



The Sermon

Dr. Steven J. Lawson

Genesis 19:1-16a

"Death of a Society, Part I"

February 13, 2022

TRANSCRIPT

So we find ourselves today in Genesis chapter 19. I want to invite you to take your Bible and turn with me to Genesis chapter 19. And we've got a heavy today, we've got a big one; it's on Sodom and Gomorrah. At the outset, I don't know how many verses we're going to get through, so we'll know when we're there. So, I want to begin as we always do by reading the passage. And I'm not going to read the entire chapter because I don't want to spend my time just reading the entire chapter, but we're going to read a good ways into the chapter. And I want to set it before you. I want you to hear the word of God as you're looking at your Bible and as you're reading the word of God. So, the title of this sermon is "The Death of a Society. The Death of a Society." I want to begin reading now Genesis chapter 19, beginning in verse 1.

"Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. And he said, 'Now behold, my lords, please turn aside into your servant's house, and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way.' They said however, 'No, but we shall spend the night in the square.' Yet he urged them strongly, so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he prepared a feast for them, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.

"Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter; and they called to Lot and said to him, 'Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them.' But Lot went out

to them at the doorway, and shut the door behind him, and said, 'Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly. Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man; please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like; only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof.' But they said, 'Stand aside.' Furthermore, they said, 'This one came in as an alien,' - referring to Lot - 'and already he is acting like a judge; now we will treat you worse than them.' So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door. But the men reached out," - referring to the two angels - "reached out with their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. They" - referring to the two angels - "struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves trying to find the doorway.

"Then the two men said to Lot, 'Whom else have you here? A son-in-law, and your sons, and your daughters, and whomever you have in the city, bring them out of the place; for we are about to destroy this place, because their outcry has become so great before the Lord that the Lord has sent us to destroy it.' Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, and said, 'Up, get out of this place, for the Lord will destroy the city.' But he appeared to his sons-in-law to be jesting.

"When morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, 'Up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city.' But he hesitated." That may be as far as we are able to go today. I have notes right here for the rest, we'll see how the Lord works this.

In these verses we very clearly see the death and destruction of a society. No culture can survive that flaunts the moral law of God. Proverbs 14:34 says, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people." This is to say the greatness of any nation lies not in its finances, lies not in its military, lies not in its medicine or its education; the greatness of any nation lies in its moral character.

A great nation lives by moral standards with an innate sense of right and wrong that has been written on the heart by God's own finger, and by the conscience that God has placed inside of their psyche. A great nation upholds the sanctity of human life, a great nation preserves the family unit, a great nation has strong fathers and strong mothers living together under

one roof, and a great nation has an allegiance to a great God. But any nation that departs from righteousness is destined to doom and destruction. Whatsoever a nation sows, that shall it also reap; do not be deceived. Any society that abandons God's moral law will soon be brought down to dust and ashes. It will become so weak of character that one of three things will happen to a nation that abandons righteousness. One, it will either implode from within and cannibalize itself; or two, it will become so weak that it can no longer defend itself from outside aggression; or three, it will be made subject to a cataclysmic disaster in divine judgment that will pull the rug out from underneath them.

History is replete of example after example after example, and one such example is found in our text today in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. These were cities that had defiantly departed from God's moral law that was written on their hearts and etched into their conscience, and they became cities that lived in open, flagrant immorality that led to their own doom. And I believe that this morning there are a few passages that we could be looking at that have greater relevance to the moment and the hour in which we find ourselves than this particular text. This text is more up-to-date than tomorrow's newspaper. And for any who have been watching the Olympics and the flaunting of God's moral law, this is pressing in the moment.

So, let's begin to walk through this. There's so much here, I don't know how far we're going to be able to advance. But the first heading that I want to set before you is "the visitation"; that's the first three verses, "the visitation."

It begins, "Now the two angels came to Sodom." These two angels had previously accompanied the Lord Himself when they came to Abraham at the oaks of Mamre in the previous chapter. These two angels, when they were with Abraham and the Lord, looked down towards Sodom, because they were headed to Sodom; and we pick up the continuation of this narrative here, these two angels, having left Abraham and the Lord Himself have now come to Sodom – Sodom, the wicked city; Sodom, whose sins are crying out to God for judgment.

