

The Rescue and Destruction

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[0:00] I got some bad news this week. I was at Joe and Vivian's house and they know how much I love this coffee shop just again just over there on Moon Street called Machali. I've told you guys about that right my love for the strawberry. Why are you laughing Gabs stop laughing. Just just it's a manly drink. All right. It's a good drink. It's a masculine drink. My body can't take the coffee.

Yeah that qualifies me for the SWAT team. Terrible devastating news. Vivian was like did you know that Machali is closed. Right. I nearly tore my sackcloth. I nearly just I was like what. I was devastated. It's my favorite place. I quickly messaged my other fellow lovers of Machali and they assured me that it wasn't closed. It's only renovating and they knew how much I cared about it yesterday. They said it's open again.

And I get upset and angry about those kinds of things. Not knowing just a few minutes walk away from my favorite coffee shop is the red light district. Are these places of pain and oppression that are just down the road.

And today we're going to be looking at the scripture that oh as your pastor I'll tell you Genesis 19 is not where it's at. It's I was like Lord we could do with another typhoon and then we could just skip this week and I'll hope that you guys don't notice and we'll do Genesis 20 instead.

And I'll be sitting in this just this darkness this this this pool of sin that is that is mankind. And so that's why I thought it was appropriate to have Alex come and share because she faces this she sees this all the time and the thing that she just said earlier just that we would have empathy for it.

[1:49] That yes there are our favorite coffee shops but just next door are things that are horrible. Painful in this city.

And a bit of a warning to you as we sit through this passage of scripture today. The reason why we're going to go through it anyway because we truly believe the word of the Lord has something to say to us in any and every circumstance.

And so we don't shy away from some of the hard topics and I want to be clear here when we read this scripture don't go hey the Bible condones this. No the Bible does not condone this. The Bible simply is showing you the consequence of sin showing you how we get to where we're at now and that we have not gone from this that we are still in this space.

So this isn't Psalm 23. This isn't Lord is my shepherd I shall not want it's going to be so cool it's going to be green pastures still waters it's going to be so nice by the lake. No this is this is what this is the world as it is.

And as I was sitting in there I was like oh my goodness this is such terrible passage. I don't even know where to go from this. And then I went to I don't even know where mankind should go from here.

[2:55] And I felt reminded that actually let's just lean in to these stories. Let's lean into what happened here recognizing and acknowledging that these things happen to this day. And I promise you at the end that I'm going to try and go as quickly as I can because there's a lot to cover.

I've told Julian around 20 past he's going to come up and start playing the piano just to remind me that we're going to finish here so you can all go for lunch. Is actually when I sat there in this scripture and I was like God why is this even here?

And I realized it's a reality check. It's a mirror. It's a mirror to where mankind is at right now. So before we think oh that was the ancient times and things were so uncivilized things were so twisted back then oh they're twisted now.

And so we're going to read the word together. And so I'm going to invite actually Anthony and Angel to come up to read to us. And we're going to read the whole of Genesis chapter 19. So can I invite you to stand for the word of the Lord. And maybe I'll quickly pray for us before we read.

So Lord we don't let those thoughts about injustice and oppression and the consequence of sin. We intentionally sit in that space today.

[4:07] As we open up the word would you speak? We know you have something to say about the darkness that surrounds us. Holy Spirit speak.

Your servants are listening. This is the word of the Lord. Okay Genesis 19. God rescues Lot. The 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 and said. My lords. Please turn aside to your servants 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. But he pressed them strongly. So they turned aside to him and entered the house.

And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread. And they ate. But before they lay down. The men of the city. The men of Sodom. Both young and old. All the people till the last man surrounded the house.

[5:05] And they called to Lot. Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them to us. That we may know them. Lot went out to the men at the entrance. Shut the door after him and said.

I beg you my brothers. Do not act so wickedly. Behold. 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. But they said.

Stand back. And they said. This fellow came to sojourn. And he has become the judge.

Now we will deal with the worse of you than with them. Then they pressed hard against the man.

Lot. And drew near to break the door down. But the men reached out their hands.

And brought Lot into the house with them. And shut the door. And they struck with blindness. The men who are at the entrance of the house. Both small and great. So that they wore themselves out. Groping the door.

[6:02] Then 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. For we are about to destroy this place.

Because the outcry against the people has become great before the Lord. And the Lord has sent us to destroy. So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law. Who are to marry his daughters.

