

Life of Faith, Pt 12: Redeeming Grace Greater than All Sin (Gen 19:30-38)

I've said before the Bible is more up-to-date than tomorrow's newspaper. In our last study I had a number of people talk me about relevant the study was to the Boy Scouts of America in the newspapers that week. I mentioned that when Lot compromised his values in Genesis 19:8, the radical homosexuals of his day were not satisfied, and the Boy Scouts of America compromising their values has not satisfied them in our day. Initially BSA tried to leave it up to individual troops whether or not to allow gay boys, and then last week under great pressure they lifted a ban completely on gay youth nationwide, a right the Supreme Court gave them. But like Lot's compromise in Gen 19, the Boy Scouts compromise alienated their own and angered enemies more. Lot's family had to be pulled out; churches are already pulling out of BSA.

Ironically the very mob the compromise hopes to appease gets more angry if they don't get all they demand, and surrenders leave nothing left to fight, and in the newspaper after our study of Lot last week, it happened this week

'California State Senate voted May 29 to drop the Boy Scouts' tax exempt status because of the organization's refusal to allow homosexual scout leaders...[in other words just as parents don't want adult males off in the woods alone with teen girls he is attracted to, same for young men also. But *Sacramento Bee* newspaper this week quoted a CA Senator saying Scouts] "are out of line with the values of California and should be ineligible for a tax benefit ..." [But a pro-family advocate said on the other side] ... "This bill is about government vilifying our values and abusing its power to penalize, through taxation, those who hold different beliefs and values. SB 323 is an unprecedented intrusion by the government and a far-reaching assault on freedoms of association, speech, and religion." ... If the bill is passed by the State Assembly and signed into law by Gov. Jerry Brown, the BSA and other youth groups that do not meet California's non-discrimination standards would be forced...'¹ [or fined taxes, not just BSA]

This chapter could not be more relevant to our times, and I want to look at the last part of this chapter, and for us to keep the news in focus of biblical truth. Genesis 19 speaks of things we would prefer not to speak of or think of, homosexuality (v. 5), rape offered (v. 8), incest (v. 33), pregnancy out of wedlock (v. 36). Our world thinks those justify abortion, and I think Gen 19 also speaks to that (end of message). It calls homosexuality "wicked" in v. 7 and bisexuality I think is included in v. 14. But Gen 19 speaks not only of repulsive sin, this chapter also shows a redeeming grace greater than all sin.

There is hope in Genesis 19 for a world like Sodom, hope in the gospel, in the sovereign grace of God to save people out of Sodom's sin and also those compromising with them; none are beyond the reach of God's compassion.

Genesis 19:15 *When morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city."* ¹⁶ ***But he hesitated. So the men seized his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of his two daughters, for the compassion of the LORD was upon him; and they brought him out, and put him outside the city.*** [Lot's wife disobeys v. 17, looks back, dies in v 26]

Lot wasn't saved out of Sodom because he was such a good guy. In fact, as the mob surrounded his house in 4, demanding sex with the strangers in v. 5, we saw last week, Lot shows he's a bad guy, too, corrupted by Sodom. Lot says in v. 8: "*behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man; please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like; only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof.*" ⁹ *But they said, "Stand aside."* *Furthermore, they said, "This one came in as an alien, and already he is acting like a judge; now we will treat you worse than them."* *So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door.* ¹⁰ *But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door."*

It takes 2 mighty angels to yank Lot to safety in his house in v. 10 and the same angels in v. 16 have to yank lingering Lot to safety *away from home*. This story isn't about the goodness of Lot, it's about the grace of the Lord! It's sovereign grace that overcomes a sinner's resistance and reluctance and despite his natural will to go the other way, it reaches out to grab him and rescue him like a shepherd grabs a lost sheep and carries it on his shoulders to the fold. None of us seek God, Rom 3:11 says, but Jesus said in Luke 15 when a sinner repents, it's because the Shepherd is seeking and saving His lost lamb by grabbing the little wanderer and carrying it back on His back.