"It was in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom." Now in that culture in that day and time the leaders of the city, the civil leaders, the judicial leaders, the powerbrokers, they would sit at the gates of the city

and they would conduct their business; and Lot here is joined in with them. It's in the evening; and it's not a stretch to say Lot really should have been home with his family. But he is right here sitting in the midst of these leaders and he's one of them. Lot has blended in. Lot is quite at home sitting at the city gates, and Lot was attached to this wicked city really in a way in which I think he has crossed the line. He is far too familiar with these men. And these men will be those who will come in homosexual desires to take the two angels into their hands.

And so, verse 1 continues, "When Lot saw them," - referring to the two angels - "he rose." He was seated at the gates of the city. He saw the two angels who have taken on a human form, and they're referred to as men throughout this chapter. So these are angelic beings, spirits that have taken on a human appearance, and they now come walking through the city gates into the city with all of the other city leaders. And the homosexuality has risen to the highest level of society. It has infiltrated the political structure, it has infiltrated the financial structure of the city, it has infiltrated the leadership at the highest level; and they're all sitting here with Lot. And Lot looks up and he sees them walking through the city gates, and Lot instinctively recognizes somehow, some way that there's something different about these two men. "They are not like the rest of this crowd that I've been sitting with and conducting my business. There's something holy about them. There is almost something heavenly about them." And there is some discernment on the part of Lot to recognize that these are unlike the people who live in this vile city.

And so, "He rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground." It was a sign of respect towards someone who is greater than you are. And he recognizes that these are heavenly visitors and that he must humble himself in their presence. And this is taking place in front of the other men of Sodom who are seated at the city gate, and they are observing these two new men who have walked into town. And they are handsome men, and they are angels who have taken on a human form, and the other men begin to be attracted to these two who have come into town.

And so, verse 2, "He" - Lot - "said, 'Now behold, my lords,' - referring to the two angels; and lords is really a title of respect: sirs, honored ones - 'please turn aside in your servant's house, and spend the night, and wash your feet.'" Now we need to understand what's going on. At the shallowest level Lot is expressing hospitality, but there's far more going on than he has good social manners. He realizes that these other men, they'll be after these two men. "They will be like sharks around a swimmer who's bleeding, and

so they need to stay with me. They need to spend the night with me, or they're going to be preyed upon, and it's going to be violent, it's going to be aggressive. They're going to be hostile, and they're going to physically apprehend these two men, and it's going to be an orgy." So he says, "Please stay at your servant's house," – to protect them – "and then you may rise early and go on your way," verse 2. In other words, "You need to get out of town immediately. You can't stay in this town any longer. You stay with me tonight, you get up first thing in the morning and you're out of here, because I know these other men."

"They" – referring to the angels, verse 2 – "said, 'No. No, we will not be staying at your house, but we shall spend the night in the square.'" In the square? This is like spending the night in downtown San Francisco and just sleeping in the park. Like, "Are you crazy?" The square is the city square, it's in the middle of town, it's in the middle of what we would call downtown. It's at the very epicenter of all the moral filth that is being vomited up out of the pit of hell through these other men. They say, "No, we're going to spend the night in the square." Verse 3, that sets Lot off. And in verse 3, "Yet he" – Lot – "urged them strongly," – I looked up the word; it means he pressed them hard, he pushed on them, if you will, to – 'stay with me.' So they turned aside," they agreed. These two angels, they agreed to what Lot has pressed upon them. "They turned aside to him and entered his house; and he prepared a feast for them, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate."

Now just a point of application before we move on. Every one of us here in this room, in a sense, need to be like these two men who came walking into town, in that there needs to be something distinctly different from us from the culture in which we live. You and I do not need to blend into the world, the world's going to hell. You and I need to stand out from the world like bright stars on a dark night. We need to be distinct. And if we're going to make a difference in the world, we have to be different from the world. And the idea that we would become like the world in order to reach the world is fool's gold; it will never happen. And so Lot immediately recognizes just even the holiness of these two men who have walked into town. You need to stand out like that where you work; you need to stand out like that and your families; you need to stand out like that in your neighborhood.