Up. Get out of this place. For the Lord is about to destroy the city. But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting. As morning dawned. The angels urged Lot saying.

Up. Take your wife and your two daughters. Who are here. Lest we be swept away in the punishment of the city. But he lingered. So the men seized him. And his wife and his two daughters by the hand.

The Lord being merciful said to him. And they brought him out. And sent him beside the city. And as they brought them out. One said. Escape for your life. Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley.

[7:00] Escape to the hills. Lest you be swept away. And Lot said to them. Oh no lords. Behold 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. Behold the 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. He said to him. Behold I will grant you this favor also. That I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken. Escape there quickly.

For I can do nothing till you arrive there. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. God destroyed Sodom. The sun had risen on the earth.

And when Lot came to Zoar. Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah. Sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew these cities. And all the valleys.

[7:56] And all the inhabitants of the cities. And what grew on the ground. But Lot's wife behind him looked back. And she became a pillar of salt. And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord.

And he looked down towards Sodom and Gomorrah. And towards all the land of the valley. And he looked. And behold. The smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace. So it was that.

When God destroyed the cities of the valley. God remembered Abraham. And sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow. When he overthrew the cities in which Lot had lived.

Lot and his daughters. Now Lot went up out of Zoar. And lived in the hills with his two daughters. For he was afraid to live in Zoar. So he lived in a cave with his two daughters.

And the firstborn said to the younger. Our father is old. And there is not a man on earth to come unto us. After the manner of all the earth. Come let us make our father drink wine.

[8:56] And we will lie with him. That we may preserve offspring from our father. So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father.

He did not know when he lay down. Or when she arose. The next day the firstborn said to the younger. Behold. I lay last night with my father. That is make him drink wine tonight also.

Then you go in and lie with him. That we may preserve offspring from our father. So they made their father drink wine that night also. And the younger arose and lay with him.

And he did not know when she lay down. Or when she arose. Thus both the daughters of Lot. Became pregnant by their father. The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab.

He is the father of the Moabites to this day. The younger also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ami. He is the father of the Emomites to this day. This is the word of the Lord.

[9:55] Thank you. Take a seat. Yeah. Thank you. So Lord we approach your word with reverence.

And fear and confusion. This world is a dark place. Help us not just understand it.

But help us understand what our role is in this world. Guide us now. In your name we pray. Amen. Just a quick disclaimer then.

So as you've now heard the story. If you are here with a minor. And you're a parent. Then I'll encourage you to. I'll try my best. To keep this easily digestible.

But if you need to then explain afterwards. I do leave that with you. But of course don't do it on your own. If you're worried then come and talk to me as well. And the second is if you are non-Christian. Or if this is your first time at church.

[10:56] Welcome. So good to have you. We read. We believe this thing called the Bible. There are really really. Just encouraging comforting passages in the Bible. That we just absolutely love.

That give us so much hope. And then there are other passages here. That make us really dig deep. And take a sober look at what reality is in this world. So we welcome you. It's not always like this. I promise you. But sadly Genesis is a little bit of a. You know a dump of kind of. Messiness. So bear with us. I'm glad that you're here.

Just a quick recap. Just to rewind your mind. We're talking about Lot. And this is the final chapter about Lot. And it's a sorry one right. It's a really sad one. And it's like. Those of you who have prepped messages before. I just kind of got your arms crossed now.

I was like. I wonder what you're going to do. Try this one James. So let me just give you a little bit of a recap. Okay. So Lot in Genesis 13. He leaves Egypt with Abraham. And they both get rich.

[11:49] They both have so much in their camp. They have to separate. Then Abraham says. Hey nephew. You choose which way you want to go. We've got. We're too big. Let's just separate now. And Abraham says. You choose.

And then Lot looks over that way. And sees a valley. And he says. That. That's so beautiful. These valleys. It's lush. It's like the Garden of Eden. It reminds me of Egypt. That is a good place to be. And then.

So actually. Abraham lets him choose. And go that way. And actually. Lot uses his eyes. And sees that something is good. Just like. Eve sees the fruit. And thinks that it's good.

And she thinks. That's the way. That's the best way to go. The conditions are perfect. But don't worry. I won't get too close. To that evil city over there. I'll just be in the valleys nearby. So that's the story. Okay. Genesis 14.

He actually doesn't stay. In the valleys nearby. He actually ends up in the city. And then that's when they get captured. And there's a whole battle going on. There's a war. Abraham. With his 318 men.