I've heard people say "I don't believe God ever saves someone against their will, dragging them along, drawing them to where they wouldn't otherwise have gone, doing for sinners what they can't and don't even want to do for themselves (if left to themselves); salvation has to be by man's will, right?" But John's gospel says our new birth is "*not of the will of man*" (John 1:13). Jesus said in John 5:40 "*you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.*" Man's will isn't what saves him, it's why man needs to be saved!

Man is unwilling and unable. John 6:44: "*No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.*"

All who Jesus raises to eternal life on the last day were *drawn by the Father* (a word used later in John's gospel for *pulling* Peter's sword out from where it was in its sheath or *dragging* a net full of large fish to the land, 21:6, 11). It's only other use in the NT is Acts 16:9 where they grabbed and dragged Paul and Silas and brought them before the authorities. The same root word is used in the Greek version of the OT for Jeremiah being pulled up out of a pit, heavy lifting with ropes (Jeremiah 38:13). No man can come to Jesus, according to Jesus, unless the Father draws him, unless God pulls us out from where we were, like pulling water from a well or a man out of the pit. God draws us with strength like it takes to pull a heavy loaded net to shore.

It takes work to pull someone along who isn't being much help. I remember being at Yellowstone and my little sister wanted to linger and we needed to go and she didn't want to, and I had to pull her along. At one point she was sitting on her heels and throwing a little tantrum and I literally was pulling her by her hands along so we could go. I was tempted to leave her there but I kept on dragging her. She's really sweet now but wasn't so much that day. I think of that as I read this chapter and as I read Jn 6:44, how I was saved.

The Father could have and should have left me in my sin but He pulled me like He pulled Lot to safety, patiently graciously amazingly saving me. I was as hopeless as Peter sinking in the ocean when Jesus grabbed His hand. I did believe, but He first had His hand on me, and did all the heavy lifting. I became willing to believe and did from my heart because God changed it.

I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew He moved my soul to seek Him, seeking me.

It was not I that found, [You] O Savior true; no, I was found of thee.

You did reach forth Your hand and mine enfold; I ... sank not on the storm-vexed sea.

'Twas not so much that I on You took hold, as You, dear Lord, on me.²

Yes, we do take His hand in faith, but because His hand pulls and holds us and won't let go of us. No one can snatch us out of His hand (Jn 10:28-29). Here in Genesis 19, Lot is pulled by his hand out of Sodom, but as we come to v. 30 we find out it's not so easy for Lot's hands to let go of Sodom's sins. A true believer can be saved but building his life on the wrong foundation, 1 Cor. 3 says, and it says it will all burn up like wood, hay and stubble (as Lot in Gen 19), and it says in fiery judgment "*he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved but only as one escaping through the flames.*" (1 Cor. 3:15 NIV).

Lot suffered the loss of his wife and the life he built for himself on a wrong foundation in Sodom, but he was saved ... barely ... as through the fire, like a fireman carrying him through the wall of fire before the house collapses. Lot moved to Sodom for a nice home, but in v. 30 Lot's family is homeless: *Lot went up from Zoar, and stayed in the mountains, and his two daughters with him; for he was afraid to stay in Zoar; and he stayed in a cave, he and his two daughters.* [in Sodom Lot was a businessman, now he's a caveman]

This is no pilgrim's progress, it's pilgrim's *regress*, not evolving, *devolving*! Lot is now afraid to stay in a city, and finds a hideaway to try to keep safe. But as we've seen before, Lot is not thinking of his family in his plans, like how does he expect his daughters to marry and keep the family name alive?

