

The Price of Indecision — Delivery Transcript

Genesis 19 (CSB) • Wes Terry • Sunday, March 3, 2024 • Faith in the Waiting

⚠ AUTO-GENERATED TRANSCRIPT — verify against the audio before quoting publicly. Produced from a Descript transcription of the Broadview Church sermon recording and lightly cleaned (filler words removed, obvious mis-hears of names and Scripture references corrected). No timestamps. This is not a publication-ready manuscript and it is not Wes's exact words for print. Check any line against the recording before it goes on a graphic, in an email, or in a book.

A little bit more about that later on. When's the last time you had to make one of those really big decisions in your life? I'm not talking about like where you're going to go to eat after church. Not that level. I'm talking decisions that when you make it, whether you choose A or whether you choose B, the implications are going to have ripple effects for years and years, maybe even decades. I'm talking huge decisions like maybe who you're going to marry or what kind of career you're going to pursue. Whether you do or don't buy a house.

Those kind of huge decisions. I don't know if anybody else is like me. I think this is just probably a personality trait. But when I have to make super big important decisions. It paralyzes me. I am so indecisive and it's a terrible character trait to have as a leader, but I can see all the different options and I can talk myself into all the different ways of thinking. And I just kind of get frozen. Is anybody else like that? You don't have to raise your hand, but make me feel better anyway.

Yeah, some of us are like that. I think some of it's personality trait, but big decisions can often lead to indecision. I think that's just a given for many of us. It doesn't matter the way you are, the way you're brought up. And indecision is a decision, right? Indecision is a decision, and indecision can often lead to missed opportunities. One of the biggest decisions that you'll ever make with your life is what you believe about God. And specifically, the decision you make about how to be rightly related to God. If there is a God, how do you know Him?

How do you enter into right relationship with Him? And that is a decision that's important because it doesn't just have ripple effects in this lifetime. That decision has eternal implications. And there are many people who have indecision when it comes to that most important decision. Not always because they don't know what to do, but sometimes because if they do what they know they probably should do, it's going to cost them something in their life and they're not quite ready to pay the price. That decision issue the price of indecision is the theme behind our text today in genesis chapter 19.

If you look at Genesis chapter 19 it really comes as a unit with 18 and 19 coming together it's about what happened when God shows up in your life. And we saw last week in Genesis chapter 18 that Abraham was a man who was ready. To meet with the Lord. When God showed up in Abraham's life, Abraham had done the diligent, difficult work of preparing his heart so that when God showed up, Abraham was ready to receive the fullness of what God wanted to give. We're going to see in Genesis 19 that's not the case for everyone.

There are those who have what I'll call the ready heart, but there are also those who have the not ready heart. And then there are some who are not ready, but they're not ready either. They're not sure if they're not ready. Or not. And that is where Lot finds himself in Genesis chapter 19. And I'm going to call him the indecisive heart and we're going to see a profile of indecision and the consequences that being indecisive can have on your life spiritually. And so let's pick it up in Genesis chapter 19, just to give you a little context.

As I said, God had just visited Abraham in Genesis 18. Abraham was told by the Lord. Actually, the Lord showed up in a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus. So this is Jesus talking to Abraham with two angels, and he tells Abraham, I'm going to Sodom and Gomorrah. And the reason I'm going to Sodom and Gomorrah is to judge them because I've been getting word that there a lot of bad stuff is going on in that city. And so what Abraham does is he stands before God and he begins to pray that God would spare judging the city of Sodom and Gomorrah for the sake of the righteous.

And he argues with God. If there's fifty righteous, would you save the city? If there's forty, if there's thirty, and God's like, yeah, but there ain't. Yeah, but there ain't, yeah, but there ain't. And on and on they go till they get down to about ten people. And Abraham's like, what if there's ten righteous people? And God says, yeah, I'll spare it for ten righteous people. But there wasn't even ten. And so Jesus and the two angels are still marching to Sodom and Gomorrah to judge it. And it says in Genesis chapter 19, when they get to Sodom and Gomorrah, the two angels entered Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in Sodom's gateway.

