

Transcript

Paul H. Dixon:

Genesis chapter 19. I love to go back into the Old Testament. I love to preach from the Old Testament. I love to hear preaching from the Old Testament. In my library, I have the whole bottom shelf, that stretches from one wall to the other, filled with biographies. Biographies of men and women of the Bible. Biographies of Christian men and women outside of the Bible and biographies of people who were not Christians. I just love to read and study lives. I find, as I look into the word of God and begin to study the lives of people in the Bible, there's so much there for you and for me.

And tonight, I like to speak on lingering Lot. I like to begin with Genesis 19 verse 1, "And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom. Lot, seeing them, rose up to meet them. And he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. And he said, 'Behold, now my Lords turn in I pray you, into your servants house. Tarry all night, wash your feet. Ye shall rise up early and go on your ways.' They said, 'No, thank you. We'll abide in the street all night.' And he pressed upon them greatly. And they turned in unto him and entered into his house and he made them a feast and did bake unleavened bread and they did eat."

Down to verse 12, please. "And the men said unto Lot, 'Has thou here any besides? Son-in-law, sons, thy daughters. Whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place. We will destroy this place because the cry of them is waxing great before the face of the Lord and the Lord had sent us to destroy it.' But when Lot went out and spake unto his sons in-laws which married his daughters and said, 'Up, get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his son-in-laws.' When the morning arose and the angels hastened Lot saying, 'Arise, take thy wife and thy two daughters, which are here. Lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.' And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, upon the hand of his wife, upon the hand of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful unto him, and they brought him forth and set him without the city."

Verse 24, "Then the Lord reigned upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities and all the plane and all the inhabitants of the cities and that which grew up on the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him and she became a pillar of salt."

I want to give you a very simple outline tonight to build our thoughts around. Number one, the lessons from the angels. The word of God's a very practical book. The lessons from the angels for you and for me. Number two, the lessons from Lot. We learn something from the angels, but we also learn something from this man named lot. Number three, the lessons from Lot's wife. Let's go back and see what's happening. God sends two angels to Sodom, Lot sitting at the gate. That's the place that generally the mayor would sit at the town. We would assume that this man who's a professing Christian is in a place, an elected place of authority. And he sits there and he welcomes all the visitors as they would come into Sodom. As he greets these men, takes them to his home, says, "I'd like to have you come in and spend the night with me." They said, "No, we'd rather sleep in the street." That's strange.

Do you ever compare Genesis 19 to Genesis 18. Genesis 18, they went to Abraham's house. Abraham gave them the same gracious invitation and they immediately responded, went inside and enjoyed the hospitality that Abraham offered. Lot extends hospitality. They say, "We'd rather not." Ever wondered why? George Whitefield great evangelist was one day invited by a couple to stay in their home, during the midst of the campaign. I guess many of us do not appreciate bluntness. I think, if you begin to study history, you'll find that though, many of these great men were not cruel men, they were usually very

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blunt men. George Whitfield looked at that couple and said, "No, thank you. I'm very particular about the homes I stay in. And I understand that you are people who do not worship God every day. You do not have a family altar. You do not serve God as a family. And I appreciate your invitation, but I'd prefer not to stay in your home." I believe that the angels were very careful about the homes they stayed in. Abraham had a spiritual home. Lot had a carnal home.

I'm not being unjust to Lot. As we study this passage of scripture and study the Bible, there's no doubt about it. Lot had a carnal home. Let me ask you something, friend. Would angels from God want to stay in your home tonight? Do you have a spiritual home or do you have a carnal home? Do you serve God in your family? Or do you serve the world in your family? Angels said, "No". Scripture says that Lot pressed upon them. Evidently he explained to them the kind of a city they were in and said, "You'd better come inside." You don't want to stay out in these streets, not here in New York city. You find out what's going on, all the homosexuality. You know what, we get the word 'sodomy,' don't you? Sodom. That's what was going on in this town.