Now second, I want you to see "the aggression"; and this this becomes ugly. And one thing about the Bible, the Bible tells it like it is. The Bible is a straight-shooting book. And so, we read in verse 4, "Before they lay down," – meaning that very night, meaning they've only been in Lot's house for

maybe an hour, a very short period of time – "the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, young and old, and all the people from every quarter." This is this is unbelievable. "The men of the city" refer to the hardened militant homosexuals, and not just an isolated few of them, but this large contingency virtually – listen to this – virtually every man in town has been sucked into this sewer, including the leaders at the gate of the city.

And so, "The men of the city," – that's a very comprehensive statement – "the men of Sodom surrounded the house." Listen, the word had spread within minutes throughout town that there's two new men that have come into town. And it spread like wildfire, and they all begin to gather as a result of their networking together, and the next thing you know they have surrounded the house, like I said earlier, like sharks around a bleeding swimmer. This is an ugly scene.

And then Moses, who writes this, says, "young and old." I mean, every generation, top to bottom, those who are in their latter years, those who are in their younger years, and what would be implied in every one in between. And then he adds, "all the people from every quarter." So it's not just that every age has now surrounded this house, but they have come from every part of town. In other words, there's not just a gay section of town and all the homosexuals just live in one place. No, no, they the have encompassed the whole city of Sodom, from every quarter. And the word "quarter" here means a border. So the entire circumference of the city is now drawn in to surround.

And what we need to understand is once this sin gets started, there's no stopping it. It spreads like a malignant cancer from one part of the body to the whole of the body, destroying all the organs. And it spreads throughout a city: young and old, rich and poor, no matter where you live. And they are sucked into this. And now they are aggressive, they are hostile, and they have surrounded the house of Lot. And the two angels are on the inside.

And in verse 5, "and they" – the homosexual men – "called to Lot." They started to chant outside of his house. "They called to him and said, 'Where are the men who came to you tonight?'" because they're hungry for fresh meat. They are hungry for a new prey. They are bold. They are empowered. They are daring. They're no longer slinking down the back alley, they're now strutting down Main Street, and they want to take every person in town

down with them. And so they're stalking these two men, having no idea that these are two angels, because they have zero spiritual discernment whatsoever. The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit.

And they say, "Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them." "Have relations" is putting it in the mildest way. It's a Hebrew word, *yada*, that means for a husband to love his wife in sexual intercourse. It's used in Genesis 4:1, that, "Adam knew his wife, and she conceived and gave birth." It is a very poetic and polite way of saying sexual intercourse that the Bible reserves only for a husband and a wife.

But they say, "Bring them out to us that we may have relations." Please notice it's in the plural. And I say this with some reservation; but what they want is a gang rape. They want multiple men to jump on these two men who have come into Lot's house. They have unbridled lust. They have perverse wickedness. They want an orgy party that would make the wildest fraternity house blush. That's what they want. They're not secret about it, they're not quiet about; it's now in this society it's so out in the open that they are bold and daring about it.

And I want us to know very clearly that the Bible says that homosexuality is a dark and deviant lifestyle that is strictly forbidden by God. There is nothing good about it, there is nothing wholesome about it, there is nothing pure about it; it is completely filthy. When the Law would be given to Moses in Leviticus 18:22, the Law that's already written on their hearts, God says, "You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination."

And as we were singing this morning before I walked up here, I pulled out my cell phone and I just checked out this word "abomination." And the word "abomination" in the Hebrew, it means disgusting, it means detestable. And homosexuality is a disgusting and detestable sin against God Himself.