You might want to circle that word gateway. And when Lot saw them, he got up to meet them, just like Abraham got up and he ran to meet them. Just like Abraham, he bows down with his face to the ground and he says to Jesus and these two angels, my lords. Turn aside to your servant's house, wash your feet, and spend the night. Then you can get up early and go on your way. They say no. We would actually rather spend the night in the square. And Lot knows if they spend the night in the square, that's not going to be good for them.

So he urges them in verse 3 so strongly that they followed him and went into his house. So what does Lot do? He prepares a feast. He prepared a feast and baked not the finest flour and the best bread, but he bakes a bread of unleavened bread. He bakes a batch of unleavened bread, and they ate. And then before they go to bed, the men of the city of

Sodom, circle this, both young men and old men. The whole population. They surround Lot's house and they call out to Lot and they say, where are the men that came to you tonight?

Send them out to us so that we can have sex with them. And so Lot went out to them at the entrance of his house, and he shut the door behind him, and he began to plead with them, saying, do not do this evil, my brothers. Look. I've got two daughters who haven't been intimate with a man. To which the daughters were probably saying, gee, thanks, Dad. Let me bring them out to you and you can do whatever you want to them. However, don't do anything to these men, because they have come under the protection of my roof.

To which they responded, get out of our way, adding, this one came here as an alien. In other words, he's a foreigner, he's not native. But he's acting like a judge. And so we're going to do more harm to you than we are to them. And so they began to put pressure on Lot, and they came up to break down the door. Now there's a whole lot in there we're going to unpack, but just at cursory glance level, I think in those butt nine verses you get a pretty good picture of what an indecisive heart looks like because Lot is plagued with an indecisive heart.

And the way you know that is because of the very opening line. It says in Genesis chapter 19, where was Lot sitting? Do you remember? He was sitting in the city gates. One of the things I learned when I went to Israel is about city gates and it's not what you think they are. It's not like these big golden gates. It's actually just like Curved hole in a big rock that people would sit in, and it was like the entrance to the city. But the people who sat in the city gates were the movers and the shakers of the city.

We're talking like the mayors, the police chief, the higher ups in the city, and that's who Lot is in Genesis chapter 19. The reason that's instructive is because Lot did not begin as a leader in the city of Sodom and Gomorrah. In fact, Lot, because he was with Abraham and Abraham was a worshiper of the true God, was a little bit hesitant to even go to Sodom and Gomorrah in the first place. And yet S He's moved from a place of hesitant to even go to Sodom and Gomorrah to actually living in Sodom and Gomorrah as one of its leaders.

How did that happen? It happened because he's indecisive. And you see this. If you go back to Genesis chapter 13 and just do a little study on Lot, in Genesis chapter 13, the reason that Lot found that he needed to move away from where he was is because where he and Abraham were living, there was not enough land to feed both of their cattle and feed both of their houses. And so Abraham looks at Lot and says, listen, brother, you and me keep fighting, and we shouldn't be fighting because we're relatives.

So let's stop fighting. Here's what I'll do. Look anywhere you want to look, north, south, east, and west, the whole plains in front of you. You pick where you want to go, and wherever you don't go, that's where I'm going to go. And so what does Lot do? It says that he looked out over all of the I think I've actually got a verse on this, if you want to go there. The profile of

the indecisive. They're they're distinct, but entangled this I'm sorry, go back to the verse. He looks out over all the land and he sees the Siddh Valley, which is where the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were, and it says that they were like the Lord's garden in the land of Egypt This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

So he sees economic prosperity. He sees economic security. He knows he probably shouldn't go to Sodom and Gomorrah because the men down there are living very wickedly and detestable before the Lord. But I can't stay here and I need some way to feed my family. So because of the material prosperity and chance of getting wealthy, I'm going to go to Sodom. Except he doesn't go into Sodom. Where does he go? He sets up his tent near Sodom and Gomorrah And then there's this little note, and the men of Sodom were really, really bad.

Skip a chapter, actually not even a chapter, go five verses later in Genesis chapter 14, Lot goes from living near Sodom to living in Sodom. And you know he's living in Sodom because the kings of the east they come and kind of take over Sodom and Gomorrah because of some political infighting that was going on, and they take Lot and in all his possessions because he was not near Sodom, he was living in Sodom. And now he goes from living in Sodom to being in the city gates. So you see this trajectory of downward progression.