And even after these men were taken into Lot's house, the men, the wicked men of the city came and they wanted these men to be turned over to them, so they could know them. So they could have illicit sexual relationships, commit homosexuality with these men. I have no time for homosexuality. It's not sickness. It's sin. I have no time today for all these preachers who want to go around having their homosexual churches and ordaining their homosexual preachers either.

Say, I'll tell you what friend. If you want a fascinating study, this is another message, I haven't brought it in years and years and years. But one day I just went through the scriptures on what the sin of Sodom actually was. As I went through my Bible, I found that God in Isaiah and Ezekiel actually lists the sin of Sodom. When I was reading that list, I thought that I was reading current American history. God judged Sodom and God's going to judge America. You mark it down.

God is not mocked. You cannot mock God as an individual. You can't mock God as a family and you can't mock God as a nation. God will judge you. God judges us all. All the sins going on. Do you know there's something from those angels that speaks to my heart. I learned one very simple lesson from those angels. You know what it is? It's the lesson of the grace of God. I think, we need to learn that lesson America today. The lesson of the grace of God. God, out of the heart of grace, mercy, sends two of His very own angels into a wicked city, bearing a message of judgment, yet deliverance, salvation to one man and his family. He didn't have to do it, but he did.

We don't know what grace is in America. You know why we don't know what grace is? You cannot understand grace, as long as you feel like everybody owes you something. When everybody feels like I deserve this, I deserve that, you don't know what grace is. We have men running for office. And I would like to think that after a lot of years, we're finally learning our lesson with all the economic problems we've had. But I don't believe we've learned the lesson. We still will vote for the guy who promises us the most. Why? Because, our country owes us something, we say. Everybody owes us something.

We're raising young people today and we're raising these young people and we've taught them that parents owe them something. I get tired going around churches. They start talking about ministry with young people. And when you start talking about an average minister with young people, you talk about how many parties you're going to throw. What you're going to do for them. I don't believe that's the way you train young people. You don't train young people by doing for them. You train young people by demanding of them. The average church has a church camp. So, you know what we do. We go around. We say, "Now, want all you men to go out to the camp and work next Saturday." That's not the way you do it.

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Go to the young people and say, "If you want to use that camp, you build it." I tell you what, when those kids have their skin in that concrete, they're playing basketball on, that means something to them. When they have splotted that paint on that cabin wall, that cabin means something to them. When they're pouring themselves into that camp, then they can appreciate it. But as long as we build the camp and paint the camp and pour the concrete, do all the work and say, "Now, you kids come and enjoy," they don't appreciate that. No. You don't train young people by doing. You train young people by demanding.

You see, there are so few people today that appreciate the grace of God, because this is the way we do in our society. We expect everything for nothing. And so we think, "Well, God owes me heaven." I get so tired of answering the question, "What about the heathen?" Everybody wants to know, "What about the heathen? What about that guy over there in Africa? No one's ever told him about Jesus." Well, first of all, I wouldn't be too concerned about that heathen over in Africa. Friend, it's you who are going to have to stand before God. But, there's an underlying problem behind that question. You know what it is? That question is asked because we feel like God owes that heathen something. Where did we ever get that idea? God doesn't owe Harry the native over in Africa anything. Sorry about that, Harry. He's a native. All right. Cannibal.

Never saw a guy eat saw a guy eat sauerkraut like that, all my life. Never saw a guy could eat spaghetti in one night and eating sauerkraut in the other night, man. I mean called it Italian spaghetti, I mean German spaghetti. I never heard sauerkraut called German spaghetti before, did you? We say, what about old Harry the native over there? Listen, people hear the verse, "Jacob, have I loved and Esau, have I hated." Immediate response? How could God say that? What? Well, you just saw God said that He hated Esau. Well, that's not the question. The question is how could God love Jacob?

