

February 27, 2022 - Mark Minnella

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 27 February 2022

Preacher: Mark Minnella

[0 : 00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church. Knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. Good morning.

You know, I was thinking that the older I get, the more I'm afraid of heights. But I have this friend, Stephen, I really feel sorry for him.

He's afraid of widths. Cerebral, I know, sorry. This morning, if you look at your outline, there's two verses up there, 2 Peter 2, 7 and 8.

And this morning, we're going to be talking about Lot, the life of Lot. And so, I thought we would, for context, we would read 2 Peter 2, verses 4 through 10.

4 through 10. For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment. If he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others.

[1 : 19] 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 people there.

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 in the day of judgment. This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desires of the flesh and despise authority.

Let's pray. Father, our God, we're thankful that you know the end from the beginning. Lord, I'm especially thankful that you have all things in control, including the lives of your children.

Lord, as we study the life of Lot, I just pray that we would be teachable, and that we would go from here more determined to serve you in a world that needs your love.

[2 : 34] Amen. What I would like for us to see today, as we examine the life of Lot, nephew of Abraham, is the progression of his life.

This is a long story, covering several chapters in Genesis. And so as I thought about this, I thought, well, I could either stand up here and tell you the story, or I could read it from the Word.

So we'll be reading a lot today. A lot about Lot. First a little history, and then some genealogy.

The history is this. Terah, who's the father of Abram and the grandfather of Lot, he was born somewhere around 2200 to 2100 BC.

And then Abram around 70 years after that. Somewhere around the time that Noah died. So we'll start reading in Genesis chapter 11, beginning in verse 27.

[3 : 41] Genesis 11, 27. This is the account of Terah's family line. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. And Haran became the father of Lot.

While his father Terah was still alive, Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, in the land of his birth. Abram and Nahor both married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah.

She was the daughter of Haran, the father of both Milcah and Iscah. Now Sarai was childless because she was not able to conceive. Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot, son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of Abram.

And together they set off from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there. Terah lived 205 years, and he died in Haran.

So when the Bible says that Lot was the nephew of Abram, we can see now that he was the son of Abram's brother. But that Lot's father, Haran, he died early.

[4 : 50] And we're not told exactly when he died. We're not told how old he was or how old Lot was. But he died before his father, and so we think maybe at a young age. And I wonder that perhaps Abram then took young Lot to raise since he had no children.

But we see that Abram and Lot are together through this whole story. So the group heads out to Canaan, but Terah gets sidetracked a little bit, and he stops short, and he settles at a place that he names after his deceased son, Haran.

According to Joshua chapter 24, this is in the future, right? This is after 400 years of Egyptian captivity and after 40 years of wandering in the desert.

But Joshua's going to refer to this time. Joshua 24, 1 through 4 says this, Then Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned the elders, leaders, judges, and officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God.

Joshua said to all the people, This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says. Long ago your ancestors, including Terah, the father of Abram, or Abraham, and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates rivers and worshipped other gods.

[6 : 09] They worshipped other gods. But I took your father Abraham from this land beyond the Euphrates, and I led him throughout Canaan, and I gave him many descendants. I gave him Isaac.

I gave him Jacob and Esau, and he goes on and on and on. The key that I want us to see here is that Terah and his family worshipped other gods. They did. Now Noah would have been alive while Terah was an adult.

They probably overlapped about 100 years. Don't know if they knew each other. It doesn't say that. But think about that. According to Jewish history, Terah not only worshipped other gods, but according to Jewish history, he was an idol maker.

That's what it said. The Lord calls Abram in chapter 12 of Genesis and starts with him. I learned something while studying for this. Do you know where they were living?

It says they were living in Ur of the Chaldeans, right by where the Tower of Babel was built. Over 500 years, and they never moved. So Genesis 12, beginning in verse 4.

[7 : 16] So Abram went as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he set out from Haran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all the possessions they had accumulated, and all the people they had acquired in Haran.

So Abram was already expanded. And they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there. They were camping near a place called Bethel. I heard it's a wonderful campground.

It doesn't have water or electric, but I heard it's a great place to camp. There Abram built an altar and called on the name of the Lord.

Later they moved south to the Negev, and there's a famine. And so they go to Egypt for a while, and then they return to the Negev, which is in the south of Israel. Chapter 13.

So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, and his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him. So Lot is still with him. Abraham had become very wealthy in livestock and silver and gold.

[8 : 19] So the Lord blessed Abram when he was in Egypt. From the Negev they went from place to place until they came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai, where they had pitched their tent earlier and where he had first built the altar.

There Abram called on the name of the Lord. Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, he also had flocks and herds and tents. But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great they were not able to stay together.

And quarreling arose between Abram's herders and Lot's. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land of that time. So sheep eat grass, and a lot of sheep eat a lot of grass, and I guess what was happening here was that the shepherds that were over Abram's flock and the shepherds that were over Lot's group, they were quarreling because there was only so much grass and there was too many sheep.

