



Sermon – 01/29/2023
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Verses Covered

Genesis 18:16 – 33

Genesis 19:1 - 11

Exodus 34:6

Genesis 13:13

2 Peter 2:8

Let's open our Bibles together. We're going to be in Genesis 18 this morning. And if you're a guest with us in the room or catching things by video, welcome home. Man, we just had an amazing men's retreat this weekend. We've seen our biggest group we've ever had. We've seen several guys come to know Christ and we've just seen the Lord in our midst this weekend. If you're grateful for the men in our church pouring into God this weekend, will you just let them know that right now?

As we turn our attention to the text, this is a familiar passage. It's a story of Sodom and Gomorrah. And so for you parents who are in the room, I just want to give a content warning to you. We'll be talking about mature themes, about issues related to intimacy and exploitation. And if you feel like that may not be a fit for your child at this age and stage, it'd be a perfect time to slip out during the prayer here in just a moment. Yeah, I texted our kids director, Reagan, to let her know that there might be a few kids that come over late once a parent hears that. And she says, "Okay, but just to let you know, this morning in the kids ministry, we're doing David and Bathsheba. It's going to be pick your poison here this morning. But if you're new to our church, I hope you notice the fact we don't shy away from the hard things. We come right at God's word. We lay ourselves at His feet and we ask Him to change us. In fact, that's what our men's retreats been all about this weekend. The theme has been Knowing God. We spent this time thinking about how God is powerful. How God is pure. How God is personal. And this morning, we're going to finish that all together from this passage in Genesis 18. Thinking of how God is patient. And when you hear God's powerful and personal, that He's pure. Those might resonate with you immediately. But you hear God is patient and you're like, "Are you sure? How do we know that?" Well, Exodus 34 tells us that's true. One of the most common descriptions of God shows up first when God is speaking to Moses. And in Exodus 34:6, it says,

⁶... “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,

That phrase, slow to anger, means full of patience. That God is a patient God. But the reality is the Bible doesn't just say God is patient, it shows it. And perhaps we need to wrestle with that when we live in such an impatient society. Are there any of you else out there like me who struggle with patience at times? You struggle with traffic patterns during the semester. You struggle with waiting for doctor's results. You struggle with obedience to your parents. You struggle with waiting in line. You pull up to the red light and just that 15 seconds waiting it to go green. You want to grab your phone and start scrolling to fill the time. We are an impatient people. But God is a patient God. And perhaps we see that nowhere more clearly in the book of Genesis than right here in this story of Sodom and Gomorrah. I want to pick up with you now in verse 16 of Genesis 18 and let's see how the text plays out.

¹⁶Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way. ¹⁷The LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, ¹⁸seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? ¹⁹For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.” ²⁰Then the LORD said, “Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, ²¹I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know.” ²²So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. ²³Then Abraham drew near and said, “Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep them away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? ²⁵Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?” ²⁶And the LORD said, “If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake.” ²⁷Abraham answered and said, “Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. ²⁸Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?” And he said, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.” ²⁹Again he spoke to him and said, “Suppose forty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of forty I will not do it.” ³⁰Then he said, “Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there.” He answered, “I will not do it, if I find thirty there.” ³¹He said, “Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it.” ³²Then he said, “Oh Lord, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.” ³³And the LORD went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

Let's pray together now.

Father, we come here to seek Your face. We want to see You high and lifted up. We want to know You in the fullness of who You are in this perfect picture of patience that You have on

display before us. And I pray that as we see that more clearly, we might follow You more faithfully. As we long for the day of Christ's return in whose name we pray. Amen.

