



A few years ago, I recall a time when I was longing for Jesus' return (I think I was praying), and when I thought about Jesus' return, and was thinking about how much I longed for it, I thought about how odd I was. I mean, think about it. When Jesus comes back (or, when I die and go to Heaven), all that I cling to in this world goes away. Think more deeply about this: the money, the status, the vehicles, the retirement account, earthly food, and the list goes on and on. Then I thought to myself, **"Why is Jesus' return so great if I'm going to lose so many of the things I cling to in this life?" And then I thought, "Why do I cling to those things?" I ought to be living today in light of the reality of Jesus' return.**

Do these questions hit deeply? Why do you cling to the things you cling to? When Jesus says you cannot serve God and mammon, he's addressing our sinful flesh's tendency to find salvation, rescue, hope, and life in *things* – not just money, but stuff. This should hit us deeply because we here are in a country with the wealthiest individuals in the world, and we have a lot of creaturely comforts. Do you ever wonder if you're blinded to reality because you are depending on comforts and living for them instead of Christ? Maybe you say "No" right now, but I'm asking you to consider this because as we enter into Genesis 19 this morning and learn about Lot and Sodom's destruction, I think we have a lot more in common with Lot (and Sodom) than Christians today care to admit.

The main idea of the sermon today is that **A Christian's loyalty must be for the Lord, not for this dying world's "delights."** Since it's been a couple weeks being in Genesis, I want to first ensure we are all on the same page as to what's happened before this text. So, what's happened before this. In chapter 18, we're told that the Lord and two angels appear to Abraham. Abraham jumps to his feet and quickly shows generous, sacrificial hospitality to the Lord and the angels. The Lord then promises that by that time next year, Sarah would have a baby in her arms. Sarah laughs, but the Lord guarantees this will happen! Then, the Lord has a conversation with Abraham. He lets Abraham know that he's going to destroy Sodom because of Sodom's wickedness. Abraham then engages in active prayer. He has a relationship with the Lord, and wants to know about God's character. Will God destroy if there are *righteous* people in the city? Will God judge the righteous with the wicked? So, Abraham continues to ask if there's 50, 40, 30, 20, 10 righteous people in the city, will God destroy it? We find this answer from the Lord in the final verses of chapter 18: **"For the sake of ten I will not destroy it."**³³ **And the Lord went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.**¹

I don't believe Abraham is only wondering about God's character, but he is also persisting in this prayer because his nephew, Lot, lives in Sodom. So, chapter 19 focuses on Lot. Remember, Lot did leave his family behind and went with Abraham all those decades ago, but it seems that while Lot physically left behind his family, and he seemed to have some trust in the Lord, Lot's heart still clung to the comforts of the world. A man by the name of Allen Ross wrote this character sketch of Lot, based on Genesis 19. What must he have been like as a resident of Sodom? Ross gives us this accurate depiction by saying, **"Here was an upright citizen, hospitable and generous, a leader of the community who was a judge –**

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 18:32–33.

meaning that he would screen out wickedness from his town and advise on good living. He knew truth and justice, righteousness and evil. . . . Yet, in spite of his denunciation of the lifestyle of his people, he preferred the good life of their society. . . . The hour of truth came when the Lord interrupted this life. His true loyalty was revealed as godly – but in the process his past hypocrisy was uncovered. The Saint had pitched his tent near the evil city, but the evil city had controlled his life (Ross, *Creation & Blessing*, pp. 377-78). Do you think you might relate some with Lot? What are you clinging to? Are the creaturely comforts of our society potentially suffocating you spiritually?

Lot's tragic living in Sodom is why the main idea is that **A Christian's loyalty must be for the Lord, not for this dying world's "delights."** So, let's jump into the first point in this main idea:

1. A Christian's loyalty. . . (vv. 1-3).

In verses 1-3, we read, "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 bowed himself with his face to the earth² and said, "My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the town square."³ But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.²

Why do I think Lot was a believer. The first reason why I believe this is because Lot's response to the angels is similar to Abraham's response: generosity and hospitality. The city of Sodom doesn't act this way. Lot is different from them. He does share the value of set of generosity like Abraham. However, that can't be enough to say he's truly righteous because we know people can act in kind ways and not genuinely trust the Lord. So, the second reason I believe that is because the Scriptures explicitly state he's righteous. In 2 Peter 2:8, we're told that Lot was a righteous man, and his righteous soul was vexed in Sodom. Lot has faith in the Lord. However, Lot's living in hypocrisy.