Why? It's the first characteristic of an indecisive heart. Indecisive hearts are distinct from their culture, but they're deeply embedded in their culture. An indecisive heart is distinct but deeply embedded in a wicked culture. And that's what's happened to Lot. They're entangled, he's entangled in this world of sin because he kept going closer and closer and closer. To where he knew he didn't need to be. Now what was his driver? His driver was money. His driver was security. His driver was what a lot of our drivers is. I know it's not ideal Honey, I know it's not ideal kids, but this is where the best jobs are, this is where the best education is going to be, this is our best chance for success.

And so even though these are not our people, we're going to live among these people. And the longer you live among those people, just like you see with Lot, the more entangled you'll become in their sin. And that's exactly what happens to Lot. He becomes a leader. Now I want to be very careful in my language because I don't want you to get the wrong idea. I don't think Lot is a sinful dude. Well, I take that back. He's a very sinful dude giving up his daughters to be sexually assaulted by the mob.

But He was not all for what was going on in Sodom and Gomorrah. Okay. And the way you know this is because there's a passage in the New Testament in 2 Peter Chapter two that describes Lot as a righteous man. Of people in Sodom and Gomorrah. He was tormented, look at this, he was tormented by the lawless deeds that he saw and heard. So it's not as though Lot was himself unrighteous. He was not himself engaged in all that sexual immorality, but he was entangled in that culture because of his commitments to material prosperity and to security.

It had kind of made him bedfellows with people he didn't really want to deal with. And that is a picture perfect representation of Christians who find themselves in a wicked culture and they cannot leave it, even though they're distinct from it, because the longer they stay, the more embedded and entangled they become with the godlessness in their culture. And a lot of you are just like Lot. You see what Lot he was good if Jesus came over. When he saw Jesus, he's like, man, I want to serve you, Jesus. I want to bless you, Jesus, but you can't stay here very long.

Because if you stay here very long, you're going to end up butting into some things I don't need you around. You're going to end up entering into domains that I really don't want you participating in because I've kind of had one foot in Sodom and one foot out of Sodom, and I'm not sure I'm ready for you to come all the way over. Which is the second attribute of an indecisive heart. Indecisive hearts are distinct but entangled in the culture of sin, and they are conflicted but accommodating to the people who practice sin.

They're distinct, they're they're conflicted but accommodating to people who practice wickedness. And that's what you see with Lot. Lot's accommodation cut both ways. —I think his personality type is probably just an accommodating person. So when Jesus shows up, he says, Jesus, I want to come come to my house. Don't don't sleep in the square. That's not going to be good for you. I know what's going to happen if that happens. So come over, I'll make you this feast. Except what does Lot do? What kind of bread does he make? He makes unleavened bread.

Why do you make unleavened bread? Because you're in a hurry. Because for Lot, Jesus, I know if you stick around too long, it's not going to be good for you. And it's going to expose things in my life I'm not ready for you to see. And that's where a lot of Christians live today. They are not sure that they're ready to go all in with the Lord. Because Lord, I'm good if you hit this domain and that domain and I'll worship you on Sunday. But if you stick around too long and you butt into my sexuality, or if you butt into my stuff going on at work or if you butt into my business practices or if you butt into how I manage my money, I'm not sure I'm ready to go there.

So let's just hang out here just for a little bit of time and then go on your merry way. That is the profile of someone who's indecisive spiritually speaking, and there is damage inflicted not only on you, but on the people you love when you live in that way. And you see the damage in Lot's heart morally when he offers up his daughters. He I think in your notes I say it this way. The sin that you tolerate in your heart will eventually seep into your life. So what was the sin that Lot was tolerating in his heart?

It was sexual sin. It was the sexual confusion of Sodom and Gomorrah and all that nastiness that was going on in there. And as a result of him tolerating that in his heart, it began to seep into his and it began to seep into his life. Namely he saw nothing wrong with handing over

his daughters to a s a crazed mob that wanted to sexually exploit them. He was sexually confused. So it exposes his decision with his daughters exposes a moral rot in his life, but it also exposes a lack of leadership in his life as the head of the home.