If you've been coming to Central for any length of time, you know that one of the rhythms in our church services we normally in the service end a similar way. At the end, I'll read a word of benediction from the Scripture and then I'll give you a charge saying, keep pressing on in light of that verse. And then at the end of that, I'll give you a commission and I'll say the phrase, "you are sent." I'm challenging us to live as missionaries, to live on mission. We're being sent out. Well, a few months ago, one of the people that had been attending our church, came up to a minister and said, "Hey, I have a question for you. Why does the pastor always talk about us so negatively at the end of the service?" He said to her, "Well, what do you mean?" He said, "Well, at the end of the service, he reads the Bible verse and then he says, 'You are sin.'" She's hearing me, instead of saying S E N T, sent; S I N, you are sin. I'm just grateful she kept coming back. I hope she's here this morning. Why would anybody want to be that negative? She wondered. But when we come face to face with what is going on in Sodom and Gomorrah, it's not that far off to say that the description, you are sin, is an accurate representation of what we find right here in the text. They've turned their backs on God. And this is not the first time we've encountered the sin of Sodom in the book of Genesis. In fact, if you were to look back at Genesis 13:13 it says this about Sodom.

¹³Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord.

So, what happens here in Genesis 18 when the God of the universe comes face to face with Sodom's sin. Now, we're so quick to fast forward to what happens in chapter 19 that we miss what happens here. We see the judgment but what we miss is that before the punishment, there is patience. God bears with them in their sin. He rescues righteous Lot. He makes a way where it is not deserved. That's the patience of God. And that same patience we see towards the sinners in Sodom is the same patience He shows towards you and me today. And so as this text unfolds, what I want us to notice is that in this passage as God confronts the sin of Sodom, we're going to see three ways the patience of God relates to our own sin.

So, starting back here in the portion of the passage we've already read beginning in verse 16, we see the patience of God and the penalty of sin. So, right here from the beginning, we see what's happening. I mean, you know what it's like when you're hosting out-of-town guests at your home and they stay there and it's getaway day. They've packed up. They've loaded the car. They're just about to pull out. They forget they left the charger for their cellphone in the room. They go back and grab it and they're about to head out and that's the exact kind of situation we find with Abraham and these angels. They've stayed with him and they're now being sent out. And before they go, God makes a revelation to Abraham about what is to come. And why is that? We'll look back at verse 18 and what it says there,

¹⁸seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

So, the reason we see the patience of God on display is God is making a connection between His patience and His promise. His covenant is the reason why He's speaking to Abraham, calling him to righteousness and justice that contrasts with the people of Sodom. The promise of God is the

root for the patience of God. But we also see the patience of God on display in the process of God. That's what happens here down in verse 21. What is God say he's going to do? 21 tells us,

²¹I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know."

So, God puts Sodom on trial. And it's not because He's unsure of their sin. It's not because He's perplexed but because He's patient. He sends these two angels. And the scholars say, He sent the two angels as two witnesses. Because on the basis of two witnesses, someone could justly face judgement. But there's a phrase right there at the beginning of 21 you might breeze just right by. Look back at the text. God says,

²¹I will go down

Now, that's the not the first time we've seen language like that in Genesis. Do you remember back in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve fall into sin, God goes down and confronts him in that sin. You fast forward to the tower of Babel in Genesis chapter 11 and what it tells us in verse 5 is that the Lord came down to the city. God comes down in His loving patience to hold us accountable for our sin. So, what is the sin of Sodom? You know, the common understanding is that it is a culture filled with sexual sin and debauchery. And of course, it is that. But the prophet Ezekiel gives us an even clearer picture of the full nature of Sodom's sin in Ezekiel 16. Look at verses 49 and 50 up on the screen. Ezekiel says,

⁴⁹Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. ⁵⁰They were haughty and did an abomination before me. So I removed them, when I saw it.