Now, the question is, "Will the Lord continue to let Lot live in hypocrisy or not?" Or, will the Lord destroy Lot with Sodom? I mean, the Lord will rescue the city for 10 righteous, but what if it's just Lot whose righteous? Does God care about just *one* of his people whom he has rescued? Well, we'll find out in a little bit, but let's focus on Lot and his hypocrisy. Whereas he ought to be committed to the Lord, he actually is living for Sodom. That's hypocrisy.

2. . . .not for this dying world (vv. 4-11).

In 1 John 2, God tells us that this world as we know it is passing away. It's dying. So, why live for, and seek your life in, something that's dying. There will be a day when this sinful, broken, cursed world will be done away with completely. Why live for it and its passing desires? So, we're told, "**And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.**"³

Lot doesn't seem to firmly believe the dying nature of Sodom. But God exposes Sodom's dying nature here in Genesis 19. When the angels arrive in Sodom, Lot is at the gate – which is symbolic terminology meaning that Lot was a leader in the city. He was a judge. So, we have these two men arrive. We're not told that Lot knew they were angels. He sees the two travelers, and he graciously welcomes them into his home. When they say they'll sleep outdoors, Lot is adamant that they stay with him (probably

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 19:1–3.

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Jn 2:17.

because he knows what could happen to them). He protect them. He cares for them. And then, after they eat their meal, we read this in verses 4-5: ⁴ But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. ⁵ And they called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them.”⁴

Men of the city, both young and old go to Lot’s home to fulfill sensual desires. For the sake of younger ears, I’ll say that this is gang sexual abuse. And notice that we’re given a description of who these men are. They’re young and old. This phrase could include young boys all the way through adulthood. Or, it could mean younger men and older men. Either way, Sodom is given completely given over to their insatiable craving for pleasure – even leading to the degrading of themselves and destruction of others.

Now, at this point, I want to make something plain. Some people today say that Sodom’s great sin was not being hospitable. They make that argument because Abraham was hospitable to the angels. Lot was hospitable. So, it wasn’t the sexual sin and promiscuity. It was that they lacked generosity and love. I believe many people today want emphasize one sin of Sodom so that they can excuse the other. While it’s true they lacked generosity and love, it’s also true that sexual sin was rampant in Sodom. Listen to how God describes Sodom elsewhere. In comparing Jerusalem to Sodom, God says through Jeremiah: **they commit adultery and walk in lies; they strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns from his evil; all of them have become like Sodom to me, and its inhabitants like Gomorrah.”** ⁵ In Ezekiel 16, we find this: ⁴⁹ Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. ⁶ In Jude, we read: **just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.** ⁷ So, was Sodom prideful? Did they take pride in their earthly desires – including food and ease? Were they inhospitable and uncaring for the poor and needy? Yes! But was that their only sin? No. The extent of their sinfulness is revealed through, as Jude decalres, their unnatural desire – the homosexual activity and sensuality. They’re overcome with it. As a result, they’re an example of the future eternal punishment that awaits those who refuse to submit to the Lord.

So, Lot is in his house with his family. The men are demanding that the two men come out to them. Lot goes outside to try to reason with them. He states that what they’re wanting to do is wicked. He’s a judge. He can say this. But he’s has faith. He knows this is truly wicked. But then right after this, we see Lot’s complete and dumbfounding hypocrisy. He pleads that they not take the men, and in verses 6-9, he urges them to consider taking his two daughters instead! How would you feel if you heard your dad say this to an angry and passionate crowd?

But, let me diverge from the story for a second, isn’t this where sin leads? For a time, we think we can manage our sin and our righteousness. We can keep sin at bay while still seeking the Lord. But there is always a point at which sin will demand way more than we ever thought. The men of Sodom don’t like the idea. And none of us readers find this to be at all spiritually impressive. Remember this, Ventura. Sin always will demand more than you ever thought, and sin will always make a fool of you. Even if you think you got it under control. That’s part of sin’s deception. You think it’s under your control. Oh, how foolish if you think that way.

⁴ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 19:4–5.

⁵ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Je 23:14.

⁶ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Eze 16:49.

⁷ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Jud 7.

