

Genesis 19 – God is Serious About the Destruction of Sin (Pray)

❖ Introduction – The City

➤ Let me tell you about a city...

- **This was a very happening city... lots of people living in it and around it...**
 - And they were so busy in this city...
- **They were growing lots of food**
 - It was a very fertile area... Almost everyone had a garden of some sort
 - They had fruits and vegetables during season... all they wanted
- **They were cooking meals and having feasts together...**
 - They cooked meals for their families...
 - Some people cooked things for others to buy....
 - There was no shortage of food to eat and wine to drink
- **It was filled with economic progress...**
 - There were businesses where you could purchase goods daily...
 - There was a traders market...
- **This place was also expanding...**
 - New buildings were going up... all the time...
 - The new house market was good as well...
 - Businesses and personal homes were being build...
- **The people in this city were enjoying their life....**
- **Then in an instant this city and its surrounding cities were destroyed in a single day**
 - And not one of the persons within it survived...
 - **Luke 17:28-29** ²⁸ Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, ²⁹ but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all—

➤ Why do I share this with you today?

- Because the truth of this story is extremely relevant for all of us here today...
- **Jesus is the one speaking in Luke 17... And He is warning people about the coming day of the Lord...**
- **And He is saying... it will be just like in the days of Lot...**
 - He would go on in verse 30 to say:
 - **Luke 17:30** “so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed.”
- **Are we not also eating and drinking? Buying and selling daily? Building?**
 - Such is life for us...
 - But... what will tomorrow bring?
 - I can promise you that no one in Sodom, outside of Lot, saw it coming...
 - No one saw their destruction...

➤ None of us can foresee our final day...

- Our final day may not come with fire and sulfur from heaven...
- I do not dare to stand and say I know when that day is coming...
- Only to say: It could be any day now...
- And we have been thoroughly warned...

➤ I would however like for us to consider the brevity of our own life:

- How many things have we left undone?
- How many prayers have we left unprayed?
- How many things have we told ourselves we will begin tomorrow
- How many of us have led our children well?

- How many things have we left unsaid?
- How many relationships do we have that do not honor God?
- How many of us would find ourselves ashamed in the presence of God...
 - Because we never quite got around to being the man or woman He called us to be?
- **Let this account serve as a reminder... Our lives are short...**
 - And God knows our actions... He knows the depth of our hearts...

❖ **Now: Let's go back and look at what took place in Sodom**

- **We remember that the Lord had already revealed to Abraham**
 - that He was about to destroy the cities of the valley...
- **Abraham met the three men... the two angels and the Lord...**
 - He bowed before the Lord...
 - He pled with the Lord for His nephew and the city of Sodom
- **We see in Abraham what a relationship with God looks like**
 - He serves as our example...
 - **In the same way our Fathers have taught us many things...**
 - **Or at least should have...**
 - **They taught us how to build things, fix things, clean things...**
 - Taught us how we should talk to others...
 - How we are to shake someone's hand...
 - How to have good manners...
 - **They taught us the importance of going to church...**
 - And how to pray...
- **In this same way... Abraham is our truest Father in the Faith...**
 - He serves as our greatest example of living in faith before our God...
 - And in relationship with Him... failures and all!
- **So we saw Abraham: Going back and forth with the Lord...**
 - Pleading for his nephew and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah...
 - If only 10 are found righteous... will you spare the whole city... and God said yes...
 - We see a closeness between Abraham and God...
 - So this is where we left off with Abraham...

❖ **What is happening in Sodom**

- **The two angels walk into the city that evening...**
 - And Lot is there at the gate to greet them..
 - He obviously recognizes them as special men...
 - And He bows to them and asks them to come stay in his home for the night
- **But... they decline... saying they will spend the night in the town square...**
 - But Lot... being the good man that He was.... Would have none of it...
 - So they finally agreed
- **He made a feast for them... provided water for them to wash their feet...**
 - But... Lot only sees them as men at this time...
- **Right about the time to go to sleep... there comes a knocking on the door...**
 - And it is many of the men of the city...
 - And they ask Lot to send the men out to them...
 - They want to commit a very very grave sin... They want to be with the two men...
- **If you remember... God had sent the two angels there to see how wicked the city was**
 - It is almost like He sent them there to test the city...
 - And the men of the city fail the test...

- **But Lot would have none of it...**
 - “⁶ Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, ⁷ and said, “I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly.
- **He even offers them an alternative sin...**
 - Yet... it was something just as bad...
 - And in their wickedness... even the wicked alternative was not enough to satiate their sinful desires
 - So they press against Lot... trying to break into his home to take the men out...
- **But the two angels open the door... and they reach out and strike the men with blindness**
 - And they bring Lot back into the house...
 - Yet the men kept groping at the door even in their blindness
- **At this point the angels let Lot know what is about to happen...**
 - Apparently this act was the straw that broke the camels back...
 - **They say to Lot:**
 - 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.”
- **So Lot tries to convince his soon to be son in laws...**
 - But they think he is crazy... and joking with them
 - **So... Lot has sort of just tarried all through the night until dawn... So we see:**
 - “¹⁵ As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, “Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city.” ¹⁶ But he lingered. So the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. ¹⁷ And as they brought them out, one said, “Escape for your life. Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away.””
- **But Lot... still bargaining...**
 - Asked if he could not go to the hills but rather to another city...
 - And they grant him that request and promise not to destroy that city...
 - So He began to head toward the city that would be called Zoar
 - When he reached the city... Sodom and the surrounding cities’ time was up...
- **And we see God’s judgment on them:**
 - ²³ The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar. 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.