In Leviticus 20:13, God says again, "If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them" – meaning both the beta male and the alpha male, both the one who assumes the male role and the one who assumes the female role, both men have committed a detestable act; and it's the same Hebrew word that is translated in the text that I just read earlier, it means disgusting. "They shall surely be put to death. Their

bloodguiltiness is upon them." And it was such a violation of God's natural order that He has built into a man and a woman that God says, "It cannot be permitted to be tolerated even another day, they are to be put to death, they are to be stoned to death, lest it spread to the rest of society."

And when we come to the New Testament we see simply the reinforcement of the same, not with the death penalty; but nevertheless, the degree of its defiance against God. And in Romans 1:27, the New Testament reads, "The men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own person to due penalty of their sin." And what this says is, in its placement in Romans chapter 1, that, "When they knew God, they did not give thanks for God, and instead they turned away from God, they abandoned God, and God gave them over to this homosexual lifestyle, and God gave them over to lesbianism as well." And it actually is the judgment of God upon a culture and upon a society because they have first rejected God, they have first rejected God's moral law, they have failed to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, then God gives them over to homosexuality.

Does it lead to the judgment of God? It is the judgment of God upon a nation. And it is the judgment of God upon a Christian denomination, it's the judgment of God upon even a church, and it is so serious that in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Paul says, "Do you not know" - meaning this is basic Christianity 101 - "that no homosexual will enter the kingdom of God." But if a homosexual will repent of their sin, just like anyone else would repent of their sin, and throw themselves upon the mercy of God, they would find forgiveness, they would find grace, but they would also be the recipient of a new heart with new desires, and they would be radically changed and transformed from the inside out such that they would no longer be now "a Christian homosexual" or "a homosexual Christian." Such a person does not exist. There may be a battle on the inside with desires, but there will not be the pursuit of that lifestyle once someone has been regenerated by Almighty God, and their old heart removed, heart of stone, and a new heart of flesh put in.

So the story continues. Third, "the persuasion," in verse 6, the persuasion. "But Lot went out to them," meaning out to this sin-thirsty mob. "Lot went out to them at the doorway, and shut the door behind him," - he shut the door behind them to keep the two angels on the inside protected and to keep the mob from overrunning the house and entering, verse 7 - "and said, 'Please, my brothers.'" He's a little too friendly with this group. It's obvious



he's not been witnessing to them. It's obvious he's not been flying his colors in front of them.

"Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly." Lot, who is an example of compromise at the highest level, he is as carnal as a believer can be and actually be a believer. He has pushed the boundaries in sanctification. Even Lot knows that these militant men are acting wickedly; he's probably never told them that. The word "wickedly" here means to be evil, and it also has the connotation of injury, that your evil is bringing upon injury to others. And Lot at least has the sense of knowing that this sin that they are rushing in to commit is absolutely wicked.

So, verse 8, this just breaks my heart to even read this: "Now behold," - and the word "behold" means you're just going to have to pay attention to this, don't miss this. "Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man." He has two virgin daughters, his own daughters, who've never had intercourse with a man. "Please let me bring them out to you, and you do whatever you like." Lot ought to be shot on the spot. He has no spiritual backbone, he has no moral principle, he has no strong convictions; he he's willing to sacrifice his own daughters on the altar of their lust. He is cowardly, he is deranged, and he stands as the poster child of this statement, that sin will make you stupid. Sin will always drive you to make the stupidest decisions you could ever possibly make. He is Exhibit A. And so rather than protecting his daughters, he is prostituting his daughters.

Lot is a weak believer who has collapsed under the pressure that has been brought to bear upon him. He is too concerned about what other people think about him. He is too concerned about fitting into the world system. He is too concerned with the applause of men and the approval of men rather than the purity of his own daughters. God help someone like that!

And then he says, "only do nothing to these men inasmuch as they have" - verse 8 - "have come under the shelter of my house." He tries to reason with the mob. And here's what we need to understand: you can never reason with the mob; whatever you want to give up, they will take times ten and they will run through every stop sign you try to put up. You have to hold to your principle and hold to what is right no matter what takes place. And so Lot now, he is backpedaling as fast as he possibly can, and he is learning all too fast that reasoning with the mob will never work.

