

## **The Line of Lot**

Genesis 19:30-38

The editor of Calvin's Commentary on Genesis wrote these words in a footnote on our text this morning: "The lengthened comment on this and the following verses, it has been deemed necessary entirely to omit." No comments were included in the written volume, even the verses themselves were not printed out. Such censorship! Thankfully, the verse and comments are included in my online version.

Another commentator whom I have quoted in previous sermons comments similarly, "certainly verses 30-38 cannot be a text for a sermon." Well, that opinion notwithstanding, and even in the absence of commentary by John Calvin, I propose to study verses 30 through 38 this morning.

I will say, that this is not a pleasant story, nor is it one about which I will spend much time explaining to you. What happened is self-evident, and I will try hard not to offend your senses and with consideration. I'll try not to speak inappropriately on these matters of gross immorality. Instead, let me derive some very specific spiritual principles from what is before us. The first, is actually a quote from Paul's letter to the Galatian church,

### **I. A MAN REAPS WHAT HE SOWS.**

Gal. 6:7 "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."

There are lots of applications of that verse, and at least two specific applications become obvious in our text today. The first is that,

#### **A. Fear produces more fear.**

Lot was a fearful man. He was a man afflicted with fear, and it had very significant consequences upon his life. We read that in fear, he was compelled to leave Zoar.

v.30

Why he was afraid, we don't know. Perhaps the people of Zoar hated Lot, resenting him as the only survivor of the destruction of Sodom, their sister city. Since Sodom and Gomorrah were south of them, and Admah and Zeboiim were north of them, they were right in the middle of the devastation and continuing earth tremors and fires around them probably made it most unpleasant place to live. The fertile plains all around had been destroyed, and the prosperity of the city had vanished. Perhaps they blamed Lot for that.

Or perhaps they viewed Lot with suspicion as a fugitive from justice, a man who fled from a city destroyed for its wickedness. Perhaps Lot feared that the city of Zoar was next on God's list to destroy, that it too would soon be overthrown. We don't know. We only know that he was afraid. And remember why he came to Zoar in the first place. Fear.

v.19-20

He came to Zoar in fear, and now he was leaving in fear. Indeed, fear often does cause incurable restlessness. And it would virtually destroy his life, at least the life to which he had grown accustomed. Because of his fear, he was compelled to stay in a cave, along with his two daughters. This from the man who had to part company with Abraham because the two of them had too many possessions to be able to stay in the same place. This from the man who sat in the city gate of Sodom, a respected leader. A man who entertained visitors in his own home, no doubt a comfortable and very respectable house.

All because of fear. And ultimately, the fear of men. Lot was consumed with such fear, thus driven and controlled by what others thought of him.

It is amazing what fear does, and still does to us. Particularly the fear of men. Paul speaks of that fear of man in,

Gal. 1:10 “For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.”

Trying to please men? A men-pleaser? Trying to win the approval of men? Paul says, at that point, if that’s what you’re, your not being a servant of Christ! Strong words. Ultimately, the only approval that should matter to you is God’s approval! The only one we are called to fear is God himself, for the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.

And from Lot’s example, the fear of man is the essence of folly! The fear of man is, in my opinion among many others, the root cause of countless psychological and emotional problems in our society today. People are insecure, fearful of not receiving the love and acceptance of others, and make themselves slaves to their felt-need of being approved of by men.

This fear of men goes under different names. The whole issue of low self-esteem is essentially an issue of the fear of men, the fear of other’s approval. Jealousy and depression are often connected with fear--the fear of man. Even things from undue shyness to eating disorders can be associated with this fear. It’s so common because in many ways it is an instinctive desire. Children wish to be approved and accepted by their parents, wives by their husbands, parents by their children, friends by other friends, and workers by their employers. But ultimately, the fear of man is a destructive thing, a destructive motivation for life.

On the other hand, the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. And the message of the gospel is that the mature fear of God is actually loving reverence which exists in the absence of any fear of rejection. In that sense, John writes,

1John 4:17 “Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. 19 We love Him because He first loved us.”

For the Christian, there should be no fear of rejection, no fear of condemnation, not in the fullness of a mature faith. Perfect love drives out fear, and I believe that refers first to God’s perfect love for us, which, if we properly understand it, is a love that drives out the insecure fear of rejection, removing the threat of eternal punishment.

