

Good morning. Please pray with me.

The title of my message this morning is *As Through Fire*. We are going to be in Genesis 13 to start if you'd like to open your bibles and turn there in anticipation.

We are going to be looking at the life of Lot, Abraham's nephew. Now, if you know anything about Lot, you probably know he was a believer, but he was famous for what? Not living like one. Lot was a believer who lived in terrible compromise with the world.

We know he was a believer for two reasons. First, 2 Peter 2:7-8 makes it clear that he was righteous. It says that when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, He **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)**

Three times in the same sentence it says he is righteous. Scripture kind of beats us over the head with it.

The second way we know Lot was righteous is because God protected and rescued him from the destruction He poured out on Sodom and Gomorrah

As we begin reading about Lot, it's going to be very difficult to see him as righteous. We need to understand that Lot was righteous, not by his works, but the same way Abraham was righteous - the same way we are righteous. It was accounted to him by faith. He was positionally righteous. He had right-standing with God.

Having qualified it that way, Lot is still a challenge to my understanding of salvation - that a genuine believer can remain in compromise so long, show such worldly behavior, and even resist deliverance. But, if it's possible, then we need to do what? We better take heed to ourselves that we are not failing in the same ways that Lot did.

Lot cannot be held up as a model for believers to follow, but he can be held up as an extreme warning.

The first time we are actually introduced to Lot is in Genesis 13. He and Abraham have grown very rich in livestock such that the land they occupy cannot support both of their camps. The shortage caused strife between Abraham's herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen because they were competing for resources.

To solve the conflict, Abraham proposes they go their separate ways, and very graciously gives Lot the choice of whatever direction he desires to go. So, Lot has a big decision to make.

Look with me at Genesis 13:10-13:

10 And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. 11 Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. 12 Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom. 13 But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord.

Verse 13 is ominous. The narrator is foreshadowing terrible events to come. It indicates that the men of Sodom were well known for their wickedness, yet Lot did not consider this when he made his decision. Lot was only thinking of what? Prosperity. Income. Taking his ease.

That leads me to lesson 1 on your bulletins:

Lesson 1: [Compromise begins with ignoring spiritual danger.](#)

The plain of Jordan where Sodom was located was the picture of wealth and abundance. It is described as “**well watered**” and to Lot it was “**like the garden of the Lord**”. This is what we do when we begin to covet. We build things up. We only see what confirms the decision that has already been made in our hearts.

For a man whose wealth was measured in livestock, this was the obvious choice. There would be an end to squabbling herdsmen. There would be no shortage of water, and there would be no shortage of vegetation for his animals to graze on.

He made his decision in the wisdom of man. He reasoned this way: What will make me the most successful? What will give me the greatest advantage? What will allow me to take my ease? He “**lifted his eyes and saw**” indicating that he was walking by sight and not by faith.

In fact, look at verse 10 and listen to the similarities between it and Genesis 3:6 **So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.**

Just like Eve’s fleshly desire for the fruit, Lot had a fleshly desire for this land of prosperity. Eve saw the pleasantness of the fruit, and Lot saw the pleasantness of the land. Eve saw the fruit as desirable to make one wise, Lot saw the land as desirable to make one wealthy.

1 John 2:15&16 warns us against fleshly desires and becoming captivated by what we see. **15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.**

Both Eve and Lot convinced themselves to give in to what their flesh, their eyes, and their pride desired, because they did not consider the spiritual danger they were entering into. They loved the things of the world. In Lot’s account, we should see Sodom as a great Old Testament picture of the world.

Let's compare how Lot viewed the land to how God viewed the land:

- To Lot, the land called out inviting him in, but to God the land cried out inviting judgement.
- To Lot, the people of the plain were rich, but to God they were spiritually bankrupt.
- To Lot, the land was green and well-watered, but to God, it was fitting to raze it with fire.

Who was right? It's a foolish question, of course God was right. The point is Lot's worldly desires blinded him to seeing the land the same way God did. Things that look good, things that look promising, things that look very beneficial to us physically, could very well be disastrous to us spiritually.

For that reason, we should develop a healthy distrust of your own motivations and desires. Let me repeat that again: We should develop a healthy distrust of our own motivations and desires.

Proverbs 14:12: There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

You might be asking yourself, "How can I avoid making a potentially terrible decision like Lot did?" We can avoid a lot of heartache, discipline, and wasted years by seeking godly counsel. Sometimes it is very easy for other believers to see the dangers associated with a course of action, but it's very difficult to see them when you're the one making the decision.