And so in verse 8, Abram says to Lot, Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herders and mine, for we're close relatives. Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right. If you go to the right, I'll go to the left. Notice the faith of Abram. Abram believed God would care for him.

[9 : 40] Any place he went. He had already seen it. Contrast that with Lot. Look at verse 10. Lot looked around, and he saw the whole plain of the Jordan towards 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. 2 Corinthians 5.7 says, For we live by faith and not by sight.

And here's the contrast. Abraham exercised his faith. You pick first. I'll take whatever's left. He wasn't worried about it. Lot looked around, and he picked by sight.

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. This is where we see the problems begin for Lot. He picked the best land. He's now away from his uncle Abram, and it says in verse 12, He pitched his tents near Sodom.

[10:50] As they like to say these days in the news, what did he know, and when did he know it? What did he know, and when did he know it? Did he know the people of Sodom were wicked?

It probably didn't take too long for him to find out. In chapter 14, a war breaks out between the kings of the land, and Lot and everything he has is taken captive.

Word comes to Abram. He rounds up 318 of his best men, and he defeats all these guys, and he rescues Lot and all of his possessions. This is where Abram runs into Melchizedek on the way back.

Melchizedek is called a priest of the Most High God. He blesses Abram, and Abram gives him a tithe, the tenth of everything. And then Abram refuses to take anything from the king of Sodom.

But that's a whole other message. I wonder what Lot thought of all this. Doesn't say. Doesn't say, but he goes right back to Sodom.

[11:54] I was just thinking, that should have been a wake-up call. That should have been a wake-up call. So the narrative for the next several chapters of Genesis then deals mostly with Abram and God's promises to him, and so we'll pick up in chapter 18.

Genesis 18. Abram, who is now Abraham, he gets a visit from three strangers. Two are angels, and one is the Lord. And the Lord tells Abraham that he will have a child the next year.

Abraham is now 99 years old. Then as they're about to leave, the Lord reveals to Abraham his plan to destroy Sodom. Abraham pleads with the Lord not to destroy the righteous with the wicked.

This is where he says, Lord, if there's 50 righteous people in Sodom, okay, if there's 40 righteous people, okay, if there's 30 righteous people in Sodom, if there's 20, if there's 10 righteous people in Sodom, would you really destroy the righteous with the wicked?

And the Lord says, okay, if I find 10 righteous people there, I won't destroy the city. Well, there weren't. The next time we see Lot is Genesis chapter 19.

[13:06] The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. He packed up and he moved into the city. Genesis 19.

When he saw them, he got up to meet them, and he bowed down with his face to the ground. My Lord, she said, please turn aside to your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way in the morning.

He doesn't know what they're there for. No, they said, we'll spend the night in the square. But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him to his house. He prepared a meal for them, breaking bread without yeast, and they ate.

He'd become a permanent resident of Sodom. 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 those men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them. This part I have to tell you is disturbing for me.

[14:16] I've never liked this. Verse six, Lot went outside to meet them, and he shut the door behind him. And he 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. How could Lot say that?

How could he say that? I don't know. There's things in the word I don't understand. I don't understand this man. I think that it's the nature of a father to protect their children.

It is. It's just built in. I don't understand how he could say that. How far from the Lord, how far from reality, how far from any conscionable thing could he say, well, don't take these guys.

Just take my two virgin daughters. But that's what he said, because that's what the scripture says.

Fortunately for Lot, the two angels blind all the men, and they cannot see, and so they cannot get in

the house.

[15:17] And then it says, throughout the night, the two angels continue to tell Lot and his family to leave Sodom because God will destroy it. Lot goes to tell these two men who are engaged to his daughters what the angels said, and they think he's joking.

Lot has no credibility with anybody of the town and not even credibility with people that are close to him, that would be his family. There's no credibility at all.

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. Verse 16.

When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand in 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 him out, one of them said, flee for your lives. Don't look back. Don't stop anywhere in the plain. Flee to the mountains or you'll be swept away.

[16:19] Show me that picture of Lot's wife, if you would. Hey, KJ. Can you get that up there for me, bud? Thanks. I have a question while we're doing this.

What is the name of Lot's wife? Come on. I got a \$50 bill, if you can tell me. Yeah. She doesn't have a name. Isn't that sad? What are the names of his two daughters?

Older and younger. Isn't that interesting? Do you think Jesus knew the name of Lot's wife? Yeah? Do you? Well, in Luke, he refers to her as Lot's wife.

Luke chapter 17, verse 32, if you want to look it up. He calls her Lot's wife. Isn't that interesting? She doesn't even deserve a name. Yeah, so this thing, if you go over to the Holy Land, I've never been there, but this thing is called Lot's wife.

That's what they call it. It's right by the Dead Sea. They call that Lot's wife. What a reminder. Verse 29, So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham.