It is healthy to search your own heart to identify the ways in which your life and emotional stability depend upon the approval of others. And work to replace that fear of man with a genuine, reverent, trusting, and self-confident fear of God.

That’s a huge task. How does it come about? By coming to know God, and knowing his love. So Paul would pray for the Ephesian church,

Eph. 3:116 “...that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the

fullness of God.”

Lot is a pitiful character, a man enslaved by the fear of man. And his example proves that a man reaps what he sows. Fear produces more fear. Sadly, after Genesis 19, we hear nothing more of Lot.

Lot shows us another way that a man reaps what he sows. That is that,

**B. Immorality produces more immorality.**

The action of his young daughters was reprehensible. It was inexcusable, repulsive. Whatever word you want to describe it. But it was also the fruit of a man who failed his daughters miserably. Remember, Lot had just offered his daughters to the men of Sodom, in an attempt to protect the two men visiting. Homosexual rape was an offense to Lot, but the prostitution of his daughters was not!

What a terrible lesson in moral values those girls learned from their father. Surely, they must have been able to reason, what they proposed to do with their own father couldn't have been as bad as what their father had proposed for the men of Sodom to do with them!

Lot laid the foundation for his daughters' immorality. And he reaped what he sowed. He failed to teach his daughters about the beauty and delights of physical, sexual love between a husband and a wife in a lifelong relationship. Instead, he had taught them that their bodies could be used, if that was necessary, to achieve some other purpose.

So they used their bodies when it seemed to the expedient thing to do. The sins of the father were, therefore, passed down

to the daughters. Immorality produces more immorality. There is no doubt that as a society, continue to experience that same phenomena. As a society, we sexualize our youngest of children. And like Lot with his daughters, though seldom as blatantly, thankfully, we fail to protect them and to show them to beauty of purity and chastity. The point is, that immorality produces more immorality!

Let's look at these circumstances again, from a slightly different perspective. In a very practical sense, what is before us is living proof that,

**II. A MAN WHO TRIES TO SOLVE HIS PROBLEMS WITH HIS OWN WISDOM IS DOOMED TO FAILURE.**

Lot's whole life history as it is recorded in Genesis is an account of decisions based upon his own wisdom--decisions made in the absence of any effort to seek after God's wisdom. First, his selection of the cities of the plains in the first place.

Gen. 13:10 “And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. 11 Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other.”

Then, of course, his offer to give his two daughters to the men of Sodom, which we studied last week. Then his request to settle in the city of Zoar in the first place. Then, his decision to leave Zoar. That fault of trusting in his own wisdom was passed on to his daughters. They, too, failed to trust in God. After all, there they were, living in a cave with their father. They lost hope that God would provide husbands for them. Indeed,

## **A. Those who fail to trust in God become hopeless.**

v.31

Now, there is no rational evidence for their hopelessness! There is nothing to indicate that Lot couldn't have found husbands for them. There is nothing to indicate that the Lord had abandoned them. Just the opposite. The Lord had remembered them, because of Abraham.

So their despair was not justified, but it was real. It was real because they had taken their focus off God. Having lost that sense of direction, having lost that perspective of God's glory and God's sovereignty, they became hopeless.

There are many occasions when we repeat this scenario. When we fail to trust in God, when we lose our focus upon God, we are prone to despair, to hopelessness, discouragement, depression, and back again to fear. Ultimately, those who fail to trust in God become hopeless.

But something else must be said about these girls, to say nothing of their father.

## **B. Those who justify immorality are deceived.**

The wisdom of these girls is absolutely lacking in any moral sensibility. Their ultimate goal was praiseworthy, that of bearing children and raising a family. But in their false hopelessness of ever finding a husband, they come up with a plan so thoroughly immoral that it defies description.

They get their father drunk. They lay with him. And they bear his children, children of that closest of all possible incestuous relationships. Let me say it with regard to this extreme example, and encourage you to apply it to less extreme examples that you

may find in your own life. The principle is this, the end does not justify the means.

There is never reason, never a sound justification, to indulge in immorality. Never. Never a sound reason to violate or ignore one of God's laws. You cannot consider the possibility of something good happening as outweighing an evil act of immorality.