Proverbs 12:15 - The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But he who heeds counsel is wise.

I wonder what might have been different if Lot would have sought counsel from Abraham.

Verse 12 says he “**pitched his tent even as far as Sodom.**” A tent conveys that he was still nomadic, traveling with his herds as needed. You get the sense that pitching his tent on the outskirts of Sodom was the furthest he was willing to go toward that wicked city.

But, the world has a way of pulling us deeper than we wanted to go, doesn't it?

That brings me to the next lesson.

Lesson 2: A compromised believer:

Part 1: lives a double life.

Please turn now to Genesis 19:1-3.

19 Now 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 he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. 2 And he said, “Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant’s house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way.”

And they said, “No, but we will spend the night in the open square.”

3 But he insisted strongly; so they turned in to him and entered his house. Then he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.

The first thing I want you to notice is this: Where does Lot live? He lives in a house! In Sodom! What happened?

He moved near the world to pursue the things the world pursues. He moved toward the world, and the world pulled him in deeper than he intended to go. He might have had great intentions. Remember! Lot is a believer! He loves the Lord, but the city of Sodom, filled with wickedness, pulled him in.

Take care what you are thinking right now about Lot. You and I are made from the same fallen flesh as he was. We have the same deceptive heart that he had. The same sin, temptation, and desires that were within Lot are just as easily within you and me.

Have you been “lifting your eyes” upon any worldly thing? Have you “pitched your tent” near the world, not considering what spiritual danger you may be exposing yourself to? My hope is that Lot’s account may be a sobering warning to all of us about keeping ourselves separate from the world.

The second thing I want you to notice is where Lot was when he saw the angels. Verse 1 says he was **sitting in the gate of Sodom**. I believe this is a strong hint at what the city offered to Lot that eventually pulled him in. The gate of the city was like the public square. It is where business was done. It was where important meetings took place. It was where justice was pronounced, and this is where we find Lot sitting. The city gate was for prominent, important, and wealthy men.

I don’t want to belabor the point, but you need to see the progression of compromise in Lot’s life. He went from looking toward Sodom, to pitching his tent near Sodom, to living within Sodom, to sitting at it’s gate indicating a position of leadership in the city.

Compromise with the world begins small and grows. Here’s an example of what it could look like:

A new movie comes out that catches your attention. This movie has your favorite actors, and the storyline is supposed to be amazing. It’s getting superb reviews from all the critics, and pretty soon your friends are all telling you about how great it is. There’s just one problem, you know that the movie contains a brief scene with nudity. When you mention your concern about the scene to your friends they say, “Oh come on, it’s barely noticeable!” Friends, that decision might be the first domino you push over that leads to a lifelong enslavement to pornography.

“You’re being too extreme! That’s too big of a leap to make!” Really? It has to start somewhere, doesn’t it? If you watch that movie you are compromising with sin. You’ve now accepted watching movies that contain nudity. Is it so hard to see how that decision leads to watching the next movie with longer or more graphic nude scenes? Is it so hard to see how that could snowball, taking you much further than you intended to go?

It is much easier and far less damaging to refrain from pushing over that first domino than it is to repent and pick up the pieces when your life has spiraled out of control.

Lot is a compromised believer, but there are some good things that he did in this account that I want to highlight.

First of all, when he sees the angels (who appear like men) he instantly responds with reverence. I’m speculating a bit, but based on his reaction it seems like he recognized they were from God. Verse 1 says, “**...he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground.**” Abraham had a similar reaction when he saw these same two angels in chapter 18.

Secondly, he immediately recognizes what? These men are in a great deal of danger. To Lot these men are naive outsiders who do not know what they are walking into. Doesn’t that beg a few questions?

- Question 1: If Lot understands the danger this city poses to outsiders so well, why has he moved into its walls? Actually, it’s worse because we will find out it is not just him, but he has a wife and a number of daughters there as well.
 - This is what a compromising believer does. They can recognize sin as wrong and dangerous, but they have made peace with it for themselves. Or, let me say it like this: He understood the danger to these men, but he disregarded the danger to himself and his family.

- Question 2: If the city truly is dangerous to outsiders, and we know it is, how was Lot able to safely live in the city?
 - I fear the answer to that question is that he was accepted as one of them. In verse 7, he calls the men of the city “**my brethren**”. Lot is a believer that can walk comfortably with the ungodly one moment, and completely change course the next when these godly visitors show up.