[12:45] Act like Spartans. And they go and save Lot. And then. You think. Okay. Well where does Lot go from here? He goes straight back. To Sodom. He gets saved.

From the place that he said he wouldn't really end up. But then he ends up going back. And that's where we kind of fast forward a little bit. So last week. Gabe. When we had our Typhoon. Zoom service.

He shared this fascinating conversation. Between Abraham. And God. Because Sodom has gotten to this point. Where it just needs to be eradicated. It's just.

So evil. But yeah. He has this conversation with Abraham. And where Abraham is trying to see. Well. What if you. What if there's 50 people? Would you destroy it then? And then. Goes down to 40. 30. And eventually. What about 10? And God said. Okay. If there's 10. I'll leave it. It's worth saving. We fast forward now. [13:37] To Genesis chapter 19. And we realize. That there's not even 10. There's not even 10 people. So the two angels. That were with God. They go to Sodom. And that's where the story. Picks up.

And you know what? It's the slippery slope. Of sin. Where you say. From afar. I'm going to be okay. I'm not going to go all the way there. I'm just going to be here. Because this is a good place to be. And you see. Before you know it. You end up. Drunk in a cave. Being abused by your daughters. C.S. Lewis. In his book. The Screwtape Letters. Talks about this. He says. The safest road to hell. Is the gradual one. It's the one with a gentle slope. And is soft underfoot. It's the one that you get to. Without even knowing. Sometimes we're like.

Oh. If I was face to face. Face to face with evil. I would make the right choice. Yes. But often it's not that obvious. And as I've been sitting in this passage. And you can imagine where I've been.

[14:34] This week. Sitting in this passage. With this weather. And I'm just like. This world. And actually every time. I speak to someone. Who's going through. Some kind of trouble.

Some kind of sin. In their lives. Every time. I talk to someone. Who's struggling. With lust. And. My heart sinks. My heart sinks. Because I'm like. This is the world that we live in.

This last week. We've had VBS. At our church. And it's been so fun. Just watching kids. Just have so. So much fun. And he put in a great shift. That's why he's exhausted. And wearing a mask right now. Being with kids all week.

And I looked. And I see such joy. And then my heart just sinks. Because I'm like. The innocence of childhood. And the world that they're going to be growing up in. How do we help them make sense of this?

How do we help them. Not go down the slippery slope of sin. And so it's really interesting. And we're just going to quickly fly through. As quick as I possibly can. If it's too fast for you. I really do apologize. We are on Spotify. You can then re-listen at half the speed.

[15:36] If you want to. But I'm just going to keep flying. Because there's so much here. Chapter 19 verse 1. The two angels came to Sodom in the evening. And Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. Whoa. He starts off by saying. I'm not going to live there. I'm just going to live in the outskirts.

Eventually he ends up living. And actually sitting at the gate. This is significant. Because actually what he's doing. He's not just living in Sodom. He's now one of the city leaders. Because only the city leaders. The elders sat at the gate. So actually anything that happens in the city. Happens at the gate. And these elders would sit there. To make decisions about these things. So this guy. Who said that he was going this way. Ends up slipping all the way in the end. Where he's actually one of the leaders.

Of this evil city. Isn't that fascinating? And so when Lot sees them. He rose to meet them. And bowed himself with his face to the earth. This is where Lot gets really confusing. Lot is a tormented soul.

Because he knows the God of Abraham. Because Abraham is his uncle. And he knows what should be done. In terms of living a good life. And yet he decides to go in to live in a city.

[16:32] And I can imagine him saying this to him. You know what? I can live in this city. I'll be okay. This is. I can try and maintain my own morals. And live in this city. Or maybe I'll have influence in this city. And I can turn the city around.

So he'll tell himself these things. And so what you find out is. He ends up. He's sat at the gate. And actually. When he sees these two strangers. He does exactly what his uncle did. A couple chapters ago. Which is greet them.

He says welcome. Come in. So these two angels go to him. And then he tries to tell them. Hey. Come and stay at my house. Now. We now read the chapter. We know why he's telling them to stay at his house.

Because it's not safe outside. He said. Hey. Come. Come and stay in my house. And then the two angels. I kind of said. Well no. Don't worry. We'll go. We'll just. We'll stay outside in the court. He's like. I assure you.

You do not want to stay outside. Come. And stay in my house. Where I can protect you. And so they agree. And so verse three. But he pressed them strongly.