So, what's their sin? The text tells us it's twofold. Verse 49 tells us there was a pride and an inward focus that cause them to turn away from the needs of the poor. And in addition to that, that pride also showed up in an inward focus that was built around satisfying their pleasure through forbidden fruit. What the text here calls an abomination before me. In other words, in Sodom, we see the first imprint in the Scriptures of what Paul talks about in Romans 1 of a culture turning away from God. A hardening of the heart. That in their pride, their hearts were darkened, they suppressed the truth of God in unrighteousness. And as a result, God gives them over to their sin yet He bears with them in His patience. So, the question we need to be wrestling with right here in Genesis 18 is, why doesn't God bring the judgment right now? Why does He delay? And the answer is not because He is weak but because He is willing. He is willing to wait for the exact reason that Peter tells us in the New Testament in 2 Peter 3:9. Listen to how he speaks to the patience of God there.

⁹The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

So, the God of the universe, the God who is the righteous judge, the one who is warranted and holding everyone of us accountable is willing to be patient towards us. Why? Because He doesn't want us to die in our sin. He longs for us to come to repentance. He bears with the sin of Sodom that they might turn from that sin. Turn from that guilt. Turn towards Him. And maybe some of you find yourself carrying that same burden of sin this morning. You're weighed down by the

guilt and the shame. You're face to face with your failures. You don't think there's ever a way you can be made right with God. But the same patience He extends towards Sodom, He extends towards us through His Son. And that's what we see right here in the text. Is that we come face to face with the patience of God beginning in verse 22. You look back there and see how Abraham offers the first prayer of petition in the Bible. He goes to God and he asks Him to provide and to make a way. And you remember how it goes, he tells Him in verse 23, he says, will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? And he goes on in the next several verses to appeal to God's character to His righteousness, to His justice for why that should stand. And it's as if we watch a negotiation playing out before Abraham. Will you save the city if there's 50? How about 45, 40. It's almost like somebody that's an auctioneer. Do I hear 50-50? Do I hear 50? How about 45, 45, 40, 40, 30, 30, 20, 20, 10. I bet y'all weren't expecting that this morning. And what does God say? For the sake of 10, He will spare them. And what I want you to notice is that when God says, He will spare them, He doesn't say, "Alright, if there's 10, I'm going to save those ten and we're going to take out the rest." Instead, the righteousness of the remnant would be counted by God as a substitute for all of the sinners. Don't miss it. Because what happens is when you and I look at this text, we will often put ourselves in the place of Abraham. That we're the righteous one pleading for the salvation of the lost and the sinners around us. And in Christ, that is true. But separated from Jesus, left to ourselves, we are not righteous Abraham; we are sinful Sodom. The ones who don't deserve it, who can't earn it. And unless God extends His patience towards us, we are nothing. But the glory of the Gospel is that we have a greater mediator than Abraham. The one mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ Himself who took on flesh, who bore with this broken world in the patience of His power in order to go to the cross to make a way for you and I. You know, we would assume surely in a city the size of Sodom that God would find at least 10 righteous people. But we learn from the text, that's not true. In fact, if you were to broaden the search throughout all of human history, spanning the entire globe, God would not find even ten in all the history of humanity. And yet despite our sin, He is patient toward us. He bears with us, longing us to come to repentance and faith in Jesus.

Which is what brings us now to chapter 19 and the second thing about the patience of God we'll notice here. We'll see next the patience of God and the power of sin. So, pick up with me here in the Bible passage beginning in verse 1. It says,

¹The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth ²and said, "My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the town square." ³But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. ⁴But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, and all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. ⁵And they called to Lot, "Where are these men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them." ⁶Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, ⁷and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. ⁸Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof." ⁹But they said, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came to sojourn, and he has become the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them." Then they

pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door down. ¹⁰But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door.

¹¹And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door.