You see a lack of leadership, I think, because the daughters they don't object. The daughters are married, they're engaged to be married to other men in Sodom, who are themselves not godly guys. So Lot failed in leading his daughters to find good men. He failed in leading his daughters and offering up to them. He failed in leading his wife because his wife, when God judges Sodom and Gomorrah, she looks back l longing to stay in her life of sin instead of doing what God wanted him to do. And you see the lack of leadership in his daughters later when they commit incest with their dad, thinking that's the only way for us to perpetrate our family line.

The sexual in other words, the sexual confusion of the culture had seeped had had s seeped sept how do you say it? It had it had mingled in, it had got all s down into the culture of his family. And that's what happens when you're an indecisive person. When you're spiritually indecisive, the sin you're tolerating in your family, the sin you're tolerating in your heart, usually where the culture is most confused where the culture is most hostile to the things of God, it is at that area that the culture is shaping and forming you spiritually and shaping and forming the people in your home spiritually as well.

I've heard it said that culture is created by the good behaviors you celebrate and the bad behaviors that you tolerate. And such is the case spiritually as well. What you're tolerating spiritually in your life and with your home is seeping. It is having an effect on you morally. There is spiritual, ethical, moral rot that's going on in your heart because you're just tolerating it, you're accommodating it. And it's affecting the people that you love as well. That's the profile of an indecisive heart. And the longer you live in that kind of a context, the longer you accommodate that kind of behavior.

Eventually it is going to confront you with an inevitable choice, and the inevitable choice is before whom or before what are you ultimately going to bow Whose accommodation matters the most? Is it accommodating the Lord who has come over to visit because judgment is about to fall on the city, or is it accommodating this culture? This crazed mob who is wanting to sexually exploit and destroy your family. And Lot didn't know what to do because he had lived his whole life spiritually indecisive, spiritually riding the fence, just like many of us are spiritually riding the fence.

One of these days you'll be confronted with a choice. And the choice that Lot made had bad consequences on him and his family. You can't live in a pig pen and not think you won't eventually get dirty. So the choice that Lot was confronted with is give us these mennn or give us your daughters. It was an impossible choice that he had to choose because of his

toleration of the sin in his life and he hands up his daughters. Now, what is the sin of Sodom? That's the big question. People debate about the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Was it homosexuality or was it something else? You've got conservative leaning people who focus mainly on the sin of homosexuality, which is obvious if you just do a honest reading of this text, it's obvious that homosexual sex was one of the problems in Sodom and Gomorrah because it was men wanting to have sex with other men. However, there are other people who will read other passages of scripture and say homosexuality was not the main problem in Sodom and Gomorrah. It was a lack of hospitality. It was it was them not taking care of the poor.

So you've got the kind of liberal, pol usually politically more liberal leaning people say it's and that's why God judged them. And then you have the more politically leaning right people say, no, it was the sexual confusion, and that's why God judged them. And the question is which one of those two people are right. So what do you think? No, I'm just kidding, you don't have to answer. The answer is both. They're both right. If you look in the Old Testament and New Testament, you see God had issues with both.

Ezekiel chapter 16 is one example. In Ezekiel chapter 16, this is what the Lord says. This was the iniquity of your sister Sodom. She and her daughters had pride. Plenty of food and comfortable security. Remember that's why Lot went down there. They were wealthy, but they didn't support the poor and needy. That was a big deal. In fact, the Lord often rebukes and judges a nation that is extremely wealthy, but disenfranchises the poor and the needy among them. But they also were haughty and did detestable acts, read homosexuality, sexual immorality before me, so I removed them when I saw this.

Well, how do you know it was sexual immorality? Well, if you read Genesis 19, it's pretty obvious it's sexual immorality. The other examples in Jude chapter 1 and Jude chapter 1 verse 7 he comes right out and says it. And Jude chapter 1, verse 7, it says, Likewise Sodom and Gomorrah and the s and the surrounding towns committed sexual immorality and perversions, and they serve as an example by undergoing the punishment. Of eternal fire. So here's the way I think about it, and I think there's a biblical precedent for this Sodom had a lot of sins going on in their culture.