[17:27] Because he knew exactly what was going on. He knew the danger. So they turned aside to him. And entered his house. And he made them a feast. And baked and unleavened bread. And they ate. And then this is where it starts to get a little bit horrifying.

The men of the city. And it says here. The men of the city. The men of Sodom. Both young and old. All the people. To the last man. This is a mob. The whole group.

The whole population of men in the city. Go up to this house. Knowing that they've seen two strangers come in. Probably likely beautiful strangers. Because they're angelic. Because they're angels. And so they see.

They hear this news about these two foreigners come in. Who've gone to the house of Lot. And so they all go and charge to his house. And they demand that he brings these two guests out. Because they would like to abuse them. They would like to have their way.

The evil. The wickedness of man is what we're seeing here. And so Lot says. Please don't. Please protect.

[18:23] These two are under my care. I need to try and protect them. Please go away. And they don't. They stay. And so then Lot comes with a compromised solution. This is how tormented he is.

This is how compromised he is. He wants to do the right thing. And he's kind of doing the right thing. But his solutions are not really the best solutions either. He's saying. Okay. You want to take my two guests. The two strangers. And you want to abuse them. Don't do that.

Please. It's just. I can't let you do that. But instead. Why don't you take my two daughters instead.

Why don't you abuse them. And you're sat here going. What? That's it. That's your solution.

But can you see what happens. When you start on this slippery slope. When you start from looking at something from afar. And think you're going to be okay. And then you go into the city. You're like. I want to be fine. Look. I'm in charge of this company. I'm going to be okay.

It's going to be a godly company. That isn't corrupt. You realize actually. You don't even know what's good anymore. Because you've gotten so far down the slippery slope. Your thinking is compromised.

[19:17] And so he thinks he's doing the right thing. Take my daughters instead. Can you just imagine for a second. How the daughters feel. Let's just sit there for just two seconds. Because that explains later. What happens in the rest of the story.

And so he says. Please do that. And then they turn on him. So the mob looks at him and go. Who are you? Verse nine. But they said. Stand back. This fellow came to sojourn.

And he has become the judge. Oh. Who are you again? Actually. So it's interesting. Because he was very rich. He ended up in Sodom. And do you remember then. They got attacked. And then he got kidnapped. And then.

Abraham went. Or Liam Neeson. Saved his nephew. And actually. The king of Sodom. Comes to thank him. Kind of. So actually. Lot would have had some favor. From this king of Sodom. Oh. Okay. Your uncle saved me. So. Hey. Continue to have influence and power. Over this city. But the locals would have been like. Who is this guy? This foreign rich man. And now he's acting all holy and judgy against us.

[20:12] So that's what they're saying. They're like. Who are you? You weren't. You're not one of us. And so. At this point. He doesn't really know what to do. He's losing control. Then they pressed hard against the man. Lot. And drew near to the.

Break the door down. But the angels. But the men reached out their hands. And brought Lot into the house with them. And shut the door. And they struck with blindness. With the men who were at the entrance. Of the house. They didn't need a SWAT team. They had two angels. Who could do.

Far greater things. So they strike the whole mob. Blind. And they pull Lot into the house. And then they are. Protected. Here. They then tell Lot.

They say. Hey. The city's going. We couldn't even find ten people who are holy. This city is going to be destroyed. Is there anyone? Is there anyone who you think can be saved? This is flashes of nowhere.

Happening all over again. Is anyone? And it's really funny. It says. Have you anyone else here? Is sons-in-law. Sons. Daughters. Or anyone you have in the city. Who might want to be saved. Do they want to join us?

[21:07] And then it's really interesting. Lot. Verse 14. So Lot went out. And said to his sons-in-law. Pause for a second. The sons-in-law. Just before it. Scripture made it clear.

That every single man. Was part of this mob. So the likelihood is. The two sons-in-law. Who were about to be. Betrayed to his two daughters. Were part of this mob. Lot goes to the two future sons-in-law.

And said. Hey. Something's going to happen here. Something's going to go down. Would you like to come and be saved with us? What's their response? Verse 14. But he seemed to his son-in-laws. To be jesting. They're like. You are mad. You must be joking. When you've lived a life. Of compromise. When you have headed down. That slippery slope. When people look at you. And they see the way you live. And when you finally turn around. And say. Hey. Would you like to come to church with me? You won't really? You. They think he's joking. It's like. This is confusing. Because you're. You're kind of trying to act holy.