So, verse 9, "They said," - this sin thirsty mob - "they said, ' Stand aside. Get out of the way." They are hell-bent on glorifying their own sinful, sensual flesh. They will stop at nothing. They are stimulated to the hilt; they are enraged; they are in the grip of their own sinful flesh. They're like someone driving a car who has no steering wheel and no brakes whatsoever, they're just running over whatever is in front of them.

"Furthermore, they said," - now I want you to watch this in verse 9. "Furthermore, they said, 'This one,' - that's referring to Lot - 'this one came in as an alien. I mean, he wasn't born in Sodom, he didn't grow up in Sodom; he's an alien, he's a foreigner. He's not one of us. And already he is acting like a judge. He's judging us. He's not tolerant of us, he's intolerant of our lifestyle, he's telling us how to live."

And now the crowd addresses Lot in the middle of verse 9: "Now we will treat you worse than them." Let me tell you what that means: "We're going to gang rape them, but we're going to gang rape you even worse than what we do to them. They're going to be so many men on top of you, violating you, that you will not even stay conscious."

"So they pressed hard against Lot" - they bullied him, they intimidated him, and for every inch he gives up, they take a yard - "and came near to break the door." They are militant, they are demanding, they are aggressive; they will stop at nothing to fulfill their flesh. This shows the stranglehold that the sin of homosexuality can have upon a person. It can literally overtake that person's life, and it becomes the beachhead for all other kinds of sins, because with it comes anger and arrogance and aroused sensual pleasures in other directions. It is a serious sin, that in the Old Testament it called for immediate death penalty. The leaven cannot spread to the loaf of bread.

This leads us to verse 10, "the protection." "But the men" - referring to the two angels, verse 10 - "reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door." They literally bodily, the two angels, dragged Lot into his own house and locked the door, so that the mob could not enter and have relations with Lot. I mean, they knew exactly what's about ready to happen to Lot; they're going to take him down literally.

Verse 11, "They" – the angels, these two angels. This situation has gotten so out of hand, this situation has no guard rails on the side of the road, this situation, it has now reached an unstoppable point. These two angels now must do something dramatic. And we read, "They struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness," – it was a divine judgment – "both small and great," – meaning all of them, they were all struck blind – "so that they wearied themselves" – the idea is they hurried themselves to find the doorway," – to retreat, to back up, to reload, before they surround the house again.

It was a mercy of God on the part of Lot to protect him and his daughters and his sons-in-law and his wife by striking this angry crowd blind so that they could no longer carry out the filth that was in their heart. Verse 12, "Then the two men" – the two angels – "said a Lot, 'Whom else have you here? A son-in-law and your sons, and your daughters, whomever you have in the city, bring them out of the place.'" In other words, "Lot you're going to have to gather up your whole family, your daughters, your sons-in-law, your wife, whoever else is in your family, and you have to get out of town. You're going to get out of town now, because something's getting ready to happen in this town."

And he tells him in verse 13 what that is, "for we are about to destroy this place." These two angels are about to bring the devastating and damning judgment of God upon Sodom and everyone who lives in Sodom. Whatever other women are there, whatever other children might be there, whatever babies might be there, across the board there's going to be fire that's going to come down from heaven from God and it's going to burn the whole city to a crisp. So you just need to gather up all your loved ones, Lot, and you need to do it now, and you need to get out of town, because the fire is about to fall." And this word "destroy" in verse 13, it's interesting. It was used earlier in the book of Genesis for God's destruction of the world through the flood when He sent the flood in Noah's day; just total devastation of the entire human race. It's the very same word that's used here. And then he tells us why this destruction is about to take place.

At the end of verse 13, he says, "because their outcry has become so great before the Lord," – what that means is their deviant lifestyle is screaming to the heights of heaven begging for God to intervene with judgment and just stop it right now before it spreads any further, verse 13 – "that the Lord has sent us to destroy it." These two angels are agents of divine wrath,

they are agents of divine judgment. And we see more of that as the Bible progresses. When we go all the way to the end of the Bible we come to the book of Revelation, and the judgments that are poured out during the great tribulation that there are angels who are being employed by God to be those who administrate this judgment upon the earth such as the earth has never seen.