❖ **What lessons can we learn from this story? There are many... but let me share 4 brief things...**

❖ **1) Sin Corrupts Progressively and Absolutely**

- **If you remember... Lot had been with Abraham**
 - But their herds and people had gotten so numerous that they had to go different ways
 - And Abraham let Lot choose...
 - And Lot chose what seemed to be the better lands...
 - **Genesis 13:12 Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD**
- **So Lot chose to settle in a very wicked land...**

- And we see that this had a negative impact on the life of Lot...
 - 2 Peter 2:7-8 ⁷ and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked ⁸ (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard);
 - The sin of the city had a negative impact on him
- **Even after being saved from the destruction of the city...**
 - Lot still wanted more of the city...
 - As you remember... he asks to dwell in Zoar... and he says... isn't it a little one?
- **We must separate ourselves from sin... fully!**
- **The people of Sodom allowed sin to grow progressively...**
 - Ezekiel 16:49-50 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. ⁵⁰ They were haughty and did an abomination before me. So I removed them, when I saw it.
 - **What was their abomination?**
 - ◆ The men of the city wanted to be with the two men that came to Lot...
 - ◆ Homosexuality is a sin in God's eyes... not matter what our culture says about it...
 - ◆ And it is not loving to people to not warn them...
 - ◆ But... can't we do this in love?
- **Now: Notice what Charles Spurgeon says about little sins:**
 - We all see in nature how easily we may prove this, —*that little things lead to greater things*. If it be desired to bridge a gulf, it is often the custom to shoot an arrow, and cross it with a line almost as thin as film. That line passes over and a string is drawn after it, and after that some small rope, and after that a cable, and after that the swinging suspension bridge, that makes a way for thousands. So it is oft times with Satan. It is but a thought that he would shoot across the mind. That thought shall carry a desire; that desire a look; that look a touch; that touch a deed; that deed a habit; and that habit something worse, until the man, from little beginnings, shall be swamped and drowned in iniquity. Little things, we say, lead on to something worse. And thus it has always been.
- **Don't be like Lot's wife... She looked back toward the city...**
 - She was not fleeing from the destruction of sin... and it cost her life.

❖ 2) God is Patient and Merciful

- **God could have destroyed those cities long before...**
 - But He was patient
- **God did not have to be kind to Lot... but He was so kind...**
 - He was merciful...
- **Notice the Mercy of God in the life of Lot... What a lesson it is for all of us who are God's Children**
 - God sends the angels to Lot...
 - They protect him and his daughters from the men of Sodom
 - They warn him of the coming judgment
- **Lot tarries...**
 - He is warned sternly... Up! Get out of this city!!!
 - Again... he tarries till dawn... and they say: UP! Get out of this city!!!
- **God moves Lot**
 - "But he lingered. So the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city."
 - Not only did they continue to warn him...
 - They seized a hold of him... and they drug him out of the city
- **Oh how Patient and Merciful is our God...**

- Ezekiel 33:11 Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live;
- **Do not however... take His mercy and patience for granted...**
 - It does not last forever... as we see here with Sodom...
- **We must be like the Ninevites... God sent Jonah to them to warn them...**
 - He obviously didn't want to go on this missions trip...
 - So God gobbled him up in a big fish and spit him out 3 days journey from Ninevah...
 - **Jonah went around Nineveh saying one thing!**
 - Jonah 3:4 "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"
- **So what do these people do?**
 - Jonah 3:5 And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.
- **What did God do?**
 - Jonah 3:10 When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.
- **God is Patient and Merciful...**

❖ 3) The Judgment of God Comes Unexpectedly but not Unprovoked

- **The men of Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities...**
 - They were eating and drinking and planting and building right?
 - Just going on about their lives...
 - Then all of a sudden Fire and Brimstone is raining down on them from heaven...
 - And everyone is dead
- **On a Side Note:**
 - **They have found the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah...**
 - And it is as the Bible said it was...
 - And there are sulfur deposits...
 - And there are remnants of destroyed cities...
 - In the same place the Bible says it happened...
 - **For many years people in the Bible knew exactly where those cities were...**
 - And they knew exactly what happened to them...
- **So... the judgment came swiftly... but it was not unprovoked...**
 - The sins of Sodom were known by God... And He had had enough...
 - He told Abraham:
 - Genesis 18:20-21 Then the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know."
 - These cities had sinned mightily against God...
 - And God had enough...
- **Heed the Words of Paul this Morning...**
 - Romans 11:22 Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.

❖ 4) Sodom and Gomorrah are an Example to us All

- This story should be placed at the end of every constitution in every country throughout the world!
 - 2 Peter 2:6 ⁶if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly;

- **An Example to the godly and the ungodly**
 - Let the godly stand for what is right... regardless of what the culture says
 - We can not allow ourselves to be sucked into cultural sins...
 - Lest we find ourselves washed away in the same flood of destruction that comes their way
- **And again ... it is not loving to side with people in sin...**
 - And to try not to offend them by calling their sin a sin...
 - This is not loving but hateful...
 - **We should warn them of God's Word...**
 - Or... do we not believe God's Word? Do we not know God's Word?
- **Notice the progression of sin that Paul speaks of in Romans 1:28**
 - Romans 1:28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God **gave them up** to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.
 - Look at your own lives... do you see this in yourself?
- **The ungodly... those who do not yet worship and serve Jesus...**
 - They must be warned... God will not be patient forever...
 - Turn from your sins and to God... and He will grant you pardon...

❖ **Invitation: How many of us live in our own personal Sodom?**

- Really? Maybe no one knows about it... But we do daily in our minds?