[17:30] And he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived. So what can we learn from this? Psalm 1.1 says this, Blessed is the one who does not walk and step with the wicked, or stand in the way that sinners take, or sit in the company of mockers.

You see the progression there? James 1.14, But each person is tempted when they're dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Is it wrong to be tempted?

Jesus was tempted. The Bible says yet without sin. It's not wrong to be tempted. What happens then, though? Then after desire is conceived, it gives birth to sin.

And sin, when it is full grown, gives birth to death. The wages of sin is death. This is the progression of sin. And this is what we see in the life of Lot and his family.

First, he picked the best land. Then he pitched his tents near Sodom. Later, he packed up and he moved into the city. And then he became a permanent resident of Sodom.

[18:42] Folks, Lot didn't change that city. That city changed Lot and his family. Many, many years ago, my son Daniel was in seventh grade, I think.

And he asked me if he could go to this youth group. It was in West County. Some of his friends were going there and they told him how much fun it was. And I said, sure. So I drove him to this youth group in West County.

And I think it's the first time he ever went. And so I picked him up and I said, how was it? And what did you learn? You know, let's talk about it. He said, well, they played this game.

I'll never forget this. And I've talked about it with Daniel many times. He said, we played this game. And he said, they asked for a volunteer and they said it was going to be really physical. So I raised my hand.

And they played this game where there was a platform here that was about three feet off the ground. And Daniel got up on the platform. And the game was this.

[19:40] All the other kids in the youth group tried to pull him down off the platform. But his job was to see how many kids he could pull up on the platform with him. I said, oh, that's interesting. How did you do?

He goes, well, I lost. There was too many of them. I said, okay. He said, and the guy said, this is the problem with Christianity. He said, bad company always corrupts good character.

And so you hang around with kids who are trying to drag you down and there's too many of them. And you're by yourself. You're going to get drugged down most times. You're not going to bring all of them up.

Another thing I'd like us to see in this story is this. The justice and the mercy of Almighty God. In another place in Scripture it says, God is the just and the justifier of those who trust him. See, justice, God is part of his character. He has to be just. He's holy. He's separate from sin. He can never have sin in his presence. And so no person could stand in the presence of Almighty God because we're not just.

[20 : 49] We're sinners. But then we see the mercy of God. The mercy of God. And just as he led Lot and his family outside of that destruction, he saved them.

It's much like the story of Noah and the ark, right? Noah builds this ark. I have no doubt that the people around him had every opportunity to get in that boat.

But none of them did. They chose to perish. There's a day that's coming for each of us where we'll be judged. In Revelation chapter 20, beginning in verse 11, it describes it this way.

Then I saw a great white throne and him who seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne and the books were opened and another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it. The death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them. And each person was judged according to what they had done.

[22 : 01] Folks, if we're judged according to what we've done, the Bible says we fall short. We've all sinned and we fall short of the glory of God. No one can make heaven on their own. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire.

This lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire. Today I'm glad that my name is in that book, not because anything I did.

But I want to back up just one verse, Revelation 20, verse 6. It says this, Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection.

The second death has no power over them. You see, the Bible describes for us that Jesus made a way for us. We could never measure up. We could never be good enough. Lot is a really bad example.

In fact, I've shared with a couple people, I wasn't going to say this, but I will. If I could pull those two verses in 2 Peter out of the scripture, we would never say anything good about Lot.

[23 : 05] Nothing. There's nothing in the narrative that's good about this man. But the Bible said he was righteous. Jesus knew his heart. He started off good anyway, right?

God knows that each and every one of us will fail. And yet, he's provided a way, one way. Jesus said, I'm the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

And so I just have to end with this. What about you? What about you? Have you come to a place in your life where you've realized that you can't make it on your own? You can't be good enough. Lot's an awful guy and maybe you're a lot better than he was.

I don't know. But none of us can make it on our own. That's why Jesus came and he died in our place. The Bible says that the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

What a neat gift. What a neat thing. Lot was saved. His life was spared even though he didn't deserve it. On any scale, there's no way this guy deserved to be saved. But God is merciful.

[24 : 09] And because of Abraham, Lot was saved. And God is merciful in our lives. Because of his love for us, the Bible says, not because of anything we did but because of his love. And just because that Abraham believed God, it was counted to him for righteousness.

Abraham wasn't a great guy either. He made a lot of mistakes. But God's love and God's mercy offer us a chance to be with him forever. That's what he really wants for each of us.

And so I pray this morning that each of us would know for sure that our name is written in that book of life. Father God, thank you so much. This was a real difficult story and a sad story in many ways. But Father, it shows that you are merciful. It shows that even though you judged this whole area and everyone perished, yet you saved Lot and his family.

And God, it shows that you are just and yet you are merciful. And that each of us is offered a way out of our sin by the death, burial, and resurrection of your son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[25 : 15] We thank you for that this morning. We thank you for that and let's pray. We thank you for that for coming to you today.

We thank you.