

"God rescued righteous Lot, distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked." (2 Peter 2:7)**Genesis 18:16-19:38****I. Destruction: The righteous judgment of God upon sinners.**

And, we'll jump into the story at the beginning of ch. 19. The Lord has departed and the other two, angels, visit Sodom.

Lot offers, then insists that the angels stay in his house. Why? We find out.

The city is a dangerous place for strangers. **vss. 4-5** The house is surrounded by a mob demanding the two men.

Lot describes what they are wanting to do as "wickedness" (vs. 7)

The Bible everywhere condemns homosexual behavior as wickedness... Lev. 18, 20, Rom. 1, 1 Cor. 6, 1 Tim. 1...

It is grouped together with things like incest and bestiality and idolatry and kidnapping as punishable by death.

This does not mean that it is worse than other sins, nor is it unforgivable... but it is corrupting.

But, then, when the mob cannot have what the people want they become dangerous and try to take them by force.

The angels are able to defend themselves just fine, and they strike the men of the city blind.

So, here in Sodom, it is not only that there are practicing homosexuals, but the culture we see is violent and oversexed.

Does this sound familiar? Violence, homosexuality, sexual desire given a free reign... and now blindness.

How can we miss the similarities? This is not God's design for human beings. This is not His image.

And so, the angels find just the sort of sin who's outcry has risen to the heavens and they are going to destroy the city. **vs. 13**

This is the most obvious lesson of the entire story. Sin invites the wrath and judgment of God.

People don't like this today, they never have. People do not want to be accountable to God... this is at the heart of what sin is.

Somehow we think that God ought not have the right to punish people for sin.

We don't want to hear about fire and brimstone. We don't want to hear about hell. But it doesn't matter what we want.

The fact remains. There is justice. God is the judge. We are ultimately accountable.

And, we do not know when God will call us to account. It might be today. You do not know.

Heb. 9:27, "It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment." This is the great fact of life.

And, who can argue with it? At best all one can say is, "I don't like it!" But you are not God. You are not judge.

As Gen. 18:25 says, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?"

But something else other than judgment is going on here... as is always the case.

II. Deliverance: The kindness of God to Abraham.

What we have in this story is an account of the first great example of intercessory prayer.

That means prayer on behalf of other people. Abraham is praying.

True, it is not the sort of prayer that we might recognize as such,

but Abraham here is asking, pleading with God on behalf of the righteous... Abraham has Lot on his mind.

Not only this, but this is the first time that anyone has reminded God of any aspect of His character.

Abraham is learning. His faith is growing. He is learning to pray.

And, of course, now we know that this is just the right way to petition God.

First we discover, as does Abraham, that prayer has its basis in a relationship with God.

God has stopped by and takes time with Abraham. You get to know someone better by talking to them.

Here we find that God is sharing with Abraham His plans and secrets... but why?

Abraham is God's friend. God has made him His friend. Consider what we have seen already in chs. 17-18.

The relationship is rooted in God's choosing and His promise.

And, God wishes to teach Abraham something. **vs. 19**

1. God is going to reveal to Abraham that He is just and wrathful. God deals with sin.

vss. 20-21 God has heard the outcry... like Abel's blood crying to God from the ground. Gen. 4

And, so, God is going to investigate... Like He did at Babel.

The wrath of God is not wild and capricious. He is careful, thoroughly investigating what happens.

Not that He doesn't know... in fact He says "I will know."

God knows, you cannot pull the wool over God's eyes. He knows about your sin.

2. God is going to show Abraham that He is merciful.

Now, we find out here that Abraham already knows something of God's right judgments. **vss. 24-25**

No doubt, Abraham is thinking of Lot. God knows this as well.

And Abraham is mindful, maybe concerned, for the right display of the character of God.

This is the right way to pray. Moses prays this way. Job does. David does. The prophets do as well.

When we pray, you and I, we pray on the basis

And, as we have seen, though Abraham gets a commitment from God to spare the city for ten righteous people...

There will not even be that many. In fact, we wonder in if there is even one!

God is not obligated to spare Lot... not for Lot's sake. Not even for Abraham. But He does spare Lot.

God is more righteous and merciful than even Abraham knows. This is who God is!

This is why when He shows Moses His glory... He speaks of righteousness and mercy... **Ex. 34:6-9**

Moses later reminds God of His mercy and righteousness in asking God to spare a disobedient people.

And, God, because He is just and merciful, answers Moses' prayer.

