



The Sermon

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Genesis 19:16-26

"Death of a Society, Part II"

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TRANSCRIPT

Well, I invite you to take your Bible and turn with me to Genesis chapter 19, and we want to pick up our account in verse 16, Genesis 19:16. The title this message is "Death of a Society, Part II."

And so, beginning in verse 16, we read, "But he" - referring to Lot - "hesitated. So the men seized his hand" - referring to the two angels - "and the hand of his wife and the hands of his two daughters, for the compassion of the Lord was upon him; and they brought him out, and put him outside the city. When they had brought them outside, one said, 'Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the valley; escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away.' But Lot said to them, 'Oh no, my lords! Now behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have magnified your lovingkindness, which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, for the disaster will overtake me and I will die; now behold, this town' - and he will name that town at the end of verse 22 - 'this town is near enough to flee to, and it is small. Please, let me escape there (is it not small?) that my life may be saved.' He said to him, 'Behold, I grant you this request also, not to overthrow the town of which you have spoken. Hurry, escape there, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there.' Therefore the name of the town was called Zoar.

"The sun had risen over the earth when Lot came to Zoar. Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven, and He overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But his wife, from

behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt." This is the reading of God's infallible word. Let us pray.

[Prayer] Father, as we look at this passage we know that the primary actor in this text is You. It's not even Lot, and it's not even the angels, it's not Lot's wife; You are the one who should stand out of this passage. And I pray that You would increase our understanding of who You are. So often we have it in our mind the way we think You are, and then we come to a passage like this and we realize that we have not yet come to see exactly who You are. So Lord, I pray that today You would increase our understanding of who You are, as You have revealed Yourself to us in Your word. And so, let God be found true, let every man be found a liar. We pray now You would bring Your blessing upon us as we look into this text, in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

Well, in these verses which I have just read we complete the account of what we began last week which deals with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. And it is in this text that we learn a very major truth about God, a truth that has been marginalized and compromised in the day in which we live, and it is the truth about the wrath of God. God is a holy God, and God is angered by all those who violate His own holy character. God hates sin, but also God hates the sinner who is outside of Christ; and God sends to hell not just sin, God sends sinners to hell.

This text is about divine wrath which is the righteous indignation of His own holy outrage towards those who break His moral law. And Holy God cannot be indifferent to that which is contrary to His own flawless and sinless character; and the entire Bible from cover to cover testifies to this, and time does not permit us even in this introduction to orient us to the wrath of God. But a God without wrath is not God at all. A God without wrath is not holy, a God without wrath is simply a figment of someone's imagination. That is a fallen, warped view of what God is like.

The apostle Paul writes in Romans 1:18, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." And the wrath of God is His smoldering anger for the sinfulness of sinners. In Romans 2:5, Paul writes some very sobering words. He says, "You are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God." In Romans 3:5, Paul says, "God inflicts wrath."

In Ephesians 2:3 it describes every unbeliever as children of wrath, which is a Hebraism meaning children deserving wrath. In Ephesians 5:6, Paul writes, "The wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience," all the sons of disobedience. And it was John the Baptist who spoke in Matthew 3:7 of the wrath to come. And John the Baptist also said in John 3:36, "He who does not obey the Son of God, the wrath of God abides on him." And by the way, these are present tense verbs, meaning this very moment the wrath of God abides upon everyone who is outside of Christ.

I would remind us that each of these verses I just quoted are found in the New Testament. And we can't play the game of saying, "Well, that was just the Old Testament, and God now is a God of love." No, in the Old Testament God was a God of love, just as He was a God of wrath. And in the New Testament God is a God of love, just as He is a God of wrath." Malachi 3:6 says that God never changes.

And so this is precisely what we see in this historical count of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. This is a real event that took place in real time. This is not an allegory, this is not a parable, this scene involves real fire and real brimstone that fell upon and consumed real sinners who had committed real acts of real sin, and this heated wrath came directly from the hand of God Himself. There should be no attempt on our part to try to explain this away or to soften its blow. It's here in the Bible for a reason, and it is that you and I would fear the Lord.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The fear of the Lord is the conclusion of wisdom. The fear the Lord marks every step from the beginning to the end of wisdom. We never outgrow the fear of God, we only grow deeper in the fear of God. We only take Him more seriously as we grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. The most mature believer here today in part is the one who most fears God, and the one who is furthest away from the Lord is the one who is lacking in the fear of God.