Can you see the power of sin right here in this community? How it's captured each one of their hearts? And as we come face to face with that power of sin, it gives us a clear picture of the patience of God. So, just see how this unfolds. These two men show up and Lot talks them into coming to stay at their house. And in verse 3, tells us, he made for them a feast. It makes me think of all the good eating we did at the men's retreat this weekend. Didn't we eat well guys? Last night, we had barbecue. The chefs told me they prepared two hundred pounds of barbecue. There wasn't a piece of meat left by the end of it. That's the kind of feast we see here. He gathers them together in this hospitality and they've eaten to the full. They're about to head to bed and all the sudden, there's a noise outside the door. It grows stronger and stronger. Maybe Lot peeks his head out of the window shade and what he sees there shocks him. The text tells us down in verse 5 that all the men of the town had gathered around young and old. There was none left behind. They were all right there. The ones he waited in line with at HEB. The ones who were there to pick up their kids at the carpool lane. The ones tailgating next to him at Kyle Field. The whole town is there. All of them have come and they've come for one reason. You'll see it there in verse 5. They called the Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we may know them." That word, know, perhaps in your Bible translation is translated as, have sex with them. It's a word that describes a knowledge that can only come through intimacy. In other words, the men of this city don't come to visit these guests but to violate them. They demand it. And what we need to recognize in this passage is the way that the power of sin has overtaken this city. In fact, 2 Peter chapter 2 in verse 8, speaks of this moment. That this was not an unexpected reality but the culmination of a pattern of the power of sin in the life of Sodom. Here's what Peter says.

⁸(for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard);

He's speaking here of Lot. That day after day, their sin had tormented him. It had torn them down. He'd been living in the midst of this culture consumed by the power of sin. And yes, it shows up here through this desire for same-sex exploitation. But it manifested itself in so many ways it violated God's design. And we as a church stand on God's word despite what the culture thinks. And in Matthew 19, Jesus Himself declares that God established sexual fulfillment to be enjoyed only between a man and a woman in the covenant of marriage for a lifetime. And we stand on that reality. That anything that goes against that design is a violation just like what we saw here in Sodom. Whether that is through same sex activity or living together or being consumed by pornography, it could take many forms. And I'm confident that in that day and age, it did in life of Sodom. The whole culture placed their desires ahead of God's design. And don't we live in a culture just like that today? All around us we're pressed to celebrate things that dishonor God. We're tempted towards things that displease the Lord. It's as if we're living in a modern-day Sodom. And you may find yourself saying, "Yeah, the culture is bad now but at least we don't have mobs of men showing up at the doorsteps of people's homes in order to violate strangers. That's true. You're probably not going to show up to someone's house and the Ring Camera footage is going to show an army of men around there seeking someone to devour on the inside. But what if we're just like Sodom in ways that are more subtle and anonymous than that. Maybe

for us, the issue isn't that we'll show up on someone's physical doorstep to violate a stranger in order to enjoy our own personal pleasure. But while we won't show up at a physical doorstep, we find ourselves knocking on the digital doorstep week after week after week. Because we desire to violate people we've never seen for our own fulfillment and satisfaction. You see, you gotta recognize something. The spirit of Sodom is behind every search. It's behind every image. It's lurking in every video consumed, that we consume. That what we see here that disgusts us, that we revile at, is actually at the heart of the pull of pornography in our lives and in our culture.

