

## Sweeping Judgment and Strong Mercy ▪ Genesis 19:1–29

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If you know your Bible decently well, and I ask you to give me an example of God’s sweeping judgment....the story of Sodom would probably be at the top of your list.

That’s true for Paul, who quotes Isaiah.

### **Romans 9:29 ESV**

And as Isaiah predicted,  
“If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring,  
we would have been like Sodom  
and become like Gomorrah.”

- The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are examples of God executing serious, large-scale judgment.
  - Even as early as Gen. 13:13, we know that Sodom is a place ripe for judgment.
  - The Bible calls that type of thing *sweeping* judgment (v15 &17).
  - But if I asked you to give an example of the strong mercy of God, you mind probably would not go to this story.
- › Yet the strong mercy of God is all over this story.

*\*\*The story of Sodom is the Serious Judgment and Sweet Mercy of God coming together to display his glory.*

This is one of those places where a single verse summarized the whole point. (V29)

The actions of God:

God destroyed - Serious judgment

God sent Lot out - Strong mercy

\*The narrative is somewhat complex; to make it simple we will look at it in two halves—based on the location (in Lot’s house; Outside the City).

First, see judgment and mercy...

### **In the house (1-16)**

- The story actually does not begin in Lot’s house—but at the city gate.
- This small detail is significant— Ancient city gates were the places where the men who had power and authority hung out.
- Here Lot meets the two visitors and treats them very much like uncle Abraham—with hospitality.
- But really, the first few verses just move the plot toward the house (v3).

—We see the sovereign leading of God starting at the gate: the angels meet Lot.

—Of all the men in the city they could meet, it’s Lot.

There is nothing random in the Lord’s work.

- But it’s in the house that we see the serious judgment pieces start to come together; this becomes the evidence for why God will sweep away Sodom.

(V4-5)

The men of the city demand that Lot let his guests out so they can commit homosexual rape (“know” is Hebrew for sexual relations) .

- Now there will be a lot of blemishes on Lot we will see, but the moral conviction we see is v. 6-7.

“Do not act so wickedly”

He names their desire for what it is: wicked.

- The NT helps us to see Lot

### **2 Peter 2:6–7 ESV**

if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked

Did you hear that? “Greatly distressed”.

Does the evil of surrounding sin greatly distress your soul, or are you numb?

Have you spent so much time indulging and being entertained by wickedness, especially sexual perversion?

“Well, it is what it is.”

Does violence and perversion entertain you, or disgust you?

- I can appreciate that there is no nuance, or unclear speech from Lot; “this is wicked”.

\*\*Some who profess to be Christians, and even have a voice.... lack this clear speech.

There has been a movement growing in the American Church that embraces what’s called “Gay Christianity”.

If you want to know more about this, I highly recommend *Five Lies of the Anti-Christian Age*.

They claim that gay desire is not bad in itself; it’s a *broken identity that God has given and should be embraced*.

They claim to be sexual minorities in the church who need a voice.

\*\*That sounds nothing like how the Bible describes same-sex sin:

### **Leviticus 18:22 ESV**

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.

- The Bible also marks homosexuality with other clear descriptions: dishonorable; contrary to nature, etc.

Romans 1:26–27 (ESV)

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women...

It's so vital that we are clear where the Bible is clear about sin.

Yet the Bible also speaks very clearly: there is strong mercy that forgives and frees!

**1 Corinthians 6:9 ESV**

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,

**1 Corinthians 6:11 ESV**

And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

*\*Notice what God does with former sin: washes, sanctifies, justifies...sounds like a new creation!*

There are some whose very testimony—

“Christ has washed me. I would have been swept away...but the strong mercy of God came.....and made me new!”

- The wicked men continue to press hard, and threaten Lot ((v9)
- Which leads to the first display of judgment: (v10-11)

There are multiple displays of Strong Mercy:

First, Lot's daughters (v8)

- If Lot's actions disgust you and make you mad...that's the right response!

What's wrong with this guy!....He is willing to exchange the purity and innocence of his daughters so easily.

- The final episode in this chapter (30-38) is quite disgusting. And it proved the point of how powerful, and twisted that sin can be...