As the narrative goes on. The men of the city reject that notion and press against Lot to get into his house. It's here that the two men reveal who they are. They open the door to bring Lot back inside and then they miraculously strike every man with blindness. At this intense judgment, hopefully Lot understands the severity of the situation! He hopefully will listen to them now when they say God is going to destroy Sodom and the surrounding region. Look at verses 12-13: ¹² Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place. ¹³ For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it."⁸

The outcry against its people could mean other cities were hurt by the people of Sodom and their wickedness. Or, it could refer to the internal turmoil and bondage of the Sodomites hearts. It's like addicts who feel their emptiness crying out from within. Either way, Sodom is completely lost. So, the angels tell Lot to warn other family. So, Lot goes to his sons-in-law. By the way, the idea of sons-in-law here actually are referring to men engaged to his daughters. But how do they respond to Lot when he warns them? In verse 14, it says the sons-in-law thought Lot was just joking.

Can you imagine how Lot felt at this moment? I imagine Lot never realized how much his sin affected him on a daily basis, but when it came down to this moment – when life or death are on the line – he sees how he wasn't taken seriously from a spiritual perspective. His hypocrisy was evident to others, and he blinded himself to it. He clung to Sodom's comforts while rejecting their sinfulness, but he was clinging to the world more than to the Lord. Does this make you think of yourself? What worldly comforts are you clinging to? What do you think you must have, and what do you justify is ok even though deep down inside you know it competes in your heart with the Lord?

This is Lot. Yet, even though Lot is a hypocrite, God is still merciful to him.

3. . . for the Lord. . . (vv. 15-26).

I hope none of us would say, "Man, I want to live like Lot! What a great example." We learn through his negative example. And in verses 15-22, we see Lot contrasting with Abraham's actions in chapter 18. Abraham was quick, speedy, running to serve the Lord. In verses 15-22, we're told that when the angels came in the morning and told Lot to get out of the city, Lot lingered. What is he thinking?! So, they grabbed him, his wife, and two daughters by the hand and get them out of the city. Then the angels said to flee to the mountains and not look behind them at Sodom's destruction. But then Lot negotiates. He doesn't obey. He wants another city. There's a little one named Zoar. I think this is symbolic that Lot still wants just a little bit of the creaturely comforts. But Zoar would have been destroyed for their sin, too. Lot's still wanting to hold on to the pleasures of the world. Yet, we're told the angels are merciful and allow him to go to Zoar.

Once Lot arrives in Zoar, we read verses 24-26: ²⁴ Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven. ²⁵ And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. ²⁶ But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt. ⁹

I believe that God miraculously and purposefully rained down fire and sulfur in just judgment on Sodom. And, Lot's wife disobeyed the angel's command, turned to look at Sodom, and then was turned to a

⁸ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 19:12–13.

⁹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 19:24–26.

pillar of salt as well. Imagine this judgment. A smoldering region that was taken out in an instant. What kind of God can do this? And to get very personal, will Lot get the point? This world is passing away. What is he living for? What is he clinging to? Why is he clinging to it? It's all gone. Was it worth it?

Now, as you hear this, you might be thinking, "Wow, God needs anger management." And I think many people today only want to emphasize a god of their own making who is always "gracious" and "merciful." But mercy makes no sense without judgment. I remember hearing someone who grew up in church once say that all she always ever heard was that God is love and God loves us and God loves me. But it had no meaning. She knew nothing else about God or what she deserved. Love wasn't deep and wide to her. Listen, if you have a view of a God who is *not just* and does not judge, what is mercy?

This is what I think God is seeking to communicate in this narrative. To the wandering Israelites in the wilderness, they are to be reminded that they cannot serve God and merge with Canaan and their sin. The same is true for us. We cannot love God and this world. But maybe as you hear this and feel conviction, you say, "Ok, I'll just never do this or that sin again," and if that's you, I'm warning you to stop that thinking because the reason we sin is because we're not focused on the Lord and clinging to him. And we don't depend and cling to him because we don't see him as the One of Superior glory and worth. The application is not simply "try harder." The answer is for us is to look to Jesus, our Mediator, to strip us of our love for this world and to increase our love for God. I say Mediator because this chapter ends by taking us back to Abraham. Look at verses 27-29: ²⁷ And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord. ²⁸ And he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the valley, and he looked and, behold, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace. ²⁹ So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had lived.¹⁰