So, last time we looked at the first sixteen-and-a-half verses, and I just want to remind you, because there is a buildup to where we will pick up our study today. But last time we noted first "the visitation" in verses 1 through 3, the visitation of two angels of judgment who had left Abraham in the high country and had come down to the valley of the low country where Sodom and Gomorrah is located, and they came on a mission to be the agents of judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah.

And then we saw "the aggression" in verses 4 and 5, that when these angels who were disguised as men came into Sodom, the other men who were homosexuals in the city – and the whole city was virtually overrun with this loathsome sin of homosexuality – surrounded the house of Lot where Lot was hiding the two angels, because Lot knew what would happen when these two angels disguised as men have come to town. There will be a militant uprising to want to lay their hands upon these two men.

And then we noted, third, "the persuasion" in verses 6 through 9 by Lot to leave the angels alone; and in a despicable, cowardly manner, Lot instead offered his two daughters to this mob scene, and said, "You can do to them whatever you want to do, just leave these two men alone."

And then we noted "the protection," the two angels in verses 10 through 15. The two angels had to step in and literally strike blind the militant group that was wanting to commit indecent acts with the two angels; and it had not been for the two angels striking blind the mob scene, who knows what would have happened. And they urged Lot to get out of town because the fire is about to fall. "Just leave with your family now."

And the last thing we saw was "the hesitation" at the beginning of verse 16. Lot had become so enamored with the city of Sodom and he was so connected with the city leaders who were homosexual in Sodom that he just couldn't disconnect himself, he just couldn't pull away. The world had wrapped its tentacles around Lot's heart, and Lot hesitated, because he just couldn't give up this vile lifestyle, though he himself not involved. But he had become inundated with it to the point that his own conscience was seared as with a hot iron.

And so we pick up the account here. And the sixth thing that I want you to note as we begin our study today is in the middle of verse 16, "the intervention." And so we read, "So the men" – referring to the two angels – "seized his hand and the hand of his wife and the hand of his two daughters." So there's two angels, each having two hands; they have four hands to lay hold of these four people, Lot and his family, and they literally have to physically extract Lot out of Sodom. His hesitation, his heart is there, his affections are there, and the angels literally have to lay hold of Lot and his wife and his two daughters and all but drag them out of town. That's how strong the world can be upon us. And Lot was a believer, and the world had

so established a beachhead in his heart that if the angels had not intervened and literally pried him out of town, he would have been there when the fire fell.

And then we read in verse 16, "and they" - the two angels - "brought him out and put him outside the city." And this was an act of mercy. In fact, it says here, "for the compassion of the Lord was upon him." This is the mercy of God, the loving grace of God to overcome his own resistance and to pull him out of town. It was really the goodness of God. And so even in this scene of wrath and vengeance and fury and judgment and destruction, even in the midst of this, there are flickering stars of mercy and goodness in this dark night of a scene. And even in the midst of God's flaming judgment there remains His grace to deliver and to forget.

And so, in verse 17, "When they" - the angels - "had brought them outside," - of Sodom - "one said," - one of the angels who was, no doubt, the lead angel in these two - "said, 'Escape for your life!'" In other words, "If you do not escape, you will lose your life. You will literally die in the flames which will reduce this city to mere ashes. Escape for your life! Get out of Sodom as far as you possibly can!"

And then they add, "And do not look behind you. Have nothing to do with Sodom. Do not even turn around and look back at it. Burn your bridges behind you. Cut your ties completely. Leave here without any second thoughts, without any lasting affection. In your mind bury this entire city and do not even think about it again, and do not even look back. Don't give it a second glance." And he says, "and do not stay anywhere in the valley."

And Sodom and Gomorrah are in the lowlands in the south, southeast tip of the Dead Sea. Abraham has been in the high country about 3,000 feet high. There there's extreme change in elevation in that part of the world, and just a very small amount of space. And Sodom and Gomorrah is down in the lowlands, and it almost represents the low living, the gutter living that took place in Sodom and Gomorrah.

And so the angel says, "Do not stay anywhere in the valley. Don't even linger close by Sodom. Do not be tempted to have one foot in and one foot out. You just need to get away and stay away. Get out of even the valley,

because what's about to happen is going to be so devastating, you must not be anywhere near it."