³¹ *Then the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of the earth."*

Lot could have gone back to Abraham's, humbled himself like the prodigal before Father Abraham, brought his family to godly influence (300+ godly men in Abraham's house, but Lot is too afraid, or maybe too proud to beg). God's grace draws Lot out of Sodom, but Lot withdraws and won't come out of the cave now. Maybe his plan was to keep his teenage girls safe by being isolated from the world: no Sodomite school system, just keep them home, no Sodomite entertainment, no youth group, no dating, no worldly contact. But even being pulled away from sin doesn't peel away the sin inside of us. The angels got Lot's daughters out of Sodom but Sodom was still in them. See, strictness and separateness is not a formula or guarantee for godliness. Without gospel grace we see rebelliousness, sometimes even licentiousness.

³² *"Come, let us make our father drink wine, and let us lie with him that we may preserve our family through our father."* ³³ *So they made their father drink wine that night, and the firstborn went in and lay with her father; and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose.* ³⁴ *On the following day, the firstborn said to the younger, "Behold, I lay last night with my father; let us make him drink wine tonight also; then you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve our family through our father."*

This is one of those passages that doesn't make the cut for flannel graph in the children's Sunday School curriculum. It's not a text a topical preacher is going to choose. But if you are committed to be an expository preacher who teaches book-by-book, chapter-by-chapter, verse-by-verse, you have to deal with passages like this that you'd honestly prefer to skip over if you could.

Both daughters have children in a way God never intended in v. 36. ³⁷ *The firstborn bore a son, and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day.* ³⁸ *As for the younger, she also bore a son, and called his name Ben-ammi; he is the father of the sons of Ammon to this day.*

What an encouraging and uplifting passage that is, let's just close in prayer. It's actually discouraging and sickening to read that sad end of that bad dad. No one wants to end a sermon how this chapter ends (or end a life like Lot). James Montgomery Boice preached a sermon on these verses and he said:

'In the preparation of my sermons, I seldom use books that give what are usually termed "homiletical [preaching] suggestions" ... But I did look at one such book for this sermon and found (to my surprise) that the incident in Genesis 19:30-38 was [determined to be] "unpreachable" ... I was told that the final verses ... "cannot be a text for a sermon." Others apparently think this way, too, for many sermon collections skip over these verses, and even commentaries get quite skimpy when they come to them.

... Someone may say, "Well the account is probably all right for adults, but what we object to is its being made known to children." Let me ask: Where would you rather have your children learn ... from secular books and people or from the Word of God? ... It is far better for children to learn the facts of life from the Word of God where sin is condemned than from [the world]'.¹³

2 Timothy 3:15 *"from childhood you have known the sacred writings [OT] which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.* ¹⁶ *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness ..."*

Then he says *"preach the Word"* (4:2). All OT Scripture is to be taught from childhood onward. All Scripture (including Genesis 19:30-38) is *inspired by God and profitable for teaching*. There is *reproof* or rebuke here, for any who are a lot like Lot. There is *correction* here to help us not end up like he did. This unrighteous scene cries out for a family's *training in righteousness*

In fact, look back a chapter at Genesis 18:19, using that word *righteousness* as the Lord says of Abraham in Gen 18:19 *"I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him."* Father Abraham and all fathers since are to be teaching their children all Scripture, reproofing and correcting them by it, training in righteousness with it, doing righteousness.

Lot doesn't seem to be doing a whole lot of that. His family suffered for it. Girls, don't conform to this world like his daughters, or love the world like their mom. "*remember Lot's wife! Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it*" (Lk 17:32-33). Remember it's all going to burn. Only Christ's work will last. 1 Cor 10 says OT stories warn us so we avoid idolatry, immorality (v. 6-8). 1 Cor 10:11 "*these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.*"
¹² *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall."*

So there are negative examples for our instruction and warning, so we don't crave what they craved sinfully (for Lot's daughters it was for children, and they were willing to do anything for that idol; our idols may be different). It says if we think we're standing firm, take heed from OT stories lest we fall. Lot relaxed his guard late in life, and like Noah and David later, fell badly. We may not fall in the same way, but the Internet or other ways can destroy.