[22:04] But you're living with us. And you're a leader of this city. And you're. Kind of doing things that aren't right. As well. So they don't. They don't see a track record. Of someone who's living. Completely different. To the city.

And so they think. He's actually just joking. They think he's gone cuckoo. They. They just don't even know. How to respond to him. I fear this. Sometimes. And. I try. And be. Nice and friendly. To those who don't know Christ.

And hang out with them. And but. What if I. Cross over the line. Where actually. They just think. That I'm just one of them. I'm supposed to be different. Of course. There's a. Perception of what a. Pasta looks like. A Chinese pastor. You've got to be. You know. 60 years old. And no hair. And always. You know. Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Gigi. So actually. A lot of my time.

I'm trying to convince people. Hey actually. I'm not that different. I'm actually quite like you. I like the same things as you. Actually. I'm quite cool to hang out with. And then. Out of my wanting to. Show them. That actually.

[22:58] There isn't just one way. Of doing church. One way of being a pastor. Sometimes I wonder. Oh actually. Maybe. I get to. I'm so successful at doing that. That actually. They think I'm just the same as them. And maybe when I tell them. Hey repent.

Because what you're doing is wrong. They'll be like. Whoa. You must be mad. You must be joking. I think that's what's happening. With a lot here. And so his son-in-law. I don't think really. You want to follow him. So then. He actually has to go.

And as morning dawns. The angels urge Lot. Saying. Up. Take your wife. And your two daughters. So the son-in-law say no. Who are here. Lest you be sucked away. In the punishment of the city. Oh and here comes the big line. So we go from the slippery slope of sin.

To my second point. Which is. Linger Lot. But. Verse 16 says this. But he. Lingered. Don't you and I.

Do that. We know what's right. We know what's wrong. We know we shouldn't be here. We know there's going to be judgment. But you know what. We're just going to linger. Just a little bit. We know we should not be watching the show.

[23:52] But we're just going to linger. Just for a little bit longer. We know we shouldn't be hanging out. With this group of people. But we're just going to linger. A little bit longer. I want to say here. When we think of Sodom and Gomorrah. We think. At least for me. I'm thinking about just this dark city.

It's like Gotham. That's always dark. There's fire and smoke everywhere. But that's not the case. Remember when Lot looked over towards it. In chapter 13. He saw it looked like the Garden of Eden.

It looked like the glorious land of Egypt. It looked like Hong Kong. It looked like comfort. And convenience. And luxury. It looked nice. And so he lingered.

He says. Oh. I know I have to go. Because something's happening. But can I just stay for a little bit? Like. But when I follow you and leave. I'm going to lose my favorite coffee job.

And my favorite restaurant. And actually. I've got a membership at this clubhouse. That it's. I still want to use. Then we have that. God I will follow you. But.

[24:50] I will follow you. But can I bring this with me? I want to follow you. Kind of. But still follow this way too. He lingers. Even more interesting.

Is this. As they go. Oh. That's just funny. As they go. He says. Okay. I'll go. But can I not go to the hills? I completely empathize with Lot here.

Because he's like. Look. I'm living in luxury here. And now you're telling me to go to the hills. This is how I feel about camping. I don't know why people want to go camping. When you have memory foam. Pillows and mattresses and Wi-Fi.

And air con at home. Why would you want to subject yourself to that circumstance for a night? He's like. I can't live in the hills. I'm not. I'm a city guy. I cannot be in the hills.

And then he negotiates with them. Can you imagine? He's talking to these supernatural beings. Who are about to send fire and brimstone. Onto the city. He's like. Okay. I won't. I get. I get you're angry. I will go with you.

[25 : 46] But can I not go all the way there? There's actually a little town. Just down the road. Over there. It's like. It's not the city city. But it's. It's kind of a way. So it's kind of. It's like. Turn and tell.

So it's okay. There'll still be some of my foods. And maybe I'll just hang out there. Is that okay? Okay. Fascinatingly. The angel said. Okay. Fine. They said.

Fine. You can move to turn. Tell. I'm destroying the city. But you can move to the island. Where you can enjoy those massive fish balls. You're lingering. And I'm going to be gracious.

And I'm going to let you do it. So that. They actually let him. Which I think is just a whole nother topic. Again. The sun had risen on the earth. And then of course at that moment. Verse 24. The Lord rains on Sodom and Gomorrah. Sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven.