They were a culture that had rejected God and were on the course of totally abandoning God's designs in every arena of life. But in a culture that has rejected God and is going their own way, the cherry on top of that kind of culture is usually sexual confusion. It expresses itself in adultery, it expresses itself in no fault divorce, it expresses itself in homosexuality our various forms of homosexuality expresses itself in our culture in transgenderism and the sexual confusion that's associated with it I'm not talking about individuals who have a genuine like gender dysphoria and there's things going on about that, but just kind of this

hijacking of the culture where your biology has no relation whatsoever with your orientation that you think about yourself mentally.

That kind of confusion is characteristic of a culture that has rejected God. There's lots of sins in the culture, but the cherry on top is sexual immorality. Now why do I say that? Well, if you go to Romans 1, in Romans 1, it talks about how the wrath of God is being poured out on all ungodliness, and he begins to describe a culture that has rejected God. And he starts with sins like pride and jealousy and gossip and gluttony and all of these things, but as he increases it more and more and more, it capstones with sexual confusion and sexual immorality.

Specifically, it says that the their men and women exchanged natural relations for one another with those that were unnatural and engaged in homosexual behavior. But the thing that's most instructive about Romans 1 and that's most instructive about Sodom and Gomorrah, it's not that people suffer from homosexuality. There are there's always been people who suffer from same sex who I sh there have always been people in society who have same-sex attraction. It's just part of the world in which we live. What was unique about Sodom and Gomorrah and what's unique about our culture is what the ultimate expression of a culture gone wrong, and that's Romans 1.

1. It's not just that there were people practicing these things. It's that the majority of the culture not only practiced them, but applauded others who did them. In other words, it was this affirmation, celebration. I know it's not what God's design is, I know it's not what's right, but because everyone else in the culture is doing it, I'm not going to say anything wrong about it. So the penultimate expression was sexual confusion, the ultimate expression of God's wrath, the ultimate expression of a culture gone wrong is celebrating and affirming that kind of confusion.

And that's where Sodom and Gomorrah was. Now, how do I know that's where Sodom and Gomorrah was? Well, if you go back and read, it says that the whole population. It was old men and young men. It was everyone who was surrounding the door. So when a majority of your culture applauds. What God appuls, his judgment and wrath will not be far behind. And that's what you see in Genesis chapter 19. Yes, there were sins of inhospitality and sins of robbing the poor and things of that nature. But the pen the ultimate expression was the whole culture celebrating and affirming that as good and true.

And as soon as Lot refused to bend the knee. As soon as he said, listen, brothers, this is wrong, this isn't right, what did they do? They turned on him and said, You are a foreigner, you're a foreigner, not a judge. You have no right to tell us what to do because you don't belong here. You're not one of us. And that's exactly what happens in any culture when the

righteous take a stand. You can accommodate and you can celebrate and you can try to go along to get along and spiritually ride the fence, but eventually in a culture that's gone sick.

You will be confronted with an inevitable choice, and whatever choice you decide will have a price. There's a price to be paid for choosing godliness, and there's a price to be paid for choosing god wickedness. And Lot paid both prices because he was indecisive on what he was supposed to do. Look at the consequences. They fall out in verses ten and following the angels reached out, they bring Lot into the house with them, they shut the door, and then they strike those men who were at the entrance of the house, both young and old, with blindness, so that they were unable to find the entrance.

And then the angel said to Lot, Do you have anyone else here, a son-in-law, your sons, daughters, anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of this place. For we are about to destroy this place because the outcry against its people is so great before the Lord that the Lord has sent us to destroy it. And so Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were going to marry his daughters. Again, I don't think these are righteous men, but Lot had given them in marriage. He says, Hey, you guys, you need to get up.

You need to get out of this place because the Lord is about to destroy the city. But his son-in-laws thought he was joking, so they don't do anything. And then at daybreak the angels urge Lot again, get up, take your wife, take your two daughters who are here. Or you are going to be swept away in the punishment of the city, but he hesitated. Some translations say he lingered. So even though Lot knew that the city was about to be judged, even though there was mercy after mercy after mercy displayed.

