The Way Of Lot

2 Peter 2:7-8 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;

If we had only the story of Lot as it is recorded in the book of Genesis we would never venture to guess that he was a righteous man.

• But 2 Peter chapter 2 describes Lot in the gilded King James vernacular as a just and righteous man who vexed his righteous soul from day to day by living in Sodom.

• A more modern translation says that Lot was a righteous man who was (7-8 ESV) “greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked (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.)”

• Here’s the truth of the passage from both translations:
  o Lot was disgusted by Sodom.
  o Lot was greatly distressed by Sodom.
  o The sensual conduct, the lawless deeds, the things he saw and heard on a day-to-day basis left him shocked, dismayed and horror-struck.

• But the irony of it all is that, in spite of his aversion to all things related to Sodom, still yet, the spirit of Sodom made its way into his soul.
  o The longer Lot was in Sodom, the more that Sodom became a part of who Lot was.

• Here’s the startling truth that can be drawn from that evidence:
  o It is entirely possible to be distressed and distraught at the condition of our world,
    ▪ yet still cling to the things of the world to the detriment of our soul!

• Somewhere in Lot’s life there was a disconnect between the revulsion that he felt in his spirit and the attraction that he nurtured in his heart!
  o Likewise, it is a dangerous thing when the church is distressed by the sinful condition of our world, while it harbors a love for the things of the world in its heart.

Consider this: The evidence suggests that the righteous man, Lot, was of absolutely no moral or spiritual benefit to the inhabitants of Sodom.

• Though he lived in Sodom for years,
  o though he was a prominent figure in the gates of the city,
  o though he, no doubt, had countless opportunities to influence his friends and associates,
    ▪ Lot failed to have any impact at all on Sodom.

• When judgment finally came to Sodom, not one righteous person could be found in the city outside of Lot and his family.
None of his business associates,
none of his fellow city leaders,
none of his neighbors or even his household servants,
- none of them were influenced to righteousness by Lot and his family.

- Talk about lighting a candle and hiding it under a bushel:
  - The men and women who called Sodom home had no more reason to believe that Lot was a righteous man than did you and I before we read the reference to him as such in the second chapter of Second Peter.
- Lot’s life did nothing to point people to a better way,
  - to a more righteous worship,
  - towards a loving God.
- Lot’s witness was completely absent.
  - In no way did he wield any positive influence on those around him.
    - None of his family and friends feared God.
- As a matter of fact, when he, in that urgent hour, sought to compel his sons-in-law to flee the cit with him,
  - they thought that he was jesting with them.
    - Even in his most adamant warning, they couldn’t find it in themselves to take him seriously.
- It is little wonder that Lot’s lifestyle did nothing to shield his wife from the enticing grip of Sodom,
  - Over the years, that culture found its way into her heart and the very fabric of her being.
    - When it came time to flee the destruction,
    - his wife left her heart in Sodom
    - and, because of that fact, couldn’t resist the urge to turn back for a final look.
    - It cost her everything.
  - The very woman that bore his children,
  - the lady who was his most intimate companion,
  - that individual that knew every contour of his soul,
    - saw nothing in him or his life that would keep her from falling head over heels in love with Sodom.
    - She would pay with her life for Lot’s lack of influence on his own family and his world!

Deception was a way of life in Sodom, and Lot was a part of it.
- Inwardly he was “greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked,”
  - and was “tormenting his righteous soul,” according to Peter,
    - but outwardly he said little or nothing at all about it because he had become a prominent man in town.
- Honesty about how he felt would have cost him everything.
  - Anything that could even slightly be construed as a positive influence,
- as a witness of the goodness of God,
- would have jeopardized his standing in the community.

- So Lot mastered the art of turning a blind eye and a deaf ear to the social and sexual abuses of Sodom.
  - He didn’t practice them.
  - He didn’t approve of them.
  - He didn’t partake of them.
    - But he didn’t lift his voice against them either.
- He was disgusted by what he heard and what he saw
  - but instead of speaking up,
  - instead of being a witness of the truth,
  - instead of pointing folks towards the God of his uncle Abraham,
    - Lot met the things that disgusted him with a polite smile and a careful deflection.
    - He learned to live and let live.
    - He learned to hate the sinful condition of his world
      - while, at the same time, making his peace with it!

Lot’s folly was this:
- Though the worldliness of Sodom vexed his righteous soul,
  - he still lived as close to the world as he could,
    - hanging onto it with everything he had right up to the bitter end.
- The result was that, although God judged Sodom and all that was within it,
  - the spirit and attitude of Sodom lived on because it had been grafted into the heart and lives of Lot and his daughters!
- There’s a lesson to be learned here:
  - It is possible for people in the church to be truly distressed by the condition of this world
    - yet still live lives that are profoundly influenced by the worldly culture around us.
  - As a matter of fact, it is entirely possible to become so weighted down by the same worldliness that distresses our soul,
    - until our very witness is rendered completely ineffective.
- Here’s the truth this morning:
  - The enticement to follow in Lot’s footsteps and live a life that is completely indistinct from the world
    - has never been stronger than it is right now.
- We live in a world in which religion and religiosity are on the rise
  - while morals and morality are in decline.
- Much of the religious world,
  - much of the church world,
    - pays lip service to the holiness of God
      - while embracing the culture and values of this world,
• to the extent that much of what is considered Christian in our world
  o is completely indistinguishable in any way from what is considered to be worldly.
• The church at large and in very general terms is becoming completely indistinct from the world.
  o That’s a fancy way of saying that what’s wrong with religion in America today
    ▪ is that the church that is supposed to be influencing the world has, itself, become worldly.