So, verse 14, "Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law who were to marry his daughters," – so the idea is probably like a betrothal, they're engaged – "and said, 'Up,' – to his sons-in-law – 'up, get out of this place, leave town now, for the Lord will destroy the city.'" The Lord is going to bring down the heavy hand and the hammer of judgment upon this city and smash it into so many pieces that it can never be put back together again. "But he appeared to his sons-in-law to be jesting." This is inconceivable to them. "What are you even talking about? We live here. We like living here. We fit in. These are our friends, these are our neighbors."

The sons-in-law had become so desensitized by this sin that had perverted the culture that they had come to assume that homosexuality was a normal way to live, it's just another alternate lifestyle. And the same could happen to you and me, that we could become desensitized, and it lose its shock value. But these verses are not jesting; this sin is an abomination to the Lord. It is evil, it is dark, it is wicked, it is detestable, it is no joke.

And these sons-in-law had also become desensitized to the wrath of God. Whatever it is that they knew of the wrath of God – and we're not told – but they think he's jesting not just because of why God will do this, but what God will do. "Wipe out the whole city?" Whatever they presume God to be, they could not bring themselves to believe that God would judge people with wrath. "After all, these are the people we sit at the city gates with. These are the people we do business with. These are our leaders. They are successful, and we want to traffic with them and ride their coattails. We would love to be in their shoes and be as successful as they are."

Let me give you a proverb, Proverbs 28:5, "Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the Lord understand all things." Evil men do not understand judgment. Evil men do not understand the wrath of God. Evil men do not understand the fury and the vengeance of God. Evil men do not understand sinners in the hands of an angry God, they just don't; they have a reprobate mind that lives in darkness. But those who seek the Lord, that

should be you and me; it makes total sense to us, because God is a holy God, and God's holiness is violated when sin is committed. And not all sins are the same, and some sins bring a more severe judgment, a severer judgment, and this is one of those.

So, verse 15, when morning dawned," - meaning early in the morning, no time to waste - "the angels urged Lot, saying, 'Up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city.'" This speaks to how urgently we must respond to the word of God whenever the word of God is made known to us. Tomorrow is the devil's day, today is God's day. "Boast not yourself of tomorrow, for you know not what a day may bring forth. Behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, today is the day of salvation." We must act immediately. Delayed obedience is no obedience. Delayed obedience is disobedience. Delayed obedience subjects us to all kinds of chastening and discipline from the Lord.

Well, the last thing I want you to see is "the procrastination," the beginning of verse 16, and we'll end it here. So, how does Lot respond? Verse 16, "But he" - Lot - "hesitated." He is the fool of fools. He hesitated, the Hebrew word that means he delayed, he lingered, he tarried. Lot could not pull himself away from Sodom, it had wrapped its tentacles around his heart and would not let him go. The city with all of its sinful lifestyles had found a place in Lot's heart. He had been sucked into the system. He had become too attached to this evil city. He had become desensitized to the seriousness of this sin and to the seriousness of God's judgment. He wrestled with giving it up, but he just could not let Sodom go; he hesitated. And as we will see next week, the angels literally had to lay hold of him bodily and physically and drag him out of town. That's how much resistance Lot was putting up against leaving Sodom, of all places.

I think we learn from this that a lukewarm, carnal heart will always hesitate to do God's will. A lukewarm, carnal heart will always hesitate to do God's will. It will always halt between two opinions, it will always tarry in the valley of decision. A lukewarm heart will always try to straddle the fence, it will always try to play both ends into the middle. It will always try to be a friend of God and a friend of the world. A lukewarm heart is always too much at home in this world; it is too chummy with the world, it is too easily seduced by the world's values.

That's what we learn from this. And I think for each and every one of us, we've got to be careful that we don't become like Lot. We're not living in the garden of Eden here even in Dallas, Texas. It's no longer what it was ten years ago, and twenty years ago. And people are flooding in here from all around the country, from California, from Oregon, and they're bringing their lifestyles with them; and we're going to be like the frog in the kettle, and the temperature is going to get hotter and hotter, but you don't even realize it's changing. We must not become too comfortable with the world and be at home with the world.