And so he adds at the end of verse 17, the angel, "Escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away." The mountains would be the higher ground. And this is going to be like an atomic bomb going off. It's going to be like an erupting volcano of fire and brimstone and wrath, and it is going to destroy not only Sodom and Gomorrah, but three other cities are a part of this judgment - and in the book of Deuteronomy we're given the name of two of these other cities. This has spread to the whole region. So it's not just like a few blocks in Sodom and Gomorrah are going to be wiped out. No, it's Sodom and it's Gomorrah and it's these other two cities. And it would have been a fifth city, and we'll talk about that in just a moment.

"Escape to the mountains." These are real mountains. "Get out of this real valley, because real fire is about to burn everyone." Men, women, boys, girls, children, babies are about to be burned to a crisp, and all that will be left behind it says in the Bible are ashes. This should say to us that we cannot allow the sin of worldliness to take root in our hearts. "Friendship with the world is hostility to God," James 4:4.

And we are in the world, but we are no longer of the world; we're no longer a part of this evil system. And you see this evil system every time you turn on cable news. You see this evil system every time you look on Instagram and Twitter. You see this evil system that is at work all around us, and the noose is tightening. But it says to us we cannot conform to the system.

This leads, number seven, "the objection," verse 18, the objection. "But Lot said to them," - to the two angels - "Oh no, my lords!" which lords is like saying sirs, it's a title of respect. And Lot does not want to flee to the mountains. And it really just shows how carnal his mind has come. Like, "You actually think you know better than God?"

These angels are just a mouthpiece for the will of God. They've been commissioned from the throne of God to descend and wing their flight down into this world and to carry out the executive orders that they have been entrusted with from the very hand of God Himself, who is surrounded by the angels in glory. And so as they come down and they say for Lot now to get out and head to the mountains, and Lot now thinks he has a better idea for

his life. And it just shows how – what an a state of insubordination in which Lot finds himself. And he's wanting to negotiate, he's wanting to bargain with the will of God.

And so, in verse 19, "Now behold," – Lot is the speaker here in verse 19. "Now behold, your servant" – he's referring to himself as "your servant." Well, a servant ought to do what the master says, right? The master is not serving the servant, the servant is serving the master. And so Lot has this completely backwards, which again shows how upside-down and inverted his mind has become by the perversion of this city.

"Now behold, your servant has found favor in your sight," – and he has found favor in God's sight, because God has ushered him out of town even by physical force – "you have magnified your lovingkindness, which you have shown me by saving my life." And he understands that this is a divine intervention, this is a divine rescue mission that these two angels have been sent on to extract him from Sodom, and he acknowledges that it is the loving hand of God that has removed him.

But then this next word, just astonishing: but, but. "But I cannot escape to the mountains, for the disaster will overtake me and I will die." And so what he is saying is, "I can't get to the high ground fast enough." Maybe he's not able to run. Maybe he's not able to make that journey, I don't know. But he counters by saying, "I can't arrive at the mountains fast enough."

So he says in verse 20, "Now behold, this town is near enough to flee to, and it is small." Now what's interesting here, what is troubling is Lot does not want to go up to the mountains to be in isolation, he wants another city, and it is a city where there's homosexuality, and it is a city that is a part of the divine judgment of God. There are five cities, Sodom and Gomorrah are only two of them. And the city he wants to go to, Zoar, is a city in which there is all kinds of licentiousness and gross sin, including the sin of homosexuality; and rather than be in isolation in the mountains, he wants to stay in the valley and just move to another despicable city.

And so he says, "Please let me escape there, that my life may be saved." You would think at some point Lot would finally awaken, that every decision that he has made has just taken him further and further away from the goodness of God and the blessing of God. I mean, he needs to repent.

He needs to humble himself beneath the mighty hand of God. He needs to yield himself to the revealed will of God. But Lot's not there yet.

And so, that leads us to "the concession" in verse 21. Amazingly the two angels yield to Lot's urgent request. It's a good thing I wasn't one of those angels, I would have probably sent him back to Sodom. These two angels yield to Lot's request.

And so, in verse 21, "He" - one of the angels - "said to him," - Lot - 'Behold, I grant you this request also.'" Now this word "also" tells us something important here, that "not only will I grant your request to go to this city" - that he will tell us in verse 22 is the city of Zoar, but in going to this city, they will withhold their smoldering judgment upon that city because Lot will be in it. So that's what's going on here.