I can understand how God could hate Esau. I can understand how He can hate Jacob too. I cannot fathom how He could love Jacob. The old liar, also planner, but he did out of a heart of grace and the heart of mercy. And the thing is God, as you hear, you have an opportunity to be saved. Don't worry about the heathen. You need Christ tonight. We need to appreciate the grace of God. God's still sending out His angels too. All you see... You say, "You mean I may have two little angels come to my door tonight?" No. But, you got one preaching to you tonight. Say, "Boy, you sure don't look like an angel. You don't act like an angel."

I don't believe God uses literal angels to get out the message of the gospel anymore. He uses preachers of the gospel. You've had an angel in this pulpit. I don't know how many years now. I know close to 20 years preaching out the word of God by the name of John Flatt. Missionaries, evangelists, Bible conference speakers have come into this pulpit and into Elizabethtown to get out the same message that the angels brought to Lot. And God is still sending out His angels. Thank God. God's still sending out the angels of providential circumstances. It's sad. Some people listen to preachers and it never moves them. And all of a sudden the baby dies. And then, they'll start to listen.

Some people listen to preachers. It never penetrates. And all of a sudden the house burns down, then they start to listen. Some people listen to preachers, just goes in one ear and out the other. And then, all of a sudden the tornado or the hurricane comes and then they wake up. God still sends out the angels of providential circumstances.

God still works through the angels of loved ones and friends. There are people here tonight because you had a friend who loved you and told you about Jesus and you got saved. There are people here tonight because there're some people from this church who went out on a visitation program and knocked on the door and told you about Jesus and you got saved. There are men here tonight who are saved because you had a wife who prayed for you and put up with you and loved you and brought you to the services and you got born again. Are you here tonight? Who had mamas and dads who loved you to

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Jesus, God's still sending out the angels of loved ones and friends. That's the message of the angels. He's still sending out His angels and they bring the message of the grace of God.

If there's something else about those angels that I think we can learn, do you ever notice this? Now you're preachers' pals. It's great, the way you listen. And you're so smart, the way you learned these songs. There were two angels, right? Four hands. Every angel would've two hands. So, two angels would've four hands. When one angel went outside the city, he had Lot in this hand, Lot's wife in the other hand. The other angel went outside the city. He had one of Lot's daughters in this hand, the other of Lot's daughters in that hand. When they left, they had four hands and they had four people. They had their hands full for Jesus. Would to God that every Christian here in this auditorium tonight would have their hands full for Jesus.

Would to God that we were doing all we could to rescue the perishing in Elizabethtown and all the surrounding communities. There's much to be done. Let's get busy using these hands and these mouths and all we have, to rescue the perishing as those angels did. But there's also the lesson from Lot, not just the lessons from the angel. The lessons from Lot. What would you do, if two angels came to your house? Now I mean, there's no question about it. He knew they angels. He knew they were sent from God. He knew they brought the message from God. God said, "We're going to wipe out this city, everything in it. You can escape." How would you respond? Probably the same way Lot did.

Scripture says in verse 16, "While he lingered..." While he, what? Lingered. Man, you would think he would already be packing a bag. You would say, "Honey, let's get out of here. Forget everything. We don't need any clothes. Judgment is coming. Let's flee to the place of safety." No. I don't know what it is, but human beings, we always procrastinate when it comes to spiritual things.

People know they need to get saved, but they just keep putting it off and putting it off and putting it off. People after they get saved know they ought to be baptized, but they keep putting it off and putting it off and putting it off. People know they ought to get involved in the church. They ought to start tithing. They ought to start living for the Lord. They ought to be faithful and active and they keep putting it off and putting it off and putting it off. We know we ought to have private devotion, but we keep putting it off. We know that we ought to have family devotion, but we keep putting it off. Spurgeon called it perilous procrastination. Lot lingered.

