours it is hard to imagine Lot responding with anything other than YES SIR!
- But here it is in the text for all to read, and yes we should remember that Paul says it is there as our example and instruction!

18 "Then Lot said to them, "Please, no, my lords! 19 Indeed now, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have increased your mercy which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die.

20 See now, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one; please let me escape there (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live."

Lot is still thinking that it is best for him to be involved in the decision making and yes we will see in a few weeks just how poorly this turns out AGAIN for Lot and his daughters!

- But for now, we once more see just how amazingly patience our God can be with His people...
- And what should be a strong reminder and warning that we should be very careful about what we ask for!

21 "And he said to him, "See, I have favored you concerning this thing also, in that I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken. 22 Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there.""

We also see two pretty amazing truths demonstrated here...

The first goes back to the discussion that Abraham had with God about whether the righteous would be judged with the wicked.

- God allows Lot to journey to this city and thus the city of Zoar is spared from judgment!

The second truth comes with God's statement that He could not bring His judgment until Lot arrived!

- Now we certainly believe in and teach the omnipotence of God! *[ask the kids what that means]*

We certainly believe and teach the simple truth that God is God and we are not: He is the Creator and we are the creatures! However, we also believe and teach that God has real and consequential interactions with those made in His image...

- If we step back and think of the big picture, Man was given the power to mar God's good creation with his rebellion in the garden!
- We saw the sinfulness of sin in man bring destruction upon the whole earth at the time of Noah.
- Now Sodom and Gomorrah are set for destruction as well.

We have seen both Abraham and now Lot interact with God in their conversations and finally we see God withholding His judgment until Lot is secure.

- All of this should truly remind us of the importance of and the power of our prayers!

We see another example of this interaction with men limiting the actions of God in the life of our Savior recounted for us in Matthew's Gospel account: A truly sobering incident!

Matthew 13:14 "And when [Jesus] had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? 55 Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? 56 And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?" 57 So they were offended at Him.

**But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house."
58 Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief."**

Here we are given a New Testament example for us to consider along with those in the Old Testament that Paul reminded us of in his Epistle.

Brothers and sister let us not be those who carry out the will of God in the power of the flesh or argue with God as Lot did...

Let us not hinder the work of Jesus as those in His own city did...

Let us learn the right lessons from the examples God has provided for us!

Let us then be those who have great faith; like the Roman Centurion who came asking Jesus to heal his servant that was dear to him believing that Jesus needed only to say the word!

- **And if we think our faith is weak, then let us cry out with the father whose son needed healing, 'Lord I believe! Help Thou my unbelief!'**

Communion Meditation: I Corinthians 10

"14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. 16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread. 18 Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? 19 What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? 20 Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. 22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He? 23 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. 24 Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being."