Men, don't go from grace to disgrace like Lot. He was a believer and was in a believing environment growing up, but choices he began to make before he was even married affected his future, and it's the same for sinful choices young men make today. 2 Timothy 2:22 says "*flee youthful lusts and pursue righteousness ... with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.*" What are you running from? What you running after? Who are you running with?

Are you just hanging out with peers who master video games, or righteous men who master God's Word and being mastered by the Lord and Master? Don't waste your life! Men, don't lose your wife! Men, fight the good fight! Are you running the race with those who have pure hearts? Or in the ditch? Are you fighting against lust in your life or inviting footholds in your life? Are you fleeing youthful temptation like Joseph fled from Potiphar's wife?

The compromises you make earlier in life, like Lot, can affect your family. What's guiding your decisions in life, where you move, what you do for a living? Who will your girls marry? If you don't have daughters yet, think about that now before it's too late. What example or legacy are you leaving? Dads, future dads, lead your family in the Word or the world will lead them.

If you men feel that's dropping a heavy load on you, a huge yoke or burden, listen to Lam. 3:27 "*It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth.*" Us guys are like trucks, no load, they get squirrely and swerve around, but you put a heavy load on 'em and they go straight. It's good to put a load on you!

We need to see the results of sin for Lot, but also redeeming grace from it.

#1. The Results of Sin

The OT says the sins of a father are revisited on the family, on the children for generations to come, as the original readers of Genesis-to-Deuteronomy would read in their Torah, which also forbids incest. Apart from redeeming grace, sin recurs and repeats and is revisited with repercussions on a family that reaps what was sown. Generations of Lot's descendants, Ammonites and Moabites, would be enemies to generations of Abraham's descendants, and recurring reminders of the choices and trajectory Lot set for his family.

We've seen this before in Genesis, a pattern only Christ's gospel can break:

- Genesis 4: sin of the father Cain affects his line to Lamech, mass murderer
- Genesis 9: sin of Ham father of Canaan affected generations of Canaanites for dishonoring Noah, who like Lot after being rescued with his family in the flood, Noah is another believer who unwisely drinks too much wine and becomes sinfully drunk, unconscious, and uncovered before his children. Canaan and generations of Canaanites clash with Noah's godly descendants
- Genesis 16: sin of father Abraham taking Hagar as a concubine would be revisited and reminded to Ishmaelite Arabs and Israelites for generations

Kids are responsible for their own sin, but shame on parents who lead in it. Lot's 2 girls aren't innocent or blameless, they're shameless and know what they're doing. In v. 33 "*Lot...did not know*" may not mean he's unconscious, it could mean he was so wasted he wasn't *fully* aware or couldn't *remember* it the next day. This is what a wasted life looks like, from grace to disgrace. He's so out of it spiritually and such a bad dad he lets down his guard and parties with and drinks with his teenage daughters 2 nights in a row like the carnal Sodom spring break crowd, then falls to the sins of the Sodom youth he had been trying to protect them from. His girls had been kept virgins, but not kept pure from the ways of Sodom. We need to keep in mind the goal is not just virginity before marriage, it must be purity (there is a difference). The world talks of abstinence, avoiding STDs; Scripture emphasizes purity of body, mind, heart (1 Thess 4, Rom 12:2, Mt 5:28). We reap what we sow

In v. 8 they heard dad offering to give them over to men sexually, now they give themselves to dad in that way and in v. 37-38 give him sons/grandsons. The name Ammon means "seed from my kinsman," and Moab means "seed from my dad" (*ab* short for *abba*=daddy). She names him to celebrate that! Just as there was gay pride in Sodom, she wants to celebrate her sin as well. She has no shame in everyone knowing, and leading an incest pride parade!