And you know, it's an interesting Hebrew word that is translated 'lingered' here. It's the word, to question, to be reluctant. I don't know what it was, but something caused Lot to question whether he ought obey God. And there is something built into every totally depraved human being that whenever we hear the word of God and we know it's the word of God, there's still that certain question as to whether we ought to listen to God and obey God. The devil always make sure of that. As I study the scripture, I'll bring this out Saturday night, the devil always attacks the mind. He always works through the mind. And the thing that he places in that mind is just the smallest question that would hinder us from instant obedience to God.

But then there's the lesson from Lot's wife. Do you ever stop to think what it cost Lot to linger? For instance, Lot lost a lot of things because he didn't listen to God. He lost his testimony. He goes up to his son-in-laws and he said, "Now, boys, God's about to judge this place and everything in it's going to be killed. All the human beings, all the animals, the cows and the horses. And you boys need to get out of the city." And they looked at him and they said, "Who are you old man, to tell us about God?" He had no influence over his son-in-laws. You know why? Because, he wasn't saved. No, Lot was a saved man. Second Peter chapter 2:7 and 8 tell us that Lot was a saved man. But, Lot was a carnal Christian. Lot was a backslidden Christian. I do not believe that Lot was living in gross sin, but the world so colored his life, that he was not living an out and out Christian life. And you will not have a testimony as long as you're a lukewarm Christian. Never.

You go back to Genesis 18. And you'll find that those angels that came to Abraham told Abraham what they were going to do. They said, "Abraham, God sent us to destroy the cities, Sodom and Gomorrah." Abraham said, "I'd like to make a deal." "Okay." "If you can find 10 saved people, 10 righteous people, would you spare the city?" "Yeah. We'll spare the city, if we can find 10." I think Abraham reasoned like this, "Lot's saved. Lot's wife's saved. I know he has two single daughters. They're no doubt saved. He has two married daughters. They'd be saved. Surely they married Christian husbands. They know what the word of God says about mingling with the heathen. And they surely married Christian, husbands. That'd be eight. And out of all of the years that they've lived in Sodom, they've surely won two people to Christ outside their family."

Abraham thought he had those angels over a barrel and the angels came back and said, "We can't find 10." You know why? Lot didn't have a testimony? How many of you led to Christ at school? How many have you led to Christ at that place where you worked? Some of you worked there for years. How many in your neighborhood have you led to Christ, or have you even spoken to about Jesus Christ? And some of you have lived in those neighborhoods, all of your lives. Lot lingered. Lot lost his testimony. Secondly, Lot lost his joy. New Testament tells us that. I quote second, Peter 2:7 and 8. It says, "Lot's soul was sore vexed, more than any man." Now that word 'vexed' is an interesting word. It's the same word that is translated torment in Revelation 20:10, when it speaks of the tormenting of Satan in hell. Can you imagine that? A Christian who's alive inwardly is going through such turmoil, that it is equated with the sufferings of the devil in hell. You know why? Happiness and holiness go together.

You cannot be a joyful Christian and be a backslidden Christian. In fact, a backslidden Christian is more miserable than an unsaved person. There's no question about that. The person who is saved and not living for the Lord has absolutely no peace. There's nothing but turmoil. There is no joy. And Lot, the way a lot of material things, I'm comfy at a beautiful home. And all the niceties of life that would go along with that day inwardly, and there might have been a smile on the outside, was eaten up because he wasn't living for the Lord. Just like some of you tonight. He lost his testimony. He lost his joy and he lost his family.

I don't know about you. But if I were listening to a guy preach tonight and he preached on those first two things, that might move me. I would hope so. I can't tell you, to be honest with you. Because, I'm not where you are right now. I'm preaching. I'm not listening. But as soon as that preacher hit my family, my ears would perk up. Because, the closest thing to me in this life other than my God is my family. In fact, I believe that my family is more important than my ministry. That may surprise you. But, I believe that with all of my heart. That's why I only take two meetings. And then, I spend Monday through Saturday at home with my family. That's why I'll fly to Indianapolis on Monday. And one of the college students will drive over, pick me up and drive me home so I can spend the night with my family, get in my car and drive back to Indianapolis on Tuesday. Because, I believe that the family is more important than the ministry.