3. God is going to show Abraham that He answers prayer.

Interestingly, the prayer that God answers is posed in a series of questions that God answers.

And, it is a prayer marked by boldness, humility, and persistence.

All of what Jesus will teach His disciples about prayer 2,000 years later.

Abraham approached the Lord and asks, no he insists, that God must not do this. Bold.

Abraham asks God virtually the same thing 1,2,3,4,5,6 times. Persistent.

And, each time Abraham is mindful of his position before God... God is the sovereign creator. Humble.

vs. 27, 30, 31, 32 We must always remember who we are speaking with.

It is all this that makes **Gen. 19:29** so stunning.

You might think that it was Lot's righteousness that caused God to rescue him, just as you might have thought that about Noah.

And, just as Noah is called righteous, Lot is as well in **2 Peter 2:7-10**. Lot is there distressed.

But this is confusing for, as we see in ch. 19, Lot does not appear to act very righteous.

Sure, he goes to great lengths to protect these two messengers of God, but that is about all he does.

So, was it that God saved him because He was righteous?

And, we discover, the answer is "no." God rescued him because "God remembered Abraham."

God did not save Lot because he was righteous. Lot was righteous because God saved him.

This is what the bold, persistent, humble prayer of Abraham accomplished.

James 5:16 "The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much."

Now, let us consider just what Lot's condition was. And it was not good.

III. Deception: The corrupting influence of the world in believers.

We have now been thinking together about Lot and Sodom for a while this morning...

and no doubt you've realized that Lot has indeed made a terrible mess of things. This is why he needed saving.

But, how did he get there. How did life get so messed up.

I have no doubt that Lot did not plan things out this way. sin is like that. It creeps up on you when you're not looking.

And, Lot was not looking. He was not aware of what was happening to he and his family.

Back in ch. 13 Lot had chosen the fertile valley.

Yes, there were wicked cities in it, but for a good salary a guy can handle that. Lot wanted security, success.

In ch. 14 Lot has a brush with death and captivity, but it seemed not to scare him too much.

Now Lot is surrounded by a culture of sex and violence... it seems right to him to sacrifice his daughters to them.

How could he think this? There is no explanation in the text.

But, I have one. 1 Cor. 15:33, "Do not be deceived, Bad company corrupts good morals."

Then, did you notice what happened when the angels wanted Lot to leave?

vs. 14 What sons-in-law are these? They think God is joking! How like our culture today... so 16th century!

vss. 15-16 "He hesitated." = Lot did not want to leave. His life was there. It had become his home.

In fact, so attached was he that the Lord had to drag him out... because of "the compassion of the Lord"

When he had left, Lot did not want to go to the mountains, as God told him. He wanted to go to Zoar.

He didn't want to totally leave city life. Here is only a little city, it can't have too much sin.

But when he got to Zoar, God made him leave anyway. God's way is always the best way.

His wife couldn't resist that backward look of longing at the world that was destroyed... and she died.

And, then, when Lot was finally safe, though destitute, his daughters sleep with him.

What has happened?

How could this man who obviously knew God... he recognized the angels, he'd been around Abraham.

How could he and his family be such a mess?

He had made the world his home. Beware. This is no isolated incident in the Bible. And, not just in the Bible... today.

The world is full of people who begin with dreams of getting married, a good job, fun vacations, serving God...

But, things happen and they're 25 years old, or 40, or 60 and life is a disaster.

Colleges are full of girls who are having sex with a different guy each week, then they move in with their boyfriend.

10 years later they're still not married. Who wants that?

Guys who are almost 30 and spend their time watching movies, drinking or playing video games... then they get old.

It's a trap... a slow trap. You get there by not paying attention on the way.

But how do you get out? I'll tell you. This story tells you.

Someone prays for you. Someone who loves the Lord keeps praying for you.

They pray and they pray and they pray... and then one day, you start praying.

And, God saves you and God drags you out of the cesspool... to where you can pray for others and God saves them.

You don't want to stay there. You'll be destroyed.

Let me close with this. *I spent 9 years with campus Crusade for Christ when I was younger.*

I shared the gospel in those days more than I do now, and saw quite a few young men come to know the Lord.

But, I cannot think of one guy who I got to know after he'd been saved who didn't have someone praying for him.

a grandmother... that was the most common, or a mom or dad, or a friend, or a pastor.

Everyone who I saw really saved had had someone praying for them. Often they didn't know it at the time.