So, what happens here in the text? You would hope that Lot would take a stand. Instead, you watch him and he makes a cowardly compromise. Rather than protect his guest and his family, he adds to the problem. He says, "Well, don't take them. But I tell you what, I have two virgin daughters. They're all yours to do with you what they want." Can you imagine if they had overheard their dad saying that at the doorstep with the mob right there? The kind of fear? The kind of distress that would bring to them. But notice what happens. You look back in verse 9 at the end, how does the crowd respond? They said, "Now." They're not satisfied. His attempt at a compromise isn't enough. Instead, they say, Now, we will deal with you worse than with them." In other words, unless the culture got his full support, he was going to be cancelled. He lived in a cancel culture even more vicious than ours today where they weren't just going to denounce him but to destroy him. I think it's worth giving us a warning today. In the cancel culture that we live in, the temptation towards cowardly compromise might pull us to where we think we can satisfy the culture around us through half measures just like Lot. But it will never be enough. So, the gift, the challenge, the opportunity that you and I have is to stand on God's word regardless of what it costs us in a way that we don't see in the life of Lot. Here what I know. I know in this room I am speaking to men and women and you find this stirring up in you, memories of unthinkable things that you wish you had never done. Maybe last decade or maybe last night. You feel that sin and shame and guilt and you wonder if there is any hope for you. And I want you to know in our church, if you find yourself pulled towards sexual sin and temptation or other things that you imagine that good church-going folk can't fathom or bear with, we want to walk with you in that. You're not alone. Because the patience of God we see on here displayed in this passage extends not just to the power of sin in the day of Sodom but to you and I right now. I mean, imagine the patience of God on display. Right here in this moment, He's seen all He needs to see. He knows all He needs to know. He's watched this play out. The angels have witnessed it. And yet God in His patience saves us from ourselves. So, how does he do that in the passage? Verse 10, it shows us that these angels, as the mob is surging on Lot. They crack open the door. They grab him and pull him into safety. But then God in His patience also saves the sinners in Sodom from their own desires. Do you see it there in verse 11? It says that he struck them with blindness. They could no longer see and they groped around for the door seeking someone to devour. So, what happens here in the text? We know figuratively they are blinded by their sins and now, literally they are blinded by their sins. That is the kindness of God to save them from themselves so they cannot continue to pursue passions that bring dishonor to Him.

But there's one last reality I want you to notice about the patience of God in the portion of the passage we'll finish today. Beginning in verse 12, we see also the patience of God and the presence of sin. So, right here in this passage, we've seen God's patience on display. We know judgment is to come. But first, there's rescue. There's protection before the punishment. And what happens here is as this rescue is taking place, we come face to face with five different ways that people can respond to the patience of God in their lives. And what we see here in the story of Sodom shows

us the same ways we can choose to respond to that patience today. And I want you to notice them with me beginning in verse 12 and 13. The first way someone can respond to the patience of God is to loath it, to reject it, to hate it. So, notice what it says there.

¹²Then the men said to Lot, “Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place. ¹³For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it.”

So, the angels are speaking to Lot and they recognize how the city loathes the patience of God. They hate it. They resist it. And we know that from their sins. Some even today loathe that patience and turn away. But notice that in verse 14, the second choice, not just to loathe but to laugh. So, verse 14 says this,

¹⁴So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, “Up! Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city.” But notice this. But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting.

So, how does the family respond? They respond not with submission but skepticism. They laugh at him because until the judgment comes, it doesn't seem like there needs to be a rescue. There's a lack of belief. A lack of trust. And that same heart can show up in people today. Where when they're confronted with the truths of the Gospel of the reality of their sin, of their need of a Savior, they can dismiss it in unbelief and in laughter. But then the text now turns to Lot. And you'll see a third way we can respond to the patience of God. We can linger. So, look at how Lot of lingers in verse 15.

¹⁵As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, “Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city.” ¹⁶But he lingered. So the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.

Can you sense the lack of urgency here? Even though he knows there's a rescue to happen. He wants to delay it. It's hard to leave behind what's familiar. It's hard to leave behind what is yours in order to surrender all of that for the sake of the Gospel. There is no sense of urgency here with Lot. And that same danger shows up today. It shows up in the college student that's here this morning who says, “I want to have my fun over these four years and then I'll settle down.” It shows up in the newlywed couple who is chasing their professional dream and says, “We want to run after what the culture around us tells us to pursue and once we achieve that, then, we'll train our eyes on Jesus.” It gets you up in all sorts of ways. Where we stand face to face with our need of God's rescue. And we're just like the child playing video games who gets called the dinner and says, give me a few minutes. I'm not done with the game yet. We linger. We look at the patience of God and we don't have that urgency. But then it goes on to a fourth example here. After that, notice what happens with Lot next. He doesn't just linger. He shows us the fourth reaction to God's patience. He limits God. So, now, starting in verse 17, it says,

¹⁷And as they brought them out, one said, “Escape for your life. Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away.” ¹⁸And Lot said to

them, “Oh, no, my lords. ¹⁹Behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life. But I cannot escape to the hills, lest the disaster overtake me and I die. ²⁰Behold, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there—is it not a little one?—and my life will be saved!” ²¹He said to him, “Behold, I grant you this favor also, that I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken.