Let me read it again: "Behold, I grant you this request also, not to overthrow the town of which you have spoken." So this clearly indicates that this smaller town to which Lot wants to flee was also to be consumed with the same fire that will fall upon Sodom. And so therefore this also means that this smaller city was also infected with the malignant cancer of homosexuality, as well as other sins.

But now these angels, speaking on behalf of God, say it a Lot, not only, "May you go to this city, but we will even spare this city because you're going to be in it." And does not this speak to the lengths to which the grace of God will go? I mean, Lot is just - he's just running stop signs, after stop signs, after stop signs; and God just continues to guide him with lovingkindness and mercy in virtually an unprecedented display of God's patience. And so this reveals that Lot still wants to live in an evil city with its collective sins.

And there is something about a city that has an exponential multiplying affect that becomes a breeding ground for sin that is different than living out on a farm, or out on a ranch, or out in the country, where you're disconnected from the influences of other people around you. Of course, that's all changing now with television, the Internet, and all of that. Even regional accents are beginning to fade away because we're all watching the same things on cable.

So, the angel in verse 22 tells Lot, "Hurry," – there's a sense of urgency about doing God's will in God's time – "hurry, escape there, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there." And this is a mercy of God as well that God says, "You need to get to this little city now," – speaking through this angel – "because I can't bring the judgment until you are safe in this city."

And Moses, who records all of this, adds this footnote: "Therefore the name of the town was Zoar." The word "Zoar" means insignificant. It could be translated "little one," just a little insignificant place that's located on the southeast end of the Dead Sea; and it was to be one of the five cities that would be judged along with Sodom and Gomorrah that had polluted the entire region. And what we see here again is the restraining effect of even just one righteous man in a city.

You remember earlier in chapter 18, Abraham said to God, "If there are fifty righteous in the city, would You spare it?" "Yes." "Forty-five?" "Yes." "Forty?" "Yes." "Thirty?" "Yes." "Twenty?" "Yes." "Ten?" "Yes." And there weren't even ten righteous people in Sodom. But the whole passage teaches the principle that God often withholds His judgment upon the ungodly for the sake of the godly who are living there.

So this leads now to number nine, "the destruction," verse 23. Verse 23, the destruction. We read, "The sun had risen over the earth when Lot came to Zoar," meaning the very next day. Lot does act promptly without delay and heads for Zoar.

Verse 24, "Then" – that very day, that very time; Lot is barely out of town – "the Lord," – and please note who is the agent of this judgment; this comes directly, immediately from the hand of Holy God – "the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven." It would be impossible for me to try to paint this scene on the canvas of your mind. It'd be impossible for me to even fully envision what this would graphically and vividly look like. But the heavens opened up. An inflammable material, burning sulfur, like fire, like a spewing volcano erupting, and orange and red and white hot lava just begin to instead of coming up from the earth like a volcano. It comes down out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah and burned those cities into non-existence, and reducing it to smoldering ashes as it came plummeting down with force

from the hand of God, and literally buried them under the south east end of the Dead Sea, never to even be seen again; just decimated.

In 2 Peter 2:6, it says, "reducing them to ashes." And in all that is left where there once were walls and gates and houses and buildings and all that would be in a city, in a moment it's just all ashes and smoke arising upward from it; a total devastation. And it was right, and it was just, and it was long past the time for it to happen.

"And He" - God - "overthrew those cities." To overthrow them means He completely devastated them, He brought them to nothing. He just literally took them out of this world (men, women and children), plus the two other cities - you can find their names in Deuteronomy 29:23. And here is one of the most vivid pictures in the entire Bible that we see of God's holy hatred of sin that was being proliferated in this wicked city.

Psalm 5:4-6 give some commentary even from another passage of scripture regarding how God feels about sin: "For you are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; no evil dwells with You. The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity." Now please note, He doesn't just hate the iniquity, He hates all those who do iniquity. "You destroy those who speak falsehood. The Lord abhors the man a bloodshed and deceit."