Now let me get to where the rubber meets the road.
• It’s easy to point our fingers at the church world in general
  o and feel all smug and self-righteous about our own condition.
• But, before you get too congratulatory, let me point something out:
  o The key indicator that the church is walking the same path that Lot walked
    ▪ is that we lose our influence on our world.
• When the church stops being an effective vehicle of evangelism,
  o when the waters of the baptistery are rarely stirred
    ▪ and the sound of newborn babes in Christ fails to echo around our altars
      • it provides the evidence that the church has lost its distinction from the world!
• I am afraid that saints that don’t pray
  o and services that see no conversions
    ▪ are evidence of a church that is growing too worldly,
      • a church where materialism, entertainment and pleasure seeking have gotten a grip upon our hearts
        o and strangled the effectiveness of our witness.
• God help us if we walk the way of Lot
  o in that while we are distressed by the knowledge of sin,
    ▪ our hearts are running headlong towards it!
  o Hear this preacher loud and clear:
    ▪ A worldly church cannot and will not reach the world!
  o The church must be distinct from the world if it’s going to reach the world.
    ▪ The church must be set apart,
      • the church must be separated to the purpose of God
        o if we are going to reach our world!
      ▪ The only hope for the world is a pure and holy church!
        • The only hope for this world is a church that has set its heart on seeking God, not the pleasures and entertainments of this life.
Make no mistake about it, today, righteous Lot loved Sodom.

- Little by little Sodom crept into his very being.
- He may have been disgusted by what he saw and heard,
  - he may have been reviled by the spiritual and moral decay of Sodom,
    - but he clung to that city and all that it offered with all of his heart.
- He, and his family paid dearly for it.
  - His wife was reduced to a pillar of salt.
    - He and his daughters alone escaped from Sodom.
- But they carried the spirit of that city with them in their hearts.
  - Without going into the graphic details of a sordid tale, suffice it to say that
    - in the deep dark depths of a cave,
      - where they were supposed to spend the night in safety.
    - The daughters of Lot conspired against him.
      - In a frighteningly stark testimony of the degree to which the influence of Sodom had saturated their hearts,
        - those young ladies proceeded to get their father drunk on his own wine
        - then dishonored him in an act of incest that insured that the spirit of Sodom would live on in their lives.

- You’ve probably heard the story of Lot and his daughters before,
  - and I’m pretty certain that when I tell you the names of the children that were born from that unholy union you will immediately recognize them as well.
  - But what I want you to recognize this morning is that the Moabites and the Ammonites who became bitter enemies of Israel throughout all of the Bible
    - Were the product of Sodom in Lot’s family.
  - He may have been a righteous man, but he left behind a heritage that was forever a thorn in the side of all that was good and Godly!

- In the end, there was no one to blame but Lot.
  - He may have maintained his righteousness throughout the episode in Sodom,
    - but hear this solemn warning,
      - his family didn’t.
  - Because he chose to live as close to the world as he could,
    - because he chose to ignore the conviction that struck his heart,
      - because he chose to make his peace with the sinful condition of Sodom,
his daughters paid the price and bore the shame
and the people of God struggled with the end
result for generations to come!

I come to this pulpit this morning to admonish the church to be the church.

- Not just for our sakes,
  - not just so our world can see the glorious light of truth,
    - not just so we can accomplish our God given task of evangelism
      in this world.
    - But so our children will walk in this truth.
- The warning is very plain,
  - where we choose to live today, in relation to our world,
    - will determine where our children and their children after
      us will live.
- If we, in our generation, set our hearts towards the pursuit of the things of
  his world,
  - if we allow the spirit of Sodom to creep into our lives,
    - we might possibly escape with having only vexed our righteous
      souls,
      - but, mark my words, our families will pay the price!
    - The wreckage and destruction of Sodom will haunt us for
      generations to come!

CLOSE

- I understand that it is a sobering message this morning,
  - but I believe that God is calling this church to walk closer to Him than
    we ever have before.
    - He has called us out of the darkness.
      - Let us turn our hearts towards him.
      - Let us live like we have truly been called out of darkness
        and into his marvelous light.
- I’m calling the church, once again, to consecration.
  - Let us find a place in the presence of God and let us pledge ourselves
    to a higher calling.
    - If Sodom is beginning to creep into your life,
      - your heart, or your way of thinking,
  - I want you to consider this morning the incredible impact that your
    direction is going to have on those who come behind you.
    - Let us leave behind us a legacy of Godliness and Righteousness.
      - Let us show forth the glorious praises of Him who has
        called us out of darkness.
        - Let us purpose, today, to walk in his light and to
          turn our hearts away from Sodom.