So, what is Lot doing here? After he lingers, he limits God. What we find here is he is negotiating the terms of his surrender to God's mercy. The angels tell him to go to the hills and he pleads to go to the city. We want God's deliverance but by our design. And what we find here in Lot's life shows up even today. Where when you face trials or when you turn to Jesus in salvation or wherever you find yourself this morning, we want the control of how God is going to work in our life. We presume upon His patience. As if we are the ones with the power to determine what happens in our future. But despite all of these wrong ways to sin, let me just show you one final one before we close. It's down in verse 22. Some people respond to the patience of God and they lead. And we see that leadership in the angels. In verse 22, they say this the lot,

²²Escape there quickly, for I can do nothing till you arrive there.” Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

In other words, the angels knew there was a shrinking window of opportunity for escape. And in that moment, the patience of God drives them towards a patience towards Lot. They bear with him in his negotiations. They bear with him in his lingering and they step up to lead in this moment of crisis. Reminds me a story I came across from back this last hurricane season. You remember Hurricane Ian struck the southwest coast of Florida near Naples. And there was a man by the name of Johnny Lauder who had hunkered down in his home, was safe from the flood waters around him, was content to remain there until he got a phone call that changed what he was doing. On the other end of that phone was his mother who lived a half mile away from him. You see, she refused to come and stay. She thought she could ride out the storm on her own. And he knew that was dangerous because she's 84. But it's even more dangerous because she's wheelchair bound after having both of her legs amputated. He gets a phone call from her in desperation. “Son, I need your help. The waters have come up to my chest. I don't know what I'm going to do.” And Jimmy Lauder had no means to get to her by car. He had no way to walk there. And so he set out, this former police officer, and swam a half mile in the raging waters of Hurricane Ian to come to her door for a rescue from the storm that was about to overtake her. And by the time he shows up traveling through neck deep water, he finds her barely above the water's edge. He's able to rescue her, to set her on a high place until the water subside and bring her back to a safe place. We just can't help but think when we hear stories like that of another only son who did an even greater rescue than him. Who left the comfort and safety of His heavenly home, who came down to Earth to make a way for you and I. And why did He do it? For the same reason that a son would go rescue his mom. It's because he saw deep danger and he was driven by deep devotion. And that's what the Scripture tells us God does for us in Jesus Christ. He sends His one and only Son to live the life we couldn't, to die the death we deserve, to defeat the grave, to find the power of the Gospel in the midst of the patience of God. And the invitation to you and I this morning is to put our trust in that Savior. The invitation to you and I this morning, if we know Jesus, is to exhibit the kind of leadership we saw through the angels. These messengers who saw that shrinking window of opportunity and were going to do whatever they could to rescue the broken before the coming

judgment. What we see in this passage is the patience of God and what we know from this passage is that when we see the patience of God, it reshapes the purpose of our lives.

Let's pray together.

Father, we celebrate Your patience towards us this morning. Even though we are worthy of judgement right now, You have given breath in our lungs. You have given us a heart that stirs with conviction over our sin. And Lord, I'm asking in this moment, if there are people in this room or catching this by video who right now, Lord, they've loathed it. They've, they've lingered, they've laughed at your patience, God, that You would bring them to their need of Jesus. Set them free from their sin. And would You make our church the kind of church we see right here in the life of the angels. One that loves our broken community so much we're willing to do whatever it takes for as long as you give us to make the Gospel message known as faithfully as we can. That's the desire of our hearts, God. May we be patient towards one another. As You've been patient towards us. And we pray these realities in Christ's name. Amen.