And so, these who were burned alive in Sodom only went from the fire to the fire. And the greater controversy is not that God brought fire down from heaven and immediately burned them, but that from there they went down into the lake of fire and brimstone to be tortured throughout all of the ages to come. This fire was relatively nothing compared to the lake of fire and brimstone into which they were submerged. The real scandal was not this fire from the Lord that fell on Sodom, the real scandal was that those in Sodom were cast into the fire of hell eternally forever and ever and ever, immediately.

And this speaks to us again of there are only two destinies once someone leaves this world: there's heaven and there's hell. And the only ones who go to heaven are those who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. The only ones who go to heaven are those for whom Christ has died upon the cross and has borne their sin. And the wrath of God fell upon Him at the cross,

and God has been propitiated and satisfied towards them, "and there is now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." And everyone who puts their faith in Christ, when they die they find themselves immediately in the presence of God. But vast untold billions, when they die will immediately awaken in the flames of hell with an existence from which they can never escape. And it will be God Himself in hell inflicting the wrath.

And so we're reminded again of the soberness and the seriousness of one's eternal destiny. And we live in a culture in which everything is a "now" culture, and everything has to be, "We want it instantly and now," and we really lose sight of eternity, and we lose sight of the long view. But we need to be made aware again from a passage like this, that there is an eternity that's waiting for every one of us that's out there. And if you die without Christ, you go to hell forever, you go to that place where the worm never dies.

And so if you're here today this moment without Christ, I beg you, while there is mercy being offered to you, while there is the love of God being extended to you in the cross of His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, I beg you to come to Christ this moment in your heart; not get up out of your seat and do anything, right there in your heart say, "Lord Jesus, save me. I am a wretched sinner."

And Jesus only died for one kind of person: sinners. He didn't die for good people. And you must confess your sin if you're to have the mercy and the grace and the forgiveness of God. And He has so much mercy and so much grace that He can forgive even the chief of sinners. "Where sin does abound, grace does much more abound."

If you would turn to Christ this moment, He would receive you in His arms of forgiveness and clothe you with His righteousness. He would wash your sins away. He would extract you from this evil world system and usher you into His kingdom of righteousness, and you would be adopted into His family and made a joint heir with Christ. You would be given a new start and a new beginning. The old things would pass away, and behold, new things would come. You would have a new start in life with God and with Christ, and every step of the rest of the way of your life Christ would be with you. Christ would go the way with you, and He would give you His strength and His protection and His guidance. But you must turn to Christ;

He's your only hope. And if you die without Christ, you will join those who were consumed in Sodom. They will be your neighbors forever.

There's one last heading that I want you to see and it is found in verse 26, and it's "the extermination." Verse 26, is a flashing light of warning. Verse 26 starts with that contrasting word: but. "But his wife, from behind him." It gives the idea that she was slow to leave. She wasn't in a hurry to get out of town. She still had affections for the world.

"His wife, from behind him, looked back." That's the very thing that the angel said do not do. This is not complicated, this is not brain surgery. "Hurry, escape; do not look back." But she looked back because she couldn't let it go. She felt too at home in Sodom. She had become quite settled into its allures and its lifestyles. She had become accepting of the alternate patterns of life. She was no longer shocked by what she saw all around her, she had become very accustomed to the vileness of the sin around her. And when she looked back it's an indication of her longings for this evil city. Her heart was still in the city. Her feet had left, but her eyes looked back because her heart was still there. And so God had to act. She didn't get a free pass.

At the end of verse 26, after hearing all of these warnings, "and she became a pillar of salt." God struck her dead God. God encased her in salt, which is probably an indication of just the sulfur and the brimstone that has fallen now with such an enormous amount that it has literally surrounded her, and she is now entrapped in this brimstone that has come down in molten lumps to the point she can't move. Now she can't breathe. Now she's immediately dead.

And this is so significant and so important for your life and for my life, that Jesus said in Luke 17:32, "Remember Lot's wife." Remember how close she was to being delivered, but remember how she suffered destruction, not only in this life, but in the life to come. Remember how close she was to a deliverance and to a rescue. But she halted between two opinions, and Jesus said, "He who is not with Me is against me," and she fell short of coming all the way to committing her life to God, and she chose love for the world over love for God. And this crisis exposed where her heart is.

