

GENESIS

Why The Beginning Matters

Study 16

Lot with His Worldly Faith & Judgement

Genesis 19

Recap

In Genesis 13, Lot chose the fertile land near Sodom and Gomorrah.

A: Lot's Worldly Faith

Part 1 of 6: Is a matter of choice

Genesis 19:1

The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city.

1) Discussion question. According to the video lecture, what is the significance of Lot being at the gate/gateway in the city?

b) Discussion question. According to the video lecture and Gen 13:10-13, what were the factors Lot had to consider before choosing the land?

Quick Verse Reference

Genesis 13:10-13

Lot looked around and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company: Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. Now the people of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord.

c) Reflection question. The major areas in our lives that will take up a lot of time, life and spirituality are our jobs/careers, spouse, friends and hobbies such as music taste. Do you think through the factors and involve God in these decisions or is it a matter of your choice?

d) Discussion question. According to Gen 18:20 and Ezekiel 16:49-50, what was the sin that made Sodom and Gomorrah evil and worthy of destruction in God's eyes?

Quick Verse Reference

Genesis 18:20

Then the Lord said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous

Ezekiel 16:49-50 (English Standard Version)

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. They were haughty and did an abomination before me. So I removed them, when I saw it.

Part 2 of 6: Worldly faith makes us live against our conscience

2) Discussion question. According to the 2 Peter 2:6-8, what do you think is the long-term effect of living among people who do not feel guilty about doing evil?

Quick Verse Reference

2 Peter 2:6-8

if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)

Part 3 of 6: With a Worldly faith, our Moral compass is skewed

Genesis 19:2-11

"My lords," he said, "please turn aside to your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning."

"No," they answered, "we will spend the night in the square."

But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate. Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house. 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."

Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him and said, "No, my friends. Don't do this wicked thing. 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."

“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.

But the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door. 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.

3) a) Reflection question. It is shocking that Lot offered his two daughters to be raped instead of his guests, but that is the point of the story: Lot’s moral compass was skewed. What are the ways that we can prevent our morals from being skewed or to identify skewedness in our moral compass?

b) Discussion question. According to Isaiah 3:8-9 Sodom is not bothered to hide their sin, and the Oxford secular dictionary had removed the word ‘sin’ since 2008. This seems to be a war on language. Why is a definition of a word when describing something important?

c) Discussion question. Jeremiah 23:14 and Isaiah 1:10-11 refer to people who are religious and those who offer sacrifice as Sodom and Gomorrah, which means those terms does not only affect non-believers. Refer to the signs and symptoms in Jer 23:14 to help us identify modern Sodom and Gomorrah today.

Quick Verse Reference

Jeremiah 23:14

And among the prophets of Jerusalem

I have seen something horrible:

They commit adultery and live a lie.

They strengthen the hands of evildoers,

so that not one of them turns from their wickedness.

They are all like Sodom to me;

the people of Jerusalem are like Gomorrah.”

Part 4 of 6: Worldly faith causes Loss of Testimony

Genesis 19:12-14

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, 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.”

So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were pledged to marry his daughters. 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.

4) Reflection question. Lot’s future son-in-laws did not believe in Lot. How do you think the people around you will react when you share the Gospel message and the effects of unbelief?

Part 5 of 6: Worldly faith causes a person to be too embedded to let go

Genesis 19:15-22

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.”

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. 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!”

But Lot said to them, “No, my lords, please! 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. 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.”

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

5) Reflection question. Lot “hesitated” and “lingered” even though his life and his family’s lives are in danger but the Lord was merciful and pulled their hands out of danger. Are there areas in your life that is making you hesitate to obey God’s commands (which are for your good)?

Part 6 of 6: Worldly faith affects all those around us

Genesis 19:23-26

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

6) a) Discussion question. What made Lot’s wife turn her head according to the video lecture?

Genesis 19:30-36

Lot and his two daughters left Zoar and settled in the mountains, for he was afraid to stay in Zoar. He and his two daughters lived in a cave. One day the older daughter said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is no man around here to give us children—as is the custom all over the earth. Let's get our father to drink wine and then sleep with him and preserve our family line through our father."

That night they got their father to drink wine, and the older daughter went in and slept with him. He was not aware of it when she lay down or when she got up.

The next day the older daughter said to the younger, "Last night I slept with my father. Let's get him to drink wine again tonight, and you go in and sleep with him so we can preserve our family line through our father." So they got their father to drink wine that night also, and the younger daughter went in and slept with him. Again he was not aware of it when she lay down or when she got up.

b) Reflection question. Lot's choice in bringing his faith into a wicked city with a world faith affected his daughter's moral compass which became skewed. What are the steps we should be doing for the future generation to prevent this?

Genesis 19:36-38

So both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their father. The older daughter had a son, and she named him Moab; he is the father of the Moabites of today. The younger daughter also had a son, and she named him Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the Ammonites of today.

c) Discussion question. What is the significance of the Moabites and Ammonites? Are they an effect of Lot's worldly faith as well?

Genesis 19:29

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.

d) Discussion question. If Lot's worldly faith is so bad, why did God bother to save Lot and pull his 'hands'?

B: God's Judgment

Part 1 of 3: God always judges evil

Genesis 19:27-29

Early the next morning Abraham got up and returned to the place where he had stood before the Lord. 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.

7) Reflection question. How do you feel about the fact that God always judges evil?

Part 2 of 3: In judgement, God exercises mercy

8) Reflection question. God spared Lot's family and a town called Zoar. How do you feel about the fact that God exercises mercy?