God's mercy shown in the warning. God's mercy shown in the protecting of Lot from the mob that wanted to sexually abuse him, God's mercy in warning the sons-in-law. Who probably the Lord knew they're not going to take this seriously, and yet he gave them a warning and invitation anyway. God's mercy in the men of Sodom and striking them with blindness instead of striking them dead. Mercy after mercy after mercy, God's patience after patience after patience, and even after all of that mercy and patience, Lot still hesitated. He still lingered because he was so indecisive.

And yet even though that was true, the Lord still delivered him. Why? Because of the Lord's compassion. Because of the Lord's compassion for him, the men grabbed his hand, and his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, and they brought him out and left him outside the city. Even in judgment, even in wrath, God's even in judgment, God's wrath is tempered by mercy. And you see mercy time example after example after example in this passage. But Lot hesitated. Now I want to ask the question. Are you like Lot?

Are you like Lot in that you know judgment is coming? You know that this you know that the culture in which we live has lost its mind. You know it's invited the wrath of God And yet you

still find yourself spiritually riding the fence. And the reason you're riding the fence is the same reason Lot's riding the fence. My wife is caught up in this. My sons-in-laws are caught up in this. I have family, I have friends that are that are going to reject me. I will lose money if I take a stand.

I will lose influence. I will lose leadership. I might lose my job. You hesitate. Here's the thing though. Even for the hesitant, even for the unprepared and unworthy, the Lord is still gracious and kind. And I love this passage because it shows you the Lord's goodness that even when you have questions in tow, Lord, I don't know if I can trust you. If you'll just take a step of faith, if you'll just let him take you by the hand and deliver you can go with your hesitations and questions in tow.

Because it's not really about the quality of your faith at this point. What matters is the object of your faith, and the object of your faith is the Lord Jesus Christ, because that's who rescues Lot, is it not? It's the Lord Jesus who takes him by the hand along with those two angels. And delivers him. And so you may be here this morning and you're very upset with me right now because I'm talking about these issues and I'm not being nuanced enough and yeah, but what about this example? And I understand that and I'm sympathetic with those arguments.

But the reality is we're living in a culture that has confronted us with a choice. And it is if you don't affirm me, if you don't celebrate me, then you hate me. And that's a false dilemma. It's a false choice. We can't celebrate and affirm people that we believe are living in sin. It's not a loving thing to do. You've got to take some kind of a stand. There has to be some kind of a choice because indecision is doing damage not only to your own soul, but it's doing damage to the people that you love.

Because the culture eats everyone eventually everyone gets eaten by the culture if they're not actively fighting against it and protecting themselves from its corrupting influence. So you've got to take a stand, but know this: when you take a stand, there will be a price to be paid. A price whether you choose righteousness or wickedness and you don't in making that choice you don't have to be confident you don't have to have all your questions answered You don't have to be excited about it. You just have to be willing to step across the threshold and let Jesus lead you where he wants you to go.

And if you'll do that, he will rescue you. He'll deliver you. You don't have to be confident to get off the fence spiritually. You just have to be courageous enough to take the first step. And so Lot does that, and as a result, the Lord saves him and judges the city. So as soon as the angels got out of one side, this is verse 17 one of them said, run for your lives, don't look back, and don't stop anywhere on the plain. Run to the mountains or you'll be swept away.

But then Lot said to them, no, my lords, please. Your servant has indeed found favor with you. Obviously, you've rescued me from here. You've shown me great kindness by saving my

life, but I can't do that. I can't run to the mountains, or the disaster will overtake me and I'll die here's like sitting on the fence again. Look, here's a town close enough for me to flee to it. I know it's a small town, not a big town like Sodom. Maybe I won't be as corrupted and influenced by the immorality.

Please let me run to it. It's only a small place, isn't it, so that I can survive. And in the Lord's kindness, even though it wasn't God's best, even what it wasn't God's original plan, they still say, Okay, fine. I'll grant you requests about this matter too, and I will not demolish the town you mentioned. But underline this part. But hurry up. Run to it, for I cannot do anything until you get there. Therefore the name of that city is Zoar. The sun had risen over the land when Lot reached Zoar.