And it all burns to the ground. And then there's the famous passage where. As they're running away from the city. His wife turns around. He lingered by the way. But his wife actually turns back and looks. Again with the same thing.

[26 : 42] But what about my plants? What about our house? What about the lives that we've built there? She turns back. And she joins the city. And turns into a pillar of salt.

Meanwhile. The movie. Flashes over to verse 27. And Abraham. Who isn't far away. Abraham's living in.

I don't know. Sun guy. You're not. And he looks. Early in the morning. And he stands. And he looks towards the city. And he sees it all up in smoke. And so it was that.

Interestingly. Interestingly. Even though Lot went down this slippery slope. Even though he became lingering Lot. God still saved him. Even though he compromised himself.

To the point where. When people. Listen to him. Talking about. Holiness. They thought he was joking. But yet God still saved him. Why? Because of Abraham's prayer.

[27 : 44] That's it. Verse 29. So it was that. When God destroyed the cities of the valley. God remembered Abraham. And sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow. When he overthrew the cities in which Lot had lived.

This is an encouragement to every single person here. Who knows people. Loved ones. Family. Friends. Colleagues. Who do not know Christ yet. Or who are refusing to follow Christ. Pray for them. It's what Alex said earlier.

Pray for them. Because you don't know how powerful your prayer is. Have you stopped praying for the people. Who you want to come to Christ? James chapter 5 says actually the prayer of the righteous person is a powerful weapon.

Don't stop praying for these people. Because it works. And you can see it here. Abraham prayed for Lot. Lot didn't deserve to be saved. And yet here he was being saved. Why? Because someone prayed for him.

Because his uncle prayed for him. If you look around Christianity in just the whole world. Not even just the western world. Especially actually in Latin America. So many of the strong people of faith there are the grandmothers.

[28 : 40] And the mothers. And you ask them. You ask their children and their grandchildren. Why am I in the faith? Because I think I had a grandmother who never stopped praying for me. Right? We.

And I'm standing here. And I recognize the irony that I am an English speaking Chinese person talking to you. But so often we approach our faith from a western individualistic perspective. Sin is simply bad behavior that I'm trying to avoid.

And it's all about me. What Alex shared with us earlier is that that's not what just sin is. Sin is not just me doing bad things. I was reading this morning on my way to church. And the author was

saying actually sin is way more than that.

Sin is social disharmony. Sin is when we break down the barriers of trust between us. Sin is when we break down the barriers of trust between us. Why do all those things happen that Eden is facing is because of social disharmony.

Because of us choosing to not only break our trust with God but break our trust with each other. So can we pray for God to reconcile some of those barriers that we've put up?

[29:47] The places where society is broken down can we ask God to heal? Because healing does actually work. And this is where I'll kind of wrap up here. And then there's a second part.

And I was like, oh, maybe I can say that I've done chapter 19 and we'll leave it there. And next week and I'll finish with Jesus somehow. And then we'll kind of move on. But there's nine verses that are even more uncomfortable. Sodom and Gomorrah is now burnt to the ground.

His wife is gone. He goes to Zor, the place that the little Changjiao village that he negotiated. But then he's terrified. He doesn't want to even go there. It says, now Lot went up out of Zor and lived in the hills with his two daughters for he was afraid to live in Zor.

Lot is, when you are a tormented soul, when you're trying to live a compromised life, when you're trying to straddle between two worlds, you are just living out fear. And so he doesn't even dare go into the city that he said, the village that he wanted to go into.

So he finally, he actually goes into the hills and now his wife's gone. And now all his possessions are gone. And now it's just him and his two daughters. The same two daughters who he'd offered up to be abused by the mob.

[30:53] And you have this terrifying, disturbing, twisted account of how his life ends. Not only is he afraid, so afraid that this person who was once rich and powerful, sat at the city gate, is now drunk and alone and desperate in a cave with his two daughters.

And that fear he's passed on to his daughters. Because they're afraid. They're like, hey, it's just us and dad. How are we going to live? How are we going to keep multiplying our family? There's no way to doing this.

And so they take matters into their own hands. And they end up both pregnant. And then the story ends.

Reminds me a little bit of Noah. Noah, who did those crazy things and built an ark for a hundred years. And then he finishes drunk in his garden. And then the sons kind of make fun of him.

And that's kind of it. And so I finished reading this chapter this week. And I'm just like sat here going, that's it. That's what we can expect.