Here’s a test to see if you’re compromising like Lot: Do you have a group of worldly friends and a group of godly friends that you’d never bring together? One reason you may not want to bring them together is that your double life would be exposed.

The third way Lot looks good in this account is that he immediately begins taking action to protect these men. You get the sense that he wants to quickly usher them into the safety of his home and then send them away before sunrise in the morning.

I don’t know if angels have a sense of humor, but they almost appear to be making sport of Lot. They know the reputation of the city. They also know they are not in any real danger. Here’s Lot clearly panicking about the entire situation trying to covertly usher them to the safety of his home, and they say, “**No, but we will spend the night in the open square.**” Very purposefully, they ratcheted up the tension Lot feels.

Perhaps they wanted to give Lot an opportunity to tell the truth about the wickedness of the city and the real danger outsiders faced. Verse 3 says Lot “**insisted strongly,**” but he concealed the real reason he wanted them to come to his home. He couldn’t tell them the real reason without exposing his double life.

The last way Lot looks good is by his hospitality. He brings the men into his home and they feast together.

Now, I wanted to point out the good in the account for two reasons: The first reason is because it shows that Lot led a double life - he adapts to whatever company he is with, walking in a worldly manner one moment (integrated into this wicked society), and walking in a godly manner the next, when the angels show up.

The second reason is that things are about to turn toward unthinkable wickedness, and that wickedness comes not only from the men of the city, but from Lot himself. It becomes very difficult to see Lot as a believer from this point on.

That brings me to the next part of lesson 2.

[Lesson 2: A compromised believer:](#)

[Part 2: suffers corruption.](#)

Look with me at verses 4 & 5.

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.”

This is what Lot was afraid of from the first moment he saw these men approaching the city. I want you to notice the exhaustive description of who was involved in the attack on Lot’s home. It was the men of the city - **BOTH old and young, ALL the people from EVERY quarter**. It really doesn’t leave anyone out, does it?

I’m reading from the NKJV. The last word in verse 5, “**carnally**”, is italicized because it is a helpful addition. The ESV simply says, “**Bring them out to us, that we may know them.**” The bible doesn’t shy away from presenting the worst aspects of humanity, but it doesn’t present them to us graphically. I think that’s important to note and even instructive for us.

My goal this morning is to faithfully preach these verses, exposing the lessons and truths that are contained in them, without being needlessly graphic.

I just want to take a step back here and say this: This is the character of all the men in the city that Lot chose to settle in and raise a family. Homosexuality is not a new problem, it has been in men's hearts since the beginning.

When man rejects God, suppresses God, rebels against God and worships instead created things, Romans 1 says that God hands them over to sin. He removes the restraints, and in the downward spiral of unbridled human depravity, the worst sorts of sin result.

Romans 1:26&27 says this: **26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. 27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.**

We live in a society that accepts and even celebrates homosexuality, but it can never be accepted and celebrated by God's people. Often, I think, we wonder how can God allow our country to go unpunished because of its acceptance of homosexuality? You need to know this: rampant homosexuality IS a sign of God's wrath. It may not be fire and brimstone like Sodom and Gomorrah experienced, but it is wrath - it is the wrath of judicial abandonment. This is what happens when God steps back and lets humanity go where it wishes.

As a believer - as a spiritual person - Lot must have thought he could remain untouched by his exposure to the people of Sodom. We do that too, don't we? We think we can dip our toes into what the world offers and remain unchanged.

1 Cor 15:33 - Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

1 Cor 5:6 - Speaking of tolerating sin in the church, Paul says, "Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?"

Was Lot affected by his exposure to the people of Sodom? Let's keep reading. Look with me at verses 6-8.

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."

Was Lot corrupted by his time in Sodom? Oh yes. Terribly so.

He was able to discern the great evil about to be done to his guests, but unable to discern the great evil in sacrificing his daughters to the men of Sodom. That should terrify anyone fooling around with the wicked things of the world. You may not know the corruption that has been wrought in your heart until some great pressure comes upon you, like Lot faced.

As terrible as that was, consider this: Was this night the first time Lot offered his daughters to Sodom? By choosing to assimilate into Sodom...

- Who would their friends be? Sodomites.
- Who would be available husbands for them? Sodomites.
- Also, I think it's probable their mother was a Sodomite woman since she isn't mentioned until after Lot is living in Sodom. Later we see her turning back toward the city indicating she wanted to remain.

All of their biggest influences (besides Lot himself) would be the inhabitants of a city seemingly completely handed over to sin.

Let's continue with verses 9-11.

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.

