

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
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LOT'S MANY MESSY MISTAKES

Genesis 19

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INTRODUCTION: While this series of messages has covered the Abraham narrative, Abraham's nephew enters and leaves the story several times. Now, we preachers like to look for ways to inspire people in our sermons, and there is nothing really inspiring about Lot's life. It is possible, however, to learn a lot from the messy stories of the Bible. The story of Lot is one of them. After today, we won't hear about Lot again.

Here are today's points:

- Lot's messy reasoning fixed nothing.
- Lot's messy hesitation almost cost him.
- Lot's messy life resulted in a messy family tree.

When God first called Abraham, God told him and Sarah to leave everything behind. Had Abraham obeyed implicitly, Lot would have never gone. Lot ended up being such a liability for Abraham. Their servants quarreled to the point that they had to part ways. Lot and the city of Sodom were captured and Abraham's men formed an army to free them. And Abraham was beside himself when he found out God's plans to destroy the wicked city where Lot lived.

As we learn in scripture, two angels arrived at Sodom. Lot persuaded them to stay at his house. He treated them to a meal.

LOT'S MESSY REASONING FIXED NOTHING

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 19:4-5

Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house. ⁵ They called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.”

This is a very blunt scripture but it points out the depravity of the city. We already knew the people in the city were awful because the scripture told us already.

⁶ Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him ⁷ and said, “No, my friends. Don’t do this wicked thing. ⁸ Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don’t do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof.”

EXPLANATION: Why in the world did he offer his daughters to the perverts? It was awful for a father to do such a thing, but I thought of something for the first time this past week. Perhaps it was hyperbole. He knew they didn’t want his daughters. Perhaps he threw it out there to confirm they wanted men. Did he offer his daughters as some kind of silly joke? I realize there are a lot of “ifs” and “perhapses” in this part of the message.

But we don’t see the emotion. There is no emoticon in scripture with a silly face that indicates he was joking. There is no “j-forward-slash-k” in scripture to indicate just kidding. If we read this at face value, we’ll take it seriously. Lot’s messy reasoning helped no one.

Whatever Lot’s messy reasoning was for moving near Sodom, we don’t know. Later, I’ll share an idea. Whatever Lot’s messy reasoning was for moving into the city and raising his family in such a sinful place, I don’t know. Whatever Lot’s reasons were for flirting with such a sinful people were, we don’t know. But what we do know is that his flirting with such a sinful nation left him with nothing in the end.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 19:9-13

“Get out of our way,” they replied. “This fellow came here as a foreigner, and now he wants to play the judge! We’ll treat you worse than them.” They kept bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door.

¹⁰ *But the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door.* ¹¹ *Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door.*

¹² *The two men said to Lot, “Do you have anyone else here—sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here,* ¹³ *because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the LORD against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it.”*

At this point, Lot learned why the two angels, who appeared as men, had come to town.

¹⁴ *So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were pledged to marry his daughters.* In this day, the father would have had to agree for his daughters to marry. The messiness of Lot’s reasoning here is very real.

He said, “Hurry and get out of this place, because the LORD is about to destroy the city!” But his sons-in-law thought he was joking.

Why did they think he was joking? Hmm. Think about it. He pled with them but they thought he was joking. They were either blind to the truth or Lot was not convincing enough. This man Lot, the foreigner, who as a believer in God was tormented over the sinfulness of his surroundings but as far as we know was one of those silent believers, all of a sudden was talking about God. “He must be joking.”

LOT’S MESSY HESITATION ALMOST COST HIM

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 19:15-20

With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, “Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished.” ¹⁶ *When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the LORD was merciful to them.* ¹⁷ *As soon as they had brought them out, one of them said, “Flee for your lives! Don’t look back, and don’t stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!”*

¹⁸ *But Lot said to them, “No, my lords, please!* ¹⁹ *Your servant has found favor in your eyes, and you have shown great kindness to me in sparing my life. But I can’t flee to the mountains; this disaster will overtake me, and I’ll die.* ²⁰ *Look, here is a*

town near enough to run to, and it is small. Let me flee to it—it is very small, isn't it? Then my life will be spared.”

“When he hesitated...” Why did he hesitate? Because he was leaving everything behind. He loved his belongings and apparently, he loved the sinful city.

²¹ He said to him, “Very well, I will grant this request too; I will not overthrow the town you speak of. ²² But flee there quickly, because I cannot do anything until you reach it.” (That is why the town was called Zoar.)

²³ By the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen over the land. ²⁴ Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the LORD out of the heavens. ²⁵ Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, destroying all those living in the cities—and also the vegetation in the land. ²⁶ But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

²⁷ Early the next morning Abraham got up and returned to the place where he had stood before the LORD. ²⁸ He looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, toward all the land of the plain, and he saw dense smoke rising from the land, like smoke from a furnace.