By the way, those leading political parades today for equality of all sexual expression and marriage for people who love each other, most don't really mean what they say, thankfully. You can't marry 8-year-olds or relatives or people you love who are married to others. But logic used to defend sins of v. 5 is also logic that could be used to defend the sin of v. 33 which follows the same Sodomite way of thinking and living and morality. How can laws judge some sin is wrong if 2 people love each other (or 3 people like v. 34)? But *that sin* is against the law, some say? Well, so was sodomy in Texas till a 2003 ruling, and 4 years later *TIME* magazine ran an article on attorneys using that case to challenge laws against incest. In 2010 a lawyer defending a 2010 consensual incestuous dad-daughter relationship said "homosexuals ...do whatever they want in their own home. How is this so different? We have to figure out why some behavior is tolerated and some is not." A 2012 Hollywood movie tried to normalize the relationship Genesis 19 ends with.⁴

Why doesn't LGBT have an 'I' in their acronym? Any answer they give is a self-defeating argument, discriminating against other letters. Why not 3 or more people who love each other, like Gen 4:23, Lamech and 2 wives? If they can give logic that doesn't work against them, I'd like to hear it. If not, their own logic makes for not allowing polygamy a bigotry. No LGBT-I-P?⁵

But the Bible calls all that, and any other letters added, by 3 letters, S-I-N. It is only God's Word that gives a just basis for determining right or wrong. If the U.S. Supreme Court rules otherwise this summer, we still have a higher court in heaven, the law of the Supreme Court of the King of the Universe. *Gen 2:24 says marriage is one man, one woman, one flesh, for one lifetime.* Believers, if we compromise, our next generation will look a lot like Lot's. Dads and moms, you have a responsibility to protect your household. All of us *also* need to affirm *all* sexual sin is deadly, not just *some sins of others* - and we need to speak up much for a redeeming grace greater than all our sin

Erwin Lutzer writes in his book *Truth About Same-Sex Marriage*: 'We must begin speaking of our own sins, the sins we tolerate in our own lives and the lives of our churches. We must repent of the double standard that sees the sin of homosexual behavior in a different category than adultery, premarital sex, and pornography. We must plead guilty to the charge ... we have acted as if our sins are minor in comparison to those of the homosexual community... We do not help them [who are struggling in it who want to change] by singling out homosexuality as the one great sin and then doing double damage by lumping them with the radicals ... we oppose.

... we desperately need to be broken before God about our own failures ... homosexuality is not an unpardonable sin ... at issue is not the greatness of our sin, but the wonder of the righteousness which God credits to those who believe in His Son...the ground is level at the foot of the cross. We all come as needy sinners; we all come with the same need for the pardon that God alone can give... Come to Jesus as a homosexual, as a heterosexual, as a thief, as an alcoholic...*come*. We come as we are, but...He loves us too much to leave us that way...There's more grace in God's heart than there is sin in your past...God is a better Savior than you are a sinner.'⁶

#2. Redeeming Grace Greater than All Our Sin

Romans 15:4 gives us a vital key for interpreting OT stories: *For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.* So if we believe Romans 15:4, whatever was written in earlier times (even Genesis 19:30-38) was written not just for a negative warning, God also has positive encouragement. To preach the text rightly there must be hope also.

How in the world are we going to find hope and encouragement out of this? First of all, if God saved someone like Lot, there's hope for anyone! There's hope also if we know John 5:39 is true; all Scripture points us to Jesus. Gen 19 is not the end of the story, it's just the end of this chapter. The end of the book of Genesis tells us even in the evil intended by man, God intends good (Gen 50:20). There is good God intends even in the evil we read in Gen 19, redeeming grace for men like Lot, through a Savior Genesis promises. But we must go to the end of the OT and start of the NT for more. Turn to Mt 1.