It is unbelievable to me that being struck blind was not enough to overcome their desire to violate Lot's guests. These men give us a glimpse into the level of depravity that man is capable of when he is unrestrained and handed over to the sin he loves.

This might be the first and only time Lot stood in moral opposition to the men of Sodom. We don't have a full account of his life, but up until this night he was an accepted member of society. At the first sign of opposition, the men of the city turn on him, and threaten to do worse to him than they planned to do to the men he was protecting.

Do you see what happened? They finally realized that Lot wasn't one of them. Lot finally made it clear that he opposed their wickedness.

Look with me at verses 12 and 13.

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 the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it.”

Lot does attempt to warn his sons-in-law. How do you think that is going to go? What kind of witness do you think he will have? Do you think he will have any credibility?

That leads me to Part 3 of Lesson 2.

Lesson 2: A compromised believer:

Part 3: spoils their witness.

A common way that believers justify compromising with sin is they tell themselves it will give them an opportunity to witness to the lost. This is one way in particular our hearts can be very deceitful. We can fool ourselves into feeling spiritual about doing very fleshly things.

Picture a young woman who has recently come to faith while she was involved in a relationship with an unbeliever. Instead of doing the right thing and breaking the relationship off, she might justify staying because she tells herself, “If I stay, I’ll be able to witness to him.”

Or, think of a man who came to faith after being a part of a group of friends that frequently went out on Friday nights to the bar. If, in his flesh, he still desires to be a part of that, he might justify it by saying to himself, “How else can I witness to my unbelieving friends?”

2 Corinthians 6:14-15: 14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

We need to be very careful in our relationships with unbelievers. We don’t want to isolate ourselves from them completely, or else how will we witness to them? But, at the same time, we cannot become entangled with them such that our faith becomes compromised.

This is not merely a problem with individual believers, it is also a problem with churches. Pastor Scott has recently preached on the need for there to be a clear distinction between the world and the church, and that distinction is holiness.

Many churches blur that line, don't they? They decide to become more like the world so that unbelievers find the church more appealing.

Now, I'm not saying that Lot justified moving into Sodom so that he could be a witness to the unbelievers there. Here is what I am saying, and here is the application for us: Lot's story shows why compromise with the world is a terrible way to witness to the lost.

Look at verse 14 with me.

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 the Lord will destroy this city!" But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking.

The truth is compromise doesn't help us witness to the lost, it destroys our ability to witness to the lost. How much influence did Lot have with these men? None at all. They couldn't take him seriously. After all, he had lived in Sodom for a number of years, apparently never opposing their wickedness. He had betrothed his daughters to them. Now he wants to warn them about God's judgment all of the sudden?

The only way they could reconcile the inconsistency of Lot's life and his new found concern about God's judgment was to assume he was joking. They were fairly nice to Lot, because most unbelievers would tell Lot he was being what? A hypocrite. We should expect the unbelievers around us to compare what we are saying to how we are living. If you want an effective witness, what you say and what you do must be the same thing.

In Matthew 5:13, Jesus said, **"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men."**

Salt is both a flavor enhancer and a preservative that was used to keep meat from spoiling. As God's people, we are to "taste" differently than the world. We are to preserve. We are to hold corruption at bay. We are to influence the world, the world must not be allowed to influence us. Just as salt that isn't salty is "**good for nothing**" a worldly believer's testimony is what? "**Good for nothing.**"

Compromise may grant us proximity to unbelievers, but it doesn't give us their ear when it comes to spiritual matters. Lot's warning was "**good for nothing**" to these men and they "**trampled it underfoot**", so to speak.

Jude 1:23 gives us a great deal of insight into how it should look when we witness to the lost. **23 but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.**

First, we need to be afraid. We need to understand that being near enough to unbelievers to witness to them puts us in an amount of danger. We need to consider ourselves lest we also be tempted. (Gal 6:1)

Second, it should look like rescuing someone out of a fire. When a fireman saves someone from a burning building does he approach the person casually? Does he establish a close relationship with them first? Does he take a seat in the midst of the flames and ask about their day? No! He snatches them out quickly! He wants to expose himself to as little danger as possible!

Now, as a believer, Lot could have been a "fireman" so to speak. He could have had an effective witness to the Sodomites, perhaps even leading some of them out of the "fire" and into faith, but what was he instead? He became one of them. Instead of snatching people out of the fire, he was happy to join them in the flames.

That leads me to the next part of Lesson 2.

[Lesson 2: A compromised believer:](#)

[Part 4: resists deliverance.](#)

Look at verses 15-17.