I don't care if their father was old. And I don't that there weren't any men living next door to them in nearby caves. I don't really care that all the men they had considered for husband material had just been burned to ashes in the destruction of Sodom. I don't really care about any of that. What they did was absolutely wrong.

When it comes to God's laws, compromise is not a virtue! It is not a virtue to compromise one aspect of godly morality in order to achieve something else. If you break one command, you have broken them all!

Now, in diplomacy, there is plenty of room for compromise. In personal relationships, especially in marriages and families, there is lots of room for compromise! There has to be, because every one of us is different. But when it comes to God's moral law, there must be no compromise with immorality. Those who justify morality are deceived, such as these two daughters of Lot. And Lot himself.

We've seen Lot's failures made quite evident, including the incredible foolishness to be seduced by his own daughters. Their guilt is certainly magnified, but Lot was not exactly a victim here. They didn't force him to get drunk. And even drunk, he could not claim that he wasn't responsible for his reprehensible actions.

Lot had concerned himself with the things of the world, and he had obviously failed in his fatherly responsibility to teach and train his daughters in the ways of the Lord. With horrible consequences. So I want to end this morning by looking at the two nations whose origins are with these two daughters of Lot. The nation of Moab and the nation Ammon. Both nations are seen to be godless rebels, rejecting God and his word, and finding themselves under his judgment and curse. What a horrible legacy for a man. Thus, to the contrary,

### **III. A MAN SHOULD CONCERN HIMSELF WITH HIS SPIRITUAL HERITAGE.**

Lot should have devoted himself to the growth of godliness in his two daughters. He should have concerned himself with their education and spiritual nurture. He should have concerned himself with the work of raising them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But he showed no such concern, and bore the painful fruit of his neglect, a godless seed. The Moabites and the Ammonites.

v.37-38

First, the Moabites. We discover that,

#### **A. The spiritual heritage of the Moabites was immorality.**

By God's grace, there were exceptions, such as Ruth, who as the wife of Boaz, was included in the line of Jesus. But by and large, they were immoral unbelievers, as a nation often at war with Israel. And their chief god was Baal-Peor, a god closely associated with sexual immorality and temple prostitution.

Turn with me to,

Num. 25:1 "Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. 2 They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people

ate and bowed down to their gods. 3 So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel. 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the LORD, out in the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel." 5 So Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor."

The false gods of the Moabites, so closely connected with sexual immorality, would plague King Solomon as well.

1Kgs. 11:1 "But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites— 2 from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. 3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as did his father David. 7 Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. 8 And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods."

Sins just keep being passed down from generation to generation. Moab, the genetic combination resulting from a father and a daughter, provides the worst carnal seduction which Israel experienced. And Ammon was no better, providing the cruelest

religious perversion we find in the OT. The chief god of the Ammonites is the god Molech, a false god, but a very popular one. Molech was the god to whom children were offered as sacrifices!

Jer. 32:35 “And they built the high places of Baal which are in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I did not command them, nor did it come into My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.”

Again, Solomon exemplifies this temptation of both Moab and Ammon. For him, one was as good as the other. And

**B. The spiritual heritage of the Ammonites is idolatry.**  
v.38

There is much more about these two ungodly seeds, much more about Chemosh, or Baal-Peor, the detestable God of Moab, and Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites. Over and over again, Israel was warned to keep themselves away from those false gods, and over and over again, they fell to that very temptation.

What a horrible legacy Lot left behind. What a horrible legacy we now study in this difficult passage of Scripture. What an ungodly heritage.

So let me tie all this together by reminding you of what ought to be your highest objective in life, a godly reputation. And a godly heritage. Don't just study this line of Lot and shake your head at the unspeakable immorality. Don't just chalk this story up as a strange OT story of terrible things. Instead, resolve to live your life with the proper priorities. In your service to God and in your work for his kingdom, leaving behind a godly heritage for

generations to come.

Lot surely shows us how the sins of the father are passed down to the third and fourth generation, but God's grace is greater than all our sin. For his love, his lovingkindness and merciful compassion extends to a thousand generations! So we read in the giving of the Law, the ten commandments in,

Deut. 5:6 “I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 7 You shall have no other gods before Me. 8 You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 9 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 10 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

Thousands of generations, that is! Thus the encouragement for us, not only the warning, from,

Gal. 6:7 “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”