Lot was a great sinner with a greater Savior. Spurgeon: 'None sing so loudly the praises of redeeming grace as those who have been forgiven great sins.'⁷ If we realize we're a lot like Lot, but that Christ has a whole lot of grace for sinners like us, then we should sing loudly, "The Love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell, It goes beyond the highest star and reaches to the lowest hell ... God's love, so sure, shall still endure, All measureless and strong; **Redeeming grace** to Adam's race, the saints' and angels' song'⁸

God's love and redeeming grace reaches our lowest point. Sinners, join the trio to sing: '**redeeming grace** has been my theme and shall be till I die'⁹ Let's join with Isaac Watts's "how sweet and awful is the place...We long to see Thy churches full That all the chosen race May with one voice and heart and soul Sing Thy **redeeming grace**."¹⁰ How does that grace come?

How is it possible to redeem even the sin of Lot's family in this dark cave? We need to look beyond the children born in this cave, to a child born in a cave in Bethlehem (stables were often caves, sometimes wooden as well). Lot sought refuge in a cave, but the NT says we must seek refuge in Christ.

We need to look to a truly pure 'yon virgin mother and child, [and a] Holy Infant so tender and mild.' We need to look beyond this day that dawned in Gen. 19 with loud destruction, that night of unholy mothers with Lot's child

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light;
radiant beams from thy holy face **with the dawn of redeeming grace,**
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.¹¹

God's redeeming grace extends to children conceived out of wedlock (even Jesus was), and even children conceived by incest, as part of His ancestors. Look at Matthew 1:1 *The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah ...*
...³ *Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar ...* [Gen 38 tells her story, she was the daughter-in-law of Judah, another incestuous conception]

...⁵ *Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab* [Canaanite, converted harlot!],
Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth [Ruth the Moabite, descendant of Lot]

⁷ *Solomon was the father of Rehoboam ...* [who was his mother? 3x the OT¹² reminds us Rehoboam's mom was an Ammonite, also a descendant of Lot!]

The world would say abortion must be legal because of incest. They believe those children should have died in the womb, but God receives them all as His children and into His family intentionally to show His redeeming grace! And because those children didn't die but were alive and were later married into this family tree, Jesus could come to offer life to abortionists and those who are guilty of incest or homosexuality or harlotry, any repentant sinner!

Lot's sons/grandsons Moab and Ammon had a dark beginning in that cave, but the redeeming grace of God overruled that evil and intended good from it, including the greatest good, their descendants part of the family tree of a baby born in another cave, the light of the world, a Messiah for all peoples! Genesis 19 shouts out to us that there is a 'grace that is greater than all our sin!' There is no sin so deep and dark it's beyond God's redeeming grace. It's a 'marvelous infinite matchless grace freely bestowed on all who believe,' even people like Lot, who 2 Peter 2 says was saved, and even people like us

PRAY - LEAD SONG - INVITE LEN AND JAN UP

¹ <http://www.thenewamerican.com/culture/faith-and-morals/item/15575-calif-senate-votes-to-drop-boy-scouts-tax-exempt-status>

² "I Sought the Lord," hymn music by George Chadwick, pronouns updated.

³ James M. Boice, *Genesis*, p. 641-42.

⁴ <http://www.charismanews.com/opinion/34146-here-come-incest-just-as-predicted>
quoting *TIME* magazine article dated April 2007

⁵ <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/family/polygamy-is-next-logical-step-says-dutch-same-sex-marriage-campaigner>

⁶ Erwin Lutzer, *The Truth About Same-Sex Marriage: Six Things You Must Know About What's Really At Stake* (Moody Press, 2009), p. 52.

⁷ Charles Spurgeon, "Great Changes," exposition of Psalm 51, Sermon No. 2934, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol. LI, p. 226.

⁸ Frederick Martin Lehman, "The Love of God is Greater Far."

⁹ William Cowper, "There is a Fountain."

¹⁰ Isaac Watts, "How Sweet and Aweful is the Place"

¹¹ Joseph Mohr, "Silent Night! Holy Night!"

¹² 1 Kings 14:21, 31 and 2 Chronicles 12:13