Part 3 of 3: Righteousness is not perfection, it is faith

9) Reflection question. Lot was described as righteous and godly in 2 Peter 2:7-9 despite being influenced by worldly faith because he had faith in God. Reflect on 1 Corinthians 3:13-15 to see how this translates for Christians today. Share your thoughts on that passage.

Quick Verse Reference

2 Peter 2:7-9

and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)— if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment.

1 Corinthians 3:13-15

their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.

Take Away

A: Lot's Worldly Faith

Part 1 of 6: Worldly faith is a matter of choice

Part 2 of 6: Worldly faith makes us live against our conscience
Part 3 of 6: With a Worldly faith, our Moral compass is skewed
Part 4 of 6: Worldly faith causes Loss of Testimony
Part 5 of 6: Worldly faith causes a person to be too Embedded to Let go
Part 6 of 6: Worldly faith affects all those around us
B: God's Judgment
Part 1 of 3: God always judges evil
Part 2 of 3: In judgement God exercises mercy
Part 3 of 3: Righteousness is not perfection, it is faith

Case Study

Case 1 – Homosexuality in the Secular Environment

Both Mr. and Mrs. Maniam are in the Parents Teachers Association of the Sri Sinar private school where their two children attend. There has been quite a lot of activity recently as one of the parents Mick Ong campaigned for a place on the committee running as the chairman. Mick is a well-known TV personality and a practicing homosexual. He is living with another man and also has two adopted children in school.

There is a lot of folk against his running for the position and there are quite a few as well who are in support. Mr. and Mrs. Maniam are Christians and object to the appointment of Mick.

1) a) Discussion question. What do you think is the usual argument in favor of Mick running for chairman?

b) Discussion question. What do you think would be Mr. and Mrs. Maniam's objections to Mick?

c) Discussion question. What would be the Christian response to this whole episode and how should Mr. and Mrs. Maniam go about solving this problem?

Case 2 – Homosexuality in Church

Sally and Simone are a lesbian couple who have been quietly attending the 2nd Baptist church of Petaling Jaya. They are professing Christians and claimed to have accepted the Lord

3 years ago. They don't believe that homosexuality is wrong and their attraction to each other is based on a natural inbuilt sexual desire for the same sex.

They live exemplary lives in the community. They are a nice couple and have no children but love kids. Recently they applied to be Sunday School teachers for the next semester as well as for church membership. Most people avoid them in church. They are fed up with the discrimination and demand to be included.

At the same time, they are fighting the management of the local steel plant where they work as accountants because they are in danger of being fired from their jobs since they have recently come out of the closet and declared themselves to be lesbians.

2) a) Discussion question. How should the church deal with this couple? Discuss these statements from homosexual couples.

Statement #1: "The church should not discriminate against homosexual couples, they have a right to full fellowship and acceptance, and love in the church. The church must show grace and receive homosexuals, like Jesus who spent time with tax collectors and sinners. In fact, Jesus came not to save the righteous but the sinners!"

Statement #2: "How can the church "judge" homosexual couples because Jesus in Matt 7:1-5 told the church not to judge when they have in the past ignored the sins of couples who divorce or commit adultery. Shouldn't the church set its own house in order before condemning the homosexual couple?"

Statement #3: "The church of all organizations should recognize basic human rights and realize that homosexuality is a private matter between a loving consenting couple and not discriminate against them. Instead, the church should accept this alternative lifestyle."

Response to each Answer

Statement #1: The church should not discriminate against homosexual couples, they have a right to full fellowship and acceptance, and love in the church. The church must show grace and receive homosexuals like Jesus who spent time with tax collectors and sinners. In fact, Jesus came not to save the righteous but the sinners!

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Statement #3: The church of all organizations should recognize basic human rights and realize that homosexuality is a private matter between a loving consenting couple and not discriminate against them. Instead, the church should accept this alternative lifestyle.

Case 3 – Same-sex Marriage

Harriet and James have a son called Brandon and he has decided to live a homosexual lifestyle despite the objections of his godly parents who are fervent Christians. One day Brandon announces that he is planning to get married to his boyfriend Fred. The country they live in had recently legalized same-sex marriage and they want to take advantage of this opportunity. Of course, Harriet and James have been invited to the marriage ceremony at the gay church the couple goes to.

3) a) Discussion question. If you were Harriet or James, what would you do? Would you attend?

b) Discussion question. What if Brandon and Fred adopted a child, should James and Harriet acknowledge the child as their grandchild? How can they do this when they never acknowledge their marriage? If they are asked to help babysit the grandchild while James and Harriet had to work. What should they do?

Case 4 – Compromised Faith

Pauline is a single mother who has come to faith in Jesus for the past 3 years and has been struggling to come to church all that time. She has been busy at work starting her own business selling bagels at a new shop in Sunway Pyramid. She is still in a relationship with her non-Christian boyfriend who has consistently made it clear that he does not believe in God and probably never will. He is possessive and domineering, always complaining she does not spend enough time with him.

Pauline finds it hard to find time to read the Bible much less pray. Her circle of friends is her employees and fellow business people. Every spare moment is spent working out how to expand the business to other malls.

Her daughter Judy is now 8 years old and is often looked after by the maid from the

Philippines who is nice and actually teaches Judy the parables. Pauline is upset with the maid telling her daughter all sorts of these “odd fairy tales” which is a term she uses for the parables as she herself is totally unfamiliar with the Bible.

Pauline runs an honest business in cutthroat competitive food industry, she makes good bagels at reasonable prices.

4) a) Discussion question. How is Pauline like Lot? Long-term what do you think will happen to Pauline and her daughter?

b) Discussion question. What do you think about her relationship with her boyfriend? is that a help or a hindrance to her life?

c) Discussion question. What kinds of choices do you think Pauline ought to make if she wants to live a life bearing fruit for the Lord?