I'm afraid for too long, we've had a lot of ministers or somehow thought that when you surrendered to God, that meant that you surrendered your family too. And they've paid a terrible price. Lot lost his family. I'd rather lose my ministry than lose my family. I'd rather lose every dime I had than to lose my family. I'd rather lose my car and lose my house. I'd rather lose everything materially in this life than to lose my family. Lot lost his family. He had some of his immediate family to die in the judgment of Solomon and Gomorrah, because they were not saved.

What a terrible thing. Not only to lose them in this life, but to lose them for eternity. I have people ask me, "Are we going to know our loved ones?" No doubt about it. No doubt about it. If you don't believe it, you study the word of God, when it talks about in heaven, the relationship of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. Father, grandfather, and son, and they all know each other. I believe that we're going to know

each other in heaven. And to be in heaven and to not have complete families in heaven, what a terrible thing.

It's about time some of you got desperate over unsaved kids and unsaved husbands, unsaved moms, and unsaved dads. He's walking outside that city. He has his wife under this arm. He has two daughters under this arm, unmarried daughters. That's all he has left of his family. Now, as he's walking outside that city, God had said, "When you leave, don't look back." Now look, friend, I wish somehow we'd get this. Generally, God doesn't say something twice. That's why in our home, at the time my boy came into our home. One rule was, I only say something once. Never twice. If you do not listen the first time and obey and you pay the penalty. God generally only speaks once. He just said, "Don't look back." Lot's wife looked back. Her heart was in that wicked city. God judged her, killed her. And she turned into a pillar of salt. He just lost his wife.

Tears are probably coursing down his cheeks. He takes one of his daughters, shifts her over to this side. He only has two daughters left. They're going down the road. They get into town. An old backslidden Lot, instead of spending the night in a prayer and a repentance and an effort to try and blot everything out, gets drunk. You say, "Are you sure, he was saved?" Listen, if you want to know what it's possible for a Christian to do you just go through your Bible and look at all the things God tells a Christian not to do. And everything God tells a Christian not to do, it's possible for that Christian to do. Yes, Lot was a Christian and he got drunk. And the two daughters looked at each other and said, "Isn't this great. Here we are. And our boyfriends were just destroyed in the fire. How in the world are we going to bring children into this life? No woman is complete without children. We don't even have any boyfriends anymore."

One of them said, "Yeah, but you know, dad's drunk. He'd never know the difference. What if he became the father of our children?" If you don't believe it, you just read the latter part of that chapter for yourself. "In drunkenness, those two girls conceived by their own father." You talk about the stench, the rottenness of sin. Those two boys that were born by those two daughters who were fathered by Lot with his own daughters, their names, Moab and Ammon. Two of the most ungodly boys who ever lived upon the face of this earth. You go through the Old Testament and you read about the Moabites and the Ammonites and they all came out of the loins of a backslidden Christian by the name of Lot.

And you tell me that backsliding is not costly. Lot lost his family, which leads me to say this. My friend, if you're a Christian tonight and you're not living an out and out life for God, it's about time you got down to business. Because if you don't, you're going to pay a terrible price. Somewhere down the line, I can't tell you when it's going to happen, but it'll all catch up with you. You can be sure your sins will find you out. Lot went for years. Looked like he was on top of the pile. Mayor of the city, beautiful home, all the trappings of a successful life. Boom. It collapsed around him.

It'll catch up with you sooner or later. But, some of you are in far greater danger because though Lot lost a lot of things, at least he didn't lose his soul. Went to heaven when he died. Second Peter tells his chapter 2:7 and 8. "He was a righteous man. He was a saved man." But some of you, if you continue like you are in your sin and you don't repent of your sin and receive Jesus Christ who died for you on the cross and arose from the dead, you're going to go to hell when you die. And there's an interesting verse that says, "Judgment lingereth not." We may linger, but God doesn't.