Then out of the sky the Lord reigned on Sodom and Gomorrah, burning sulphur from the Lord. He demolished those cities, the entire plain, all the inhabitants of the cities and whatever grew on the ground. But Lot's wife looked back and became a pillar of salt. And early in the morning Abraham went to the place where he had stood before the Lord, and he looked down towards Sodom and Gomorrah and all the land of the plain, and he saw that the smoke was going up from it like the a smoke of a furnace.

And so it was when God destroyed the cities of the plain, He remembered Abraham. And he brought Lot out of the middle of the upheaval when he demolished the cities where Lot had lived. There's so much there that we could talk about. You can talk about Lot's fear keeping him from God's best. You could talk about Lot's wife looking back and turning to a pillar of salt. A reminder that you can't receive God's grace and live in sin at the same time. It's an either-or. You either receive the grace of God and repent of sin or you live in sin and reject the grace of God.

That's a very instructive lesson. But the thing that I want us to focus on as we conclude our time together is this phrase in verse 22 and again in verse 29, the angel pleading with Lot. Get to the city because I am not allowed to do anything. I'm not allowed to do anything until you're safe. And then at the very end of verse 29, it says that the Lord remembered Abraham. What did he remember about Abraham? You remember Genesis chapter 18? What did Abraham do for Lot? He prayed. He prayed for his nephew.

He said, Lord, if will you would you please spare the city for the sake of 50 righteous? Would you spare the city for the sake of 45 righteous? What if it's 40? What if it's 30? What if it's 20? What if there's only 10? And in that pleading with the Lord, he found out there's no one righteous in the city. Not even Lot. But he still spared an unrighteous man. He was delivered. Not because Lot was righteous, but because Jesus is righteous. Who takes Lot by the hand in the story?

It's Jesus and these angels. They take him by the hand, an act of mercy and compassion, and they rescue him, even though he was undeserving, even though he wasn't ready, even though he was hesitant. Jesus rescues Lot. Why? Because of Abraham. The Lord remembered Abraham. Abraham in the Old Testament is a type of Christ. What I mean by that is he functions in a way that is similar to how Jesus functions in the New Testament. Specifically in this case, Abraham is a type of Christ in that he mediates, in prayer, he mediates for the unrighteous.

He's standing in the gap. He's saying, Lord, I know they don't deserve it. I know that sin deserves judgment. I know your wrath is just. But would you please extend mercy, not for his sake, but because you are a good God, because you are a kind God, because you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. That intercessory work of prayer is what Jesus does for us today. Is what Romans 8 talks about we have a that he is seated at the right hand of God interceding for us. The book of Hebrews says that we have a great high priest who's able to sympathize with us in our weakness because he was tempted as we are without sin.

Jesus is our mediator. Abraham like Jesus was praying for those people in his life who he knew were far from God and rejected God, but he wanted them to see salvation. And God heard his prayer and he answered it which is a reminder for us as we make our way towards Easter and we pray for people who are far from God and we want to see people come to faith in Jesus as Lord. It's a reminder that God responds to prayer with mercy. God's mercy being unleashed in the life of people you love is a response to your prayers.

Prayed for those people. And so you need to stand in the gap. You need to like Abraham approach the throne of God and say, Lord, please, would you please spare them? Would you please save them? And I know some of you have. Some of you been praying for children, for family members, for spouses, for whatever the case. Someone in your life is spiritually indecisive, and you've been praying for God to show mercy. This morning is a reminder, God hears those prayers. And when he responds, he responds in light of those prayers.

And so as we conclude, I want to invite many of you to come up here and pray for those people. To pray for those people in your life who are like Lot. Some of you have people in your life who are not like Lot. They're more like Lot's son-in-laws. They think it's all a joke. They think it's all fun and games. They think the whole religion thing is a farce. There is no judgment. There is no wrath. That's just an opiate for the masses. Would you pray for them? Maybe you don't even know someone by name, but you know the culture is full of those people and they need God's mercy.

God that he would withhold judgment and he would work in their life to cause them to step athrost step across that threshold. Some of you may want to pray for children like Lot's daughters. Maybe they're your children. And the culture got them, just like it got Lot's daughters. And they're confused and they are not able to really see right and there's all kinds

of complexity and nuance and you'd have a big complicated story. But at the end of the day, you need God to show mercy to them. You need God's kindness in their life.