²⁹ So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived.

Think of Lot looking back to Sodom and Gomorrah where he had just spent a lot of his life. There was nothing but a scorched earth, nothing but smoke rising like that of a furnace.

LOT'S MESSY LIFE RESULTED IN A MESSY FAMILY TREE

EXPLANATION: The rest of this chapter is so awful I don't even want to read it. The once rich Lot was reduced to living with nothing in a cave with his two daughters. They made horrible choices and each had a son. One became the nation of the Moabites and the other the Ammonites. Both became problems to Israel who were Abraham's descendants.

In the book of Numbers chapter 25, we see that Moab led Israel into Baal worship. In Deuteronomy 23, we see that the Ammonites and the Moabites hired Balaam to curse Israel in their journey to the Promised Land.

Parents' choices affect children. Parents who never pray are likely to have children who never pray. Parents who never learn their lesson are likely to have children who never learn lessons.

Whatever happened to Lot? We don't know. That's the last we hear of him, living in a cave.

That's the story of Lot. Normally I add some practical daily application to each of my points, but I won't do that today: It goes without saying that messy reasoning fixes nothing, that messy hesitation can cost us, and that a messy life can result in a messy family tree. I want to spend the rest of our time going a little deeper.

Years ago, I read a commentary which said God didn't destroy the city because of the sin of homosexuality but because of the sin of lack of hospitality. That's become known as the hospitality argument.

Let me be clear here. You've heard me say that the best commentary on the Bible is the rest of the Bible. There are times, such as in Paul's epistles where we conclude Paul was addressing a cultural issue of that day and not a universal issue for all people of all time. We conclude that because we note where he addresses the subject in a different way in another epistle.

So, the question everyone is wondering is do I believe homosexuality is a sin? Yes, I do because of the few times it is mentioned in the Bible – Genesis 19, Leviticus 18 and 19, Romans 1, I Corinthians 6, and I Timothy 1—in all scriptures, both Old Testament and New Testament, it is never held in a positive light. Right on the heels of this statement, I want to remind everyone that Abraham pled with God that he would spare the place. Let us not be quick to condemn. Let us be quick to plead with God!

A thousand years or more later, in Luke 17, Jesus was talking with the Pharisees and they asked him when the kingdom of God would come. They were looking for an earthly king that would free them from the oppression of the Roman government. Jesus said the kingdom of God was all around them. And then Jesus tells them about the time when he will return someday:

SCRIPTURE: Luke 17:26-32

“Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man.

²⁷ People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

And here we have a reference to Lot and to his wife!

²⁸ “It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. ²⁹ But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

³⁰ “It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. ³¹ On that day no one who is on the housetop, with possessions inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. ³² Remember Lot’s wife!

Later in 2 Peter 2:7, Lot is called righteous. This is baffling if you think about it. Why in the world was Lot righteous? Here we see that Peter, being led by the Holy Spirit, had more insight about Lot than where the scripture leaves Lot in Genesis chapter 7...*and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless ⁸ (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)—*

As you know, when he parted ways with his uncle Abraham, he set up camp in the plain outside of Sodom and eventually moved into Sodom. My thought is that as a wealthy herdsman, he viewed Sodom as a place to make money. We really don’t know why he stayed. He was tormented, but stayed.

Peter said Lot was righteous, and we may scratch our heads, but it is confirmed in the fact that he was tormented by the sin of his day. A man who is not righteous would not have held such conviction. Lot represents the man who knows what is right and observes the sin around him but either does nothing about it or doesn’t know what to do about it.

Lot never had a true calling from God like Abraham did. Lot strikes me as the kind of man who never found his way. He just followed his uncle, and later flirted with the sinful city of Sodom, hoping for the best. God never called Lot to be the prophet-missionary to Sodom so he should have never gone.

Abraham never prayed for himself, always others. If you recall, Abraham pleaded that God would spare Sodom if only a handful of righteous people could be found.

Do you see the contrast in the two men? Do you see that Abraham was spending his time in constant communion with God and Lot was spending his time building a comfortable life for himself? Abraham's comfort was in following God's will. Lot's comfort was in making himself comfortable.

Think of how Lot missed out on God's blessings. He lived with Abraham and saw this unique dynamic relationship between God and his uncle. It's what I heard described as living around spiritual furniture. A lot of people live around spiritual furniture. Think of it...furniture is all around us. Look at all the furniture in this room. We use it and we don't even think about it. We really don't even notice it. Many people are around spiritual teaching and teachers, but they don't even notice them... the teaching makes no difference in their lives. Lot epitomized what results when you ignore spiritual furniture.

Let us learn from Lot and not repeat his messy mistakes!

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