

Abraham Part 7

The Righteous With The Wicked

Genesis 18:20-19:28, 20:8-11

Memory Verses: Psalm 130:3

MANUSCRIPT

The Setup: Good and Bad, right and wrong, benevolence and evil, the light side and the dark side. When it comes to morality and values, humanity tends to think in these terms. There is white, there is black, and there is a little gray. Except when it comes to Gary Gray. He is very gray. But, kidding aside, when the world thinks about the scales of justice they think in terms of the good outweighing the bad. Even this past month Pope Francis, in an interview with 60 Minutes, said “we are all fundamentally good.” And in the minds of most people, if we are good then this means that when we die, something good will happen to us. We will either go to heaven, paradise, or some other utopia for the dead. Or we will be reincarnated into a better body and lifestyle. Or we will join in with the life force of all of the souls of the world in the eternal bliss of Nirvana. Good things happen to good people, and bad things happen to bad people.

Abraham shares similar thoughts with the Lord when, in **Genesis 18:23**, he asks him “will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? In fact let's look at the whole passage; **Genesis 18:20-33**.

The struggle here is in the meaning of the word righteous. To be righteous means to be without wrong. It means the absence of anything considered bad or evil. If one were to be righteous they would have to be completely righteous. Any amount of unrighteousness completely negates any righteousness. So if the standard of God's salvation is complete righteousness, we may be in some trouble. Look at **Romans 3:10-11**.

The purpose of today's message is simple. We are not righteous but God is. We do not deserve to be spared, but in his love for us he may spare some of us. This is not about our goodness. This is about God's goodness. Our understanding of this issue should be rooted in **Psalm 130**. If you kept a record of wrongs, who could stand before the Lord? But with him there is forgiveness and hope and redemption. The main point this morning is this... **There is only one righteous enough to be spared, and he is your only hope.**

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to see here is that... **The Sodomites Deserved To Die, But So Did Lot, And So Do We**. Lets tackle these one at a time. First, and probably most obviously, the inhabitants of

Sodom deserved to die. Let's read **Genesis 19:1-11**. The Lord, in theophany form, has surveyed Sodom and Gomorrah and determined they are completely evil and beyond redemption and thus must be destroyed. But after bargaining with God, Abraham convinces God to refrain from destroying Sodom if he can find at least 10 righteous people. The Lord sends two angels to go down and assess whether there are 10 righteous people in the city. **Lot is by the gate, notices that they are angels sent by the lord and bows down to them and brings them into his home to honor them.** So far so good, right? 1 Righteous man, check! But immediately the city shows it's true colors when every single man of the city surrounds Lot's home. Sodom must be a pretty big city right? Granted some of the men of the city died in the war of the 9 kings, there still must be at least a couple hundred men. Men as young as teenagers and men as old as Abraham all come to Lot's house. Maybe they too want to come and honor these angelic messengers from the one true God? Wrong! Their intentions are clear. They say bring them out so we can know them. These men are sexual deviants, enraged with sexual lust, and they literally want to ravage these two men to death. I'm saying this in the least offensive language I could think to use here! It is clear that there is no appeasing them or talking sense to them. They have made their minds up that this is what they are going to do and that nothing will stop them. Lot too would have fallen victim to their rage filled lust if he hadn't been saved by the angels who miraculously pulled him inside.

So the evidence is clear, right? Sodom is so evil and wicked that the men of the city are quickly organized, unhindered by the women, and completely determined to commit one of the most evil and disgusting crimes imaginable. And look at how they justify their evil in **vs.9**. Relativism and Hedonism. Lot is an outsider who doesn't understand our ways and he has no room to judge them. We live according to self-gratification and you can't stop us. These men are ungovernable and void of morality. They are, in their minds, beyond judgment of any kind because they have their truth and it is not Lot's. This way of thinking is called relativism. What is right and true for me may not be right and true for you, but you must respect my truth and let me live by it. But relativism crashes in on itself. Because as you can see, they demand Lot respect their hedonism and self-gratification but they themselves don't respect Lot's truth that these men are off limits. So what are these men's real sin? Is it homosexuality? Yes. Is it rape? Yes. Is it murder? Yes. But that's not the sin that destroyed them. Anyone can be saved after any of these sins. These sins don't keep you from salvation. The sin that condemned them was relativism. Pagan Relativism says there is no God and no truth except myself and my truth. The real sin is the same as the sin in the Garden. You can be your own God! You can be like gods and live however you want! You don't have to live by a holy standard. You can be your own master! **The most extreme blasphemy is this; “there is no**

God except me and I can do whatever I want to do!" There is nothing else the one true God can do with this type of blasphemy, wickedness, and immorality but to judge it as evil and punish it with extreme prejudice. So the angels conclude in **vs.12-14**... there are not 10 righteous people in this city and they are about to destroy it.

Well what about Lot? He was righteous right? Okay, let's examine that. What has Lot done since we met him in Genesis 12 that has led you to believe that he is righteous? Did he get his herdsman in line or allow them to quarrel and bring dissension? Did he show humility and turn down Abraham's offer to give him half of the land? Did he quickly choose the better half of the land and take advantage of Abraham? Did he move his family outside of the most wicked city in the area because of its comforts and amenities? Did he move his family inside this wicked city because of its supposed safety further compromising his loyalty to his family, Abraham, and God? Did he move his family out of this wicked city even after they were captured by an evil king? And lest you missed it in the passage, did he not offer up his own daughters to be ravaged and killed by the men of the city? Also, look at **vs.15-16**. Lot either doesn't believe the angels and lingers. Or he loves the city too much to leave and lingers. Either option is not good! The bottom line is this... Lot was not righteous either! He was just more religious and a little less radical.