And in the very next verse in Luke 17:33, Jesus then adds this verse, which is a commentary on **Luke's** wife, and should be a warning to us. Jesus said, "Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it." We understand exactly what that means. If you try to hang on to your life and call the shots for your life, and go where you want to go and do what you want to do and live how you want to live, if you want to hang on to that steering wheel of your life, Jesus promises you're going to lose it, you're going to lose it forever. But if you will lose your life, if you will lose the control of your life, if you will surrender your life and submit your life to the lordship of Jesus Christ, He will preserve it forever.

So, have you come to the point in your life where you have lost your life to the Lord so that He may preserve your life eternally? But if you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it throughout all the ages to come in a real place called hell. That was Lot's wife. No wonder Jesus said, "Remember Lot's wife." She bargained her soul into hell.

Remember also what Jesus said in Matthew 6:24, "No one can serve two masters." In other words, you can't live for Sodom and live for God at the same time; you're going to have to decide which way will it be in your life. "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth," or an alternate lifestyle, or anything else. Jesus is saying, "Remember her divided heart. Remember how she lost her soul. Don't let that happen to you."

Remember James 4:4, "You adulteresses," referring to spiritual adultery, meaning you love someone or something more than God. "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." You cannot be a friend of the world system and be a friend of God; it is either or, not both and. They are exclusive, not inclusive.

So as I conclude this, Jesus said that there is a sin that is worse than homosexuality. Jesus said that there is a sin worse than worldliness. Not all sins are the same, some sins are greater than other sins. And you may ask, "What is that sin that's at the top of the list?" It is a sin that will bring an even greater judgment: it is the sin of hearing the gospel of grace and rejecting it.

Now as I close, I want you to hear two verses, and then we're finished. These come from the lips of Jesus Christ. Matthew 10:14, "Whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words," - He said this to His disciples as He had sent them out to preach the gospel of the kingdom - "whoever does not heed your words," - verse 15 - "it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for them." God will go easier on Sodom and Gomorrah at the great white throne judgment and throughout all of the ages to come in eternal hell. It will be easier on Sodom and Gomorrah than for someone who sits in church and hears the gospel of Jesus Christ and continues to reject the blood of Christ. That is the greatest sin to ever be committed under heaven. And the other verse, Matthew 11:23, "Capernaum, if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. It will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."

Jesus didn't go to every city, but the cities where He went to preach the gospel, and those cities heard His preaching and saw His miracles, and those who rejected the preaching of Christ, Jesus said, "It'll be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for those of you who have heard the pure preaching of the word of God, and have chosen to harden your heart and remain uncircumcised, and have refused to let go of the world, and will not repent of your sin. It'll be a stricter judgment on that last day."

So, what does this say for you and me? The greatest sin committed today will not take place in some sleazy bedroom or some house of ill-repute or some brothel, the greatest sin occurs in church where the gospel is preached and unbelievers continue to reject its message. If you have never believed in Jesus Christ, I call you this day, this moment, to repent and to believe in Jesus Christ, to turn to Christ, who came into this world on a mission of salvation; who went to the cross; who died in the place of guilty, hell-bound sinners; who shed His blood; who made the only atonement for our sins; who was taken down from the cross, buried, and on the third day was raised from the dead; who is now ascended to the right hand of God the Father.

And whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. If you walk away from that, hell cannot be hot enough, because you are trampling underfoot the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you are insulting the Spirit of grace. You have committed a tragedy and a travesty far greater than the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah. So if you die rejecting the gospel, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for you.

Today you're in a very privileged place because you are hearing the message of God's wrath and God's grace, His wrath upon all sinners and sin, and His offer of grace and mercy to those who will turn from their sins and embrace Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. You will never hear a greater message than the gospel of Jesus Christ. "He who has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." Let us pray.

[Prayer] Father, Your word has spoken today, Your word which is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword. And Lord, we hear what Your word says, and we have better understanding of what Your word says; and I pray that we would be not just hearers of the word, but doers of the word. Father, sober us, increase our fear of You. We take You too lightly. We, at times, have not given due thought to Your anger towards sinners outside of Christ. And so I pray that You would grip our soul this day.

Every sermon, every text will not be like this. But this is what You wanted us to hear this day. This was Your message from heaven for us this day. And we may never hear a sermon on Sodom and Gomorrah again; who knows. May this settle down into the depths of our psyche, into the depths of our soul, and never depart from us, that You are a God of wrath and You are a God of grace. And both of those were expressed at the cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Implant this in us. May we take it with us when we leave here today, in Jesus' name. Amen.