Second Corinthians 6:14 says, "Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?" "Come out from among them and be separate," says the Lord. We are to be in the world, but we're not to be of the world; the world is our mission field.

And let us hear James 4:4 one more time: "You adulteresses," - and he's talking about spiritual adultery - "you say you love God, but you're laying down in the bed with the world. You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility with God?" Did you hear that? And what he is saying here, he's not saying we can't have friendship relationships with people in the world, but they are our mission field and we cannot allow ourselves to become their mission field. Someone's going to influence someone.

"You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world" - and he's talking about the evil world system: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the boastful pride of life - "do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility with God?" If you have made friendship with this evil world system, you're not just in neutral zone, you have declared yourself to be an enemy of God. And then James 4:4 says, "Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." It's pretty crystal clear; that's a hard one to explain away.

And so this text is a call for each and every one of us to not be setting down our roots into this evil world system that has its own agenda, that has its own moral values, that has its own standard for what marriage is, for what a family is, for what a proper love relationship is. This world is so adrift it is on a collision course with divine judgment, and it is inescapable,

and it is looming on the horizons, and we need to be as distinct as we possibly can. While we're in the world and trying to reach the world, we cannot become sucked into being like the world. First John 2:15 says, "Do not love the world nor the things that are in the world." "For the things that are in the world are passing away, but he who does the will of God abides forever." This is a strong message; it's intended to be a strong message, and I trust that it has received full acceptance with your heart this day. If not, you need to repent, and you need to change your way of thinking, because it's off-course.

The final thing I'll say, and we'll pick this up next week in verse 16; and it gets even stronger. As you find yourself here today, this God of wrath has demonstrated His love towards sinners, in that while we were His enemies, Christ died for us, that God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him would not perish, but have everlasting life. I want to tell you just as simply as I can, that if you will put your faith and your trust in Jesus Christ, you will escape the final judgment to come, you will escape eternal damnation in hell. But do not hesitate, because you do not know what a day may bring forth.

This may be your last day to live. This may be the last sermon you will ever hear. This may be the last time you will ever find yourself in a gathered body of believers. This is your day of opportunity, this is your time with God. This is your time to step out of the crowd and to come to Christ, and to surrender your life to Christ, and to confess your sin, and to receive His grace, His mercy, His forgiveness. He will take your sin and He will place it behind His back, never to be seen again. He will take your sin and bury it in the depth of the sea of His forgetfulness. He will take your sin and He will remember it no more, if you will put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ. It's the greatest offer that anyone has ever made to you. And don't let anything keep you from being right with God.

We began the service by singing "It Is Well With My Soul." It can be well with your soul today, in a moment, if you would repent of your sin and commit your life to Jesus Christ. But I think we see from this text God is serious about sin. And there is only one solution to your sin, and that is Jesus Christ who died on the cross to take away sin. You have no other hope; you have no other place to stand; you have no other basis whatsoever to find acceptance with God. You have no other way to escape eternal wrath in hell forever, except to believe in His mercy and His grace. And if you refuse this offer and you die in unbelief, hell cannot be hot enough for you, because you have trampled underfoot the precious blood of the Lord Jesus

Christ, and you have insulted the Spirit of grace. That is a far greater sin than any other sin that could be committed, that you would harden your heart and stiffen your neck against the free offer of the gospel of Jesus Christ. So I urge you, I plead with you, today, if you hear His voice, harden not your heart. Let us pray.

[Prayer] Father, take Your word that we have looked at today, more deeply inscribe it into our hearts, that we would understand the seriousness with which You take sin. You're an infinitely, holy God, and You will not tolerate it. And so may You awaken us this day to be responsive to Your word, and to immediately do whatever it is You require of us. And for those here today among us who are without Christ, may they this instant, may they this millisecond cast themselves upon the mercy that You have for sinners who will come in faith in Jesus Christ. We pray this in His name. Amen.