And if nobody else is going to pray for them, at least you'll be there to pray for them. As a result, maybe God will hear that prayer and respond in mercy. It may be like Lot's wife: someone who is deeply embedded in the culture, someone who has rejected God, even though they're around the righteousness, even though they maybe even come to church, at the end of the day, they're not about it. And you'd pray God would you save them? Would you keep them from becoming a pillar of salt instead exchange their heart of stone with a heart of flesh?

I don't know. But I know there are this is a room full of people, and I know there are people in your life who match one of those criteria. So in our time of response, we're going to have a pastoral prayer time. I'm going to lead us through praying for people in that way. And I just think there's something meaningful about you getting up out of your seat and coming and bowing before an altar. An altar in the Old Testament was something where you would give something to the Lord at the altar.

And so you may be giving this person to the Lord and saying, Lord, I need you to do what only you can do. The other way I want us to respond this morning is you may be that person. You may be Lot. You're that person who has been spiritually sitting on the fence. And you've been hemming and hawing and hesitating and lingering. And today, in God's mercy, He's saying to you, stop. Let me take you by the hand and let me save you. You don't have to you don't have to live this way.

You don't have to be like everybody else. You don't have to perish I can deliver you but you've got to trust me. And then you would say, yeah, but what about this? What about that? What about this person? What if I get rejected? What if I lose? And I understand. I know you're filled with questions. But Jesus doesn't have to give you answers to every question in order to save you and you don't have to have every answer to every question in order to put your faith in Jesus. All you have to have is enough to take the first step.

To say, Jesus, I know I can't save myself and I know you. Have saved me and I am repenting of my sin and I'm trusting you. I'm not saying I got it figured out. I'm not saying I can stop it all tomorrow, but I want to make you my Lord and I'm done trying to save myself. If you will exercise faith, even though it's not a good quality of faith, because Jesus is strong and mighty and able to deliver you, he will respond to that faith with salvation in your life.

And so would you come and give your life to Jesus this morning and stop being indecisive? Let today be the day where you finally cross the threshold. And then finally, those of you who are on the fence spiritually, you've given your life to Christ, but you're spiritually indecisive ethically with a sin in your life. You've been hemming and hawing. I'll quit next week. I'll

quit next month. It's not the right time. Whatever it is, I know there's something going on for many of us spiritually. Would you let God's word to you this morning be a sobering reminder that God's wrath eventually visits those who applaud what God appalls?

And that this morning might be an opportunity for you to repent of that sin in a room full of people who are going to pray for you and intercede for you so that God might give you mercy. Of course, you can't overcome it in your own strength or power. It's got to be the mercy of God, but that mercy is available to you if you'll respond in faith. And so I'm going to pray, and as soon as I'm done praying, I want those of you who are going to be praying to come to the front.

I'm going to ask if you're a pastor or just if you're willing to pray with somebody. If you'll come up here to the front and stand so that people can pray with you. I'd like a couple of ladies, if you're willing, Isabel or any. Any other woman who's willing to pray with another person. And these people are going to be standing here to pray with you and pray for you over these needs that we've discussed. And I'll be here at the front to receive anybody who wants to make a decision to follow Jesus as Lord.

However, Lord leads you to respond, you do that now after I pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this passage. We thank you for this work that you're doing in the life of our church, creating in us a burden to see people come to know Jesus. And I pray now as we respond. That our response would be indicative of people who actually care about people, who actually want to see. Those who are perishing rescued because of the tender mercy of Jesus Christ. And so would you burden us like you burdened Abraham?

Would you show mercy like you showed mercy to Lot? And would you use this time, this morning, as a special morning to hear our prayers and to respond in the way that only you can for those who need salvation this morning, those who are not sure they are really followers of Jesus, would you use today as a way of putting a stake in the ground so that they might know that they know that they know. That they are following Jesus. Not because they have all their questions answered, but because they have surrendered to the one who can give them those answers, who is mighty to save.

In Jesus' name. Amen.