*You can take the family out of Sodom, but you can't always take Sodom out of the Family.*

- But...strong unseen mercy....the men of Sodom are so depraved they pass Lot's offer up.

#### Second, his future family (12-14)

- The future sons-in-law are given a strong warning, which they just laugh right off.

This is a picture of how some treat God's mercy—in a lighthearted way.

#### Thirdly, Lot's lingering (15-16)

- Several times the angels have to physically grab Lot (10, 16)
- › Strong hands of grace have to literally pull Lot away from his foolishness and complacency.

V16 has a key phrase: "the Lord, being merciful to him"

- › *Mercy is the anthem over Lot's life. It's the only anthem here.*

Think of our own lives; how many times has a Strong Unseen Hand of Mercy pulled you away from something that could have potentially destroyed you?

Sometimes parents pray for a "hedge of protection" for their children.

We can also pray that a Strong Unseen Hand would pull them back, especially when they are prone to linger.

The judgment and mercy continue....

#### **Outside the city (17-29)**

- The whole narrative moves forward in moving Lot and his family out of the city to be safe.

- The instructions are very clear (v17) —get up to the hills—where you can escape the sweeping judgment of God.

Once again, we see Strong Mercy

- (v18-19) Much like Abraham who had the boldness to ask, so Lot asks to flee in safety to Zoar...yet the key difference: Abraham is driven by a concern for others, and God's character....

The power and patience of God's preserving Grace continues (21-22).

Lot is untouchable as long as God has his protective hand on him.

The angel said, "I can do nothing till you arrive there" (v22)

(Kidner) "the patient mercy of God, shepherding even the straggler to safety."

- Yet...here is a lesson on presuming on grace; there is serious judgment lesson in Lot's wife (v26).

The story closes with the sweeping judgment (v23)

- In the Ancient Near East, a court was held at the rising of the sun, at the break of dawn

*It's clear that the Judge of the Earth is doing Right.*

- It's no small irony that another judgment a couple thousand years away..... would be held first thing in the AM.

### **Mark 15:1 ESV**

And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. And they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate.

- this judgment would look very different,
- Its not sulfur that rains down on a city...it's the fierce, anger of God that rains down on his beloved, God's Son...as he *bears all the wrath for our sin!*

And the mercy: the door of eternal life would be open to all who flee to the Son for salvation.

- › *The Cross is the Final Resting Place where the Sweeping Judgment and Strong Mercy of God meet*

Don't let this week pass you by without meditating on the cross, adoring the Christ of the Cross, thanking God for his love poured out on Calvary.

What we learn from Sodom: The sweeping judgment and strong mercy of God are real things that happen to real people in real places.

I imagine if you were to visit hell right now, ask a soul that has been imprisoned there what that day was like—they would say *a complete surprise*.

That is actually how Jesus described it.

#### **Luke 17:28–29 ESV**

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—

The main characters have things to teach us:

#### Lot's Family:

—His sons hear the warning—but brush it off.

—They laugh at repentance....and they are destroyed...*time runs out for those who take spiritual things with lightheartedness.*

There are those—and it could be you listening—who would rather be entertained and hear jokes than to take repentance from sin seriously.

There is a reason why many Americans people love a preacher who tells jokes.

- › *The Sweeping Judgment of God is nothing to joke about.*

#### Lot's wife:

- Remember Lot's wife (Lk. 17:32)

There are some who may feel a pull to turn back—you are really attached to some things of this world.

Things that have nothing of Christ and don't help you love him and his kingdom.

Lot's family teaches us: There is a time you need to stop laughing, and stop looking back.

*You need to run. Run to Christ today.*

### Lot

- Lot is anything but stellar. He's an impotent host, lousy dad, drags his feet in procrastination, too lazy to go the distance.....he even seems way too attached to this world.

We look at him and ask: Why would God save this guy? Why would he have patience with him?

*Why would God save me and you; why?*

One main thing we can learn from him:

He can take credit for nothing. Nothing.

### Titus 3:4–5 (ESV)

But when the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy,

Strong Mercy. It's our anthem as well.

Let's adore our good, loving, merciful God.