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, the Lord 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.”

Look at verse 16, it says, **”while he lingered”**! The angels had to take hold of Lot physically and tear him away, because in his flesh he loved that which God had promised to destroy! He lingered in the face of God’s wrath because he wasn’t ready to make a break with Sodom. He wanted to continue experiencing what the city offered.

Can you see the application for us, friends? How many of us have lingered toying with worldly things far too long? I have. How many of us have continued living in compromise even after realizing God’s wrath for it? I have.

I’ve been very critical of Lot, but aren’t we prone to being just like him in that way?

It is hard to make a break with sinful compromise because our own fleshly desires and motivations are what led us into it in the first place. 2 Peter 2:8 says that Lot **“tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds...”** Doesn’t that make you wonder why he remained? Why would he torment himself? He couldn’t leave because his flesh was in control and his righteous soul was along for the ride.

It is confusing why Lot would choose to torment himself, but we do the same thing when we choose to remain in compromise. It is a choice, because as believers, we have all the resources we need to escape it.

We may not have angels ready to drag us away, but...

- We have been set free from sin.
- We have the Holy Spirit convicting, teaching, and leading us.
- We have the truth of God's word that sanctifies us.
- We have a God who chastens us as a loving Father.

Speaking of chastening, Lot is about to experience severe chastening. What is he about to lose? Everything. All of his possessions. All of his wealth. The pursuit of wealth is what led him to Sodom in the first place, and it is all about to be burned up. Is that why he lingered? It would fit the narrative.

Now, Lot not only lingered in the face of God's judgment, but he also refused to obey the angel's command. They told him, **"Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed,"** but look at Lot's response in verse 18:

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.

Do you see how Lot is resisting his own deliverance? Instead of obeying he argues. Instead of submission, he negotiates. It's very easy to see Lot's weak faith, his selfishness, and his desire to remain entangled with the world.

We do that, friends! Is it getting tiresome yet to hear me say that? Speaking of the things we read about in the Old Testament, Romans 15:4 says this: **For whatever things were written before were written for our learning...** We need to learn from Lot's bad example. We need to take the warning because the same weaknesses that were within Lot are within us.

Don't we begin to negotiate when we become convicted over our sin? Don't we think of how we can continue to partake in a way that wouldn't be explicitly forbidden? Don't we attempt to moderate instead of amputate? In other words, are we tolerant of little compromises in our lives? After Lot was pulled out of Sodom he begged the angel to permit him to flee to Zoar and he justified it by saying, **"Is it not a little one?"**

Look at verses 23-26 with me.

23 The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. 24 Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens. 25 So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.

26 But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

For the sake of time, skip to verse 30.

30 Then Lot went up out of Zoar and dwelt in the mountains, and his two daughters were with him; for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar. And he and his two daughters dwelt in a cave.

That leads me to the last lesson on your bulletins:

[Lesson 3: Lot fled the world very late.](#)

I gave a great deal of thought about how to word this last lesson. At first, it was worded: “Lot fled the world too late”, but that seemed to be too final. We don’t have any further record of Lot’s life after this chapter. Knowing that sanctification is progressive, knowing that God doesn’t abandon believers to sin, believing that God works all things together for the good of those that love Him, I have to be hopeful for Lot.

There is a saying that I’m sure many of you have heard. It goes like this: When is the best time to plant a tree? And the answer is: “Twenty years ago.” That kind of gets a chuckle because we can’t go back in time, plant the tree, and then have a mature tree today. But, there is always a follow up question. When is the second best time to plant a tree? And the answer is: “Today.”

Fleeing compromise - fleeing the love of the things of the world - is like planting a tree. It is best to flee from it early in our Christian walk to avoid all the heartache, loss, and suffering it will bring. And, if you find that you’ve been walking in compromise for some time, the second best time to flee the world is today.

In verses 18-20, Lot argued with the angels, not wanting to flee to the mountains out of fear, but in verse 30 it says he was afraid to dwell in Zoar, so he went up and dwelt in the mountains. He had just seen Sodom and Gomorrah completely destroyed because of their wickedness. I suspect he saw the same wickedness in Zoar. It seems that his fear of God’s wrath toward sin finally overcame his love for the world.

Now, I changed the wording of the lesson because I didn’t want to convey too great a sense of finality - as if Lot could not progress in sanctification after these events, but there are a number of things that Lot fled the world too late for:

- He fled the world too late to remain uncorrupted.
- He fled the world too late to influence his sons-in-law.
- He fled the world too late to avoid severe chastisement.