God remembered Abraham. **Abraham was the Mediator** for Lot, in his persistent prayers. And, if Lot wouldn't get the Sodom out of his heart, God would get Lot out of Sodom. Praise God that Abraham prayed for Lot and God mercifully heard. And even more for us, praise God for Jesus who prays for all who turn to him in faith. Have you turned to him? Have you turned from your sins and submitted to Jesus as your Savior and Master? I urge you today to take this seriously because in the New Testament, Sodom is brought up many times with very specific applications for us – whether you are a follower of Jesus or not. I want to state briefly the implications:

- **People who have known about Jesus, and rejected him, incur a stricter judgment for eternity than even Sodom.**

Jesus tells certain people that if he would have appeared to Sodom, the city would have repented, but the people in his day didn't even repent. He says it's going to be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom! Can you even imagine that the Lake of Fire has degrees of punishment? So, I want you to think about yourself. Maybe you've grown up in church, know all the answers, but you don't really trust, love, and follow the Lord. You reject Jesus, who took God's just fire and sulfur in himself on the cross. But as one hymn states, "God the Just was satisfied to look on [Jesus] and pardon me." Why spurn him? Why experience an even horrific judgment than Sodom for all eternity? I cannot imagine what that must be like, but we must take Jesus' words seriously. Jesus means what he says! Will you embrace your judgment or turn to Christ? Even as I say this, I know some could feel angry. You may think, "So, if I don't trust Jesus, I'll be condemned?" No! Jesus said in John 3:17 that he came not to condemn because the world is condemned already. He came to save! You are on your way to condemnation. But Jesus came to

¹⁰ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 19:27–29.

take the condemnation and give you his righteousness! Why choose fire and sulfur? Why choose to be like Sodom? Now is the time to turn to Jesus!

- **A believer's soul is vexed in hypocrisy.**

I read from 2 Peter earlier. Lot's righteous soul was vexed, but he allowed a vexed soul because the comforts were worth it. Do you find yourself there? If you do, you might say, "Well, I'm fine. God saved Lot and got him out of it; so, it's ok that I continue until God gets me out." Whoa! That shouldn't be the conclusion. Second Peter says, "7 and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked. . . then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment."¹¹ God rescued Lot, but do you want to follow in Lot's steps? Never should it be! Get out now. If you're sitting here, claiming to be a Christian and clinging to sin, stop! Why live with a vexed soul? You need to heed the New Testament warning of Paul to the churches when he says, ". . . those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."¹² If Jesus has saved you, he will save you. Are you genuinely looking to him or do you just have Jesus as a lucky charm?

So, what is God saying to you about your sin that you may be coddling in your life? You could say, "Well, I'm not doing sexual sins; so, I'm good!" Lot actually reminds me of the Ephesian church in Revelation, where Jesus confronts them because while they know doctrine, and they speak against the wickedness of the society, they have lost the love they had for the Lord and one another. Maybe that's you. Theologically correct and loveless. Think back to what God said through Ezekiel. **Sodom's sin also included prosperous ease, excess food, and they didn't care for the poor – all the while they lived for a pursuit of pleasure. How are you living?** I can't help but wonder if I'm more like Lot than I care to admit. Don't "shoo away" your conviction and say you're fine because it'll be through godly sorrow that you will find encouragement. God knows how to rescue his children. And today, you're hearing a message urging you to set your gaze once again into your Savior's eyes – to look to Christ and trust him.

- **A believer must live righteously.**

The apostle Jude brings up Sodom and says that those who indulge in sensuality (even if they say they're spiritual) are fakes. And then Jude call genuine believers to live in God's love, pray, encourage one another and wait for Jesus' return! Then comes a glorious conclusion by Jude. He assures us that God will guarantee our obedience! How glorious. So, we can say that a believer must repent because God frees them to do so. He opens their eyes to see he truly is more wonderful than the world's delights. God has promised this, and he's guaranteed the promise through the perfect Mediator, Jesus.

We have the Savior who has prayed for us and continues to pray for us – and promises to sanctify us. So, if you are his, you will repent? You can't stay in it. **God knows how to deliver the righteous! He truly is more glorious and wondrous than any worldly comfort that Sodom or America could give us. And someday, when he returns, while he will condemn the world, he will welcome all his children into his arms for all eternity. All of the brokenness that we've clung to will go away – and we will be eternally happy because we will finally see him as he is. So, why not let go of the things today? He's just as glorious right now!**

Ventura, a Christian's loyalty must be for the Lord, not for this dying world's "delights."

¹¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 2 Pe 2:7–9.

¹² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ga 5:21.