Listen, a little religion cannot make you righteous. A righteous uncle doesn't make you righteous. Bowing down to and honoring God's messengers doesn't make you righteous. A little good cannot cover over a multitude of sins! So clearly Lot deserved the same punishment as the men of Sodom. He had become a Sodomite himself. He wanted Sodom more than God and thus he deserved the same damnation. However, that's not what happened. Look at **Genesis 19:15-29**. You know the story. God destroys Sodom and saves Lot. Why does God save Lot? There is only one good reason I can come up with. **Vs. 29**: God remembered Abraham. God made a promise to bless Abraham. God only saves Lot because of his love and covenant to Abraham! This is so important to understand! God saved Lot because of his love for someone else!

And that's where we come into the story! You see, even if Lot was a righteous person by our standards, he wasn't according to God's standards. Because in God's eyes, all are born with sin and all fall short of the glory of God. Meaning, none are righteous, no not one! Do you get it? God knew he wasn't going to find 10 righteous people in the city because there aren't 10 righteous people who have ever lived throughout the entirety of human history! Look at **1John 1:8 & 10**. We all have sin and if we say we don't we are liars. We are not righteous. So, pastor are you saying that we are no better than the people of Sodom and

Gomorrah? That's exactly what I'm saying! In and of yourself you are evil and wicked and you will follow your own heart and your own ways and establish yourself as your own god! But here is the good news this morning. Though you deserve Fire and Brimstone, like Lot, God has saved you! Not because of who you are or what you have done that is good. Your good is irrelevant. Your religion is irrelevant. Your works are irrelevant. **You were saved by God for the same reason God saved Lot. Because of His love for someone else.** Except this time it was not Abraham, but Abraham's seed, his son, Jesus Christ! In **John 17**, Jesus is in the garden and he is about to go to trial and then floggings, and then the cross. And this entire chapter he prays for you to be saved by his father, God. To save time let me just read the first three verses. **John 17:1-3**. I've said this many times, but it deserves repeating many times. When God looks at you in your sin, he doesn't see your sin. He sees the blood of his son! He accepts you and loves you all the more now, because you are covered by the one he loves above all, his son! You cannot save yourself! You are not righteous. Jesus is righteous and because of the father's love for him, you can be saved! **There is only one righteous enough to be spared, and he is your only hope.**

Secondly, we need to see that... **Though God May Choose To Spare You, You Can Choose Not To Be Spared**. Now we are getting into the weeds and I promise you I will be brief. This part deserves a longer conversation, but it is very uncomfortable and not suitable for this atmosphere I think. Plus, it is very theologically confusing. You'll see what I mean in a moment. Let's read **Genesis 19:30-38**. I have a theory. **My theory is this. God wanted to save Lot and include his lineage in with the lineage of Abraham. Evidence? He gave him half the land. He saved him from Kedorlaomer. He saved him from Sodom. But, Lot and his family did not want to be saved. Evidence? At every chance Lot is drawn to the wickedness of Sodom. Even after the angels of the Lord warn him multiple times to get out of the city... he keeps lingering. Even after the angels tell them to not look back, Lot's wife does and is turned into a pillar of salt. Even after the angels save him from a wicked city, his first request is to go to another wicked city. And so it is fitting that after the escape the destruction of the lord and after they flee another evil city that tried to kill them and after Lot was willing to give up his daughters to be ravaged and killed... that we find ourselves here. Here Lot's daughters, who learned everything they needed to know about righteousness from the evil culture of Sodom, get their father drunk and sleep with him. Wow!**

Why did God save them again? O, right, because of his love for Abraham. But as we've said before, God is a gentleman and he will not save those who do not want to be saved. And before you counter, God is sovereign and he can do what he wants. Yes, he is and yes he can. He can

save whoever he wants whenever he wants. But we also have free will to deny his salvation. And so yes, God will save those he wants to save and yes, God will not save those who reject him. It's both at the same time! And here we see it played out. God sovereignly saves Lot and Lot and his family time and time again reject God's salvation. They have clearly blasphemed enough. And now God will give them what they want. What is their final punishment? Look again closely at **verses 37 & 38**. I missed this the first few times I read it. Abraham is the father of the Israelites; the chosen people of God. But Lot's offspring are the Moabites and the Ammonites. These are not the chosen people of God. In fact these are the enemies of Israel who God tells Jacob to devote to destruction. God wanted to keep Lot's family in the lineage of Israel. But Lot's family rejected that lineage and so God cut them out of his chosen people!

Application

Let this be a very sober warning to us all today! **God will save you by his grace and by the blood of his son if you accept his salvation and make him the Lord of your life. But God will also allow you to reject him and be cut off from his church.** You can have Canaanland or you can have Sodom, but you can't have both! Today I would ask you to do one thing. Hear God's invitation to draw near to him. Hear the angel's warning and flee Sodom and be saved by the blood of Christ! Run from sin and run into the arms of the one who died to save you from hell! You may think, well I'm good. I've done enough good things, I've given enough money, I've served at church now and then. And I'm telling you its not enough! You cannot be spared without giving your life to Christ! **There is only one righteous enough to be spared, and he is your only hope.**

Conclusion

I've heard it said that if God doesn't destroy America, then he owes Sodom and Gomorrah an apology, and I would submit that that is just bad theology. As I've said and the Bible has made clear, there aren't 10 righteous people in America because there has only been one righteous person ever and his name is Jesus. If God is sparing America, it's not because any of us are righteous, we aren't. If God is sparing America it is because of the Grace and Mercy of Jesus Christ. It is because there is still a remnant of the church who are covered by the blood of Christ and are saved. It is not because America, along with every other nation in the world will not be destroyed. They will. It is because God is patient and is not ready to pull the trigger just yet. Pray that God would remain patient. Pray that America would experience revival before it's too late.