These next two, I especially want husbands and fathers to pay attention to.

- He fled the world too late for his wife. The angels told them, **“Do not look behind you,”** yet she did. Why? She didn’t want to lose Sodom. She looked back with longing for the destroyed city rather than looking ahead in thankfulness for God’s deliverance.
- Lastly, he fled the world too late for his daughters.

Look at verse 31 and 32 with me. **31 Now the firstborn said to the younger, “Our father is old, and there is no man on the earth to come in to us as is the custom of all the earth. 32 Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father.”**

I nearly decided not to preach on this text because of these verses. It is just too terrible to think of, but I have to believe this is recorded in God’s word for our benefit.

The first thing I want you to think about is that Lot and his daughters have left Zoar to live in the mountains, but have they actually fled from worldliness?

It’s possible that Lot was convicted about not having obeyed the angel’s command to flee to the mountains and now we are seeing him begin to obey, but what did he make sure to bring with him to the mountains? He brought a great deal of wine into the mountains. Not only does he have wine, but as you read on, Lot is willing to drink beyond the point of drunkenness to complete incapacitation not once, but twice. So, although he has fled to the mountains, Sodom is still alive where? In Lot’s heart.

Second, while it is true that we cannot save our children, as fathers our decisions can certainly contribute to their corruption. We are the leaders of our families and they are along for the ride, learning from our influence and the influences we allow into their lives. Lot’s daughters left Sodom, but Sodom never left them.

If we feed our children what the world offers - If they listen to the world's music, watch the world's movies, take in the world's education, we shouldn't be surprised when they get older and act like what? The world. Never apologize for sheltering your children from the evil influences of the world.

I'd like to conclude with a few thoughts about what we should learn from Lot's life. Earlier I said Lot cannot be held up as a model to follow, but his account in Genesis 19 is absolutely instructive for both believers and unbelievers.

For unbelievers: In this account we see a man who had no righteousness of his own, yet God counted him righteous by faith. We see a man who, by all human understanding, deserved the same wrath that the Sodomites received, but instead received only what? Mercy. Grace. Rescue. That same mercy and grace is available to you through faith in Jesus Christ.

Now, for believers... How is Lot's account instructive for us? Lot is a picture of someone saved from the fire, but having suffered extreme loss. He was rescued, but everything that Lot pursued in Sodom - the fruits of his worldly ambition were destroyed. It cost him everything.

- His home, his possessions - destroyed.
- His wife - dead.
- His sons-in-law - dead.
- His daughters - immensely corrupted.
- His dignity - ruined.

Lot's life is an illustration of what we find in 1 Corinthians 3:11-15, which describes how our earthly works will be tested by the Lord to determine heavenly rewards.

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.

The imagery is simple to understand. As believers, we are all building upon the foundation of Jesus Christ. We can choose to build with gold, silver, and precious stones - these are things that will endure the fire of God's testing. Or, we can choose to build with wood, hay, and straw - these are the things that will be consumed when God tests them.

Lot was saved, but he was saved "**as through fire.**" He was building on the foundation of Jesus Christ, but what did he build? With wood, hay, and straw he built a worldly, compromised life, and it was consumed. He was rescued from the wrath God poured out on the wicked city, but he only scarcely escaped with his life. The last time we see him, he is living in a cave in the mountains - destitute, and still suffering from the corruption of Sodom.

That's terrible, but here is the bigger point I want to make: What he lost was not merely things in this life - he gave up heavenly rewards.

Make no mistake, believer, you are building upon the foundation of your faith. We are all building SOMETHING. What is it made of? Is it temporal? Is it consumable? In our flesh, a worldly life may look good to us (the land looked good to Lot), but to God it is fit to be burned.

When we come to the end of our lives and stand before our Lord, will our work on earth be rewarded or will it be burned away until only the foundation remains? That is what it means to be saved "**as through fire.**" It means that by faith you were saved, but you have nothing of value to present to your Lord when you stand before Him.

Finish this sentence for me: Abraham was the father of...? Faith. What is Lot the father of? One commentator said, "*Lot...was the father of all such as are scarcely saved.*" (Wiersbe 77) That is a sobering thought, is it not? Here is an even more sobering thought: What will I be known as? What will you be known as?

I will be up front after service. If anyone has any questions or if I can pray with anyone, I would be privileged to do so.

Bibliography

Wiersbe, Warren W. *The Bible Exposition Commentary Old Testament Genesis - Deuteronomy*. David C Cook, 2001.