[32:00] When we choose the slippery slope of sin. When we linger in the decisions that we make. This is where we end up. What's the hope? There is no hope. I want to finish with this.

You don't actually have to come up, Julian. I'm going to be, I promise I'll finish on time. Second Peter, chapter two, verse seven. If you're interested, I encourage you to turn to it.

Peter's talking many years later. He's talking about Lot. And he says this, chapter two, verse six. If by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes, he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly.

And if he rescued righteous Lot, 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.

Wait, I thought he was lingering Lot. I thought he was compromised Lot. I thought he was tormented so a lot. How on earth did somehow he end up being righteous Lot?

[33:06] We've just read Genesis 19. Does anyone think he's righteous? No. Then why? Verse nine in second Peter.

Then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials. I think this story can give us hope because Lot was not righteous. He was foolish. He was compromised.

He was tormented. He was trapped and attracted by the things of this world. He lingered. He stayed. But what happened when he stayed? If we go back to that Genesis 19, the angels actually grab him by the hand and pull him away.

That, brothers and sisters, is the picture of salvation. We still linger. We still want to be in our sin. And yet God comes and grabs us by the hand and says, you are coming with me because I love you and I want to save you.

And you see this story. Yes, there is judgment. There is fire and brimstone happening. And there is judgment that's coming on the world. You and I, if we ever walked into Myanmar or these brothels, we're going to look, we're going to go, Lord, send judgment on these people now.

[34:07] Free these people and destroy the wicked. We're going to feel that way. But the problem is none of us is really safe. Because if we keep peeling back those things, every time I talk to brothers, especially who are struggling with sin, struggling with lust, and they know exactly what they're feeding into.

We know exactly. This isn't just us and our bad behavior. This is a social disharmony. We are empowering and enabling this machine that manipulates and oppresses people. And yet we have a God in our lingering will come and grab us by the hand and saying, I'm saving you.

And by doing so, lingering lot becomes righteous lot. There's a few quotes I want to read you.

G.K. Chesterton, who's an apologist from England, who was asked by a newspaper, what is wrong with the world? Don't we ask that question? What is wrong with the world? And his answer was very short.

It says, dear sirs, I am sincerely yours. G.K. Chesterton. So before we look a lot, and before we look at the mob, we look at ourselves and go, oh my goodness.

[35:14] If you keep peeling back, we're not that far different. We are all sinners. We all fall short of the glory of God. There's a Russian author who writes this.

If only it were all so simple. If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it was necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being.

That's why we all need saving. That's why we should be willing to sit in the sin and the darkness that the world surrounds us with, is because we are very much part of that. If we read a story like Genesis 19, and we're deeply uncomfortable, and we're like, you know what?

Can we just move on? Let's go back to Psalm 23. Then we've missed the point. The point is Genesis 19 is here because it's a mirror showing us that we are those very people. That we have chosen the slippery slope.

That we have lingered. Final, final thing, I promise. Those two daughters who took matters into their own hands. They ended up having two sons.

[36:21] The problem is those two sons ended up being the fathers of the Moabites and the Ammonites. And if you grew up in Sunday school, and you're kind of familiar with the Old Testament, you'll know that the Moabites and the Ammonites end up being such pains in the backside to the Israelites.

They end up being enemy nations. And so you can see the consequence of sin. You can see how we end up over the destiny of decay that we have.

Yet, yet, there soon comes one Moabite. Her name is Ruth, who decides to step out of the darkness of her people and chooses to follow a holy God.

She ends up being the great grandmother of a king who's called David. You keep following that lineage. You get into Matthew chapter one. You'll see that there is a boy who is born of Moabite blood.

The Bible is so defiant in saying, even if you choose sin, even when the enemy means something for evil, God will turn it for good. From that Moabite line, there will be a savior.

[37:31] There will be a prince of heaven who will be born into a sinful world. And yet he will save. He will grab humanity by the hand and he will pull them out himself.

Straight from the line of Moabites. Straight from the lineage of Lot. Straight from the evil, desperate acts of his daughters. We see a savior who is born into sin, but of purity.

Jesus himself. That is what makes Lot righteous. Because he was chosen to be part of this greater salvation plan. That he is righteous, not because of what he did or what he does, because he's not, he is trash.

And yet he becomes righteous because of Jesus. Doesn't that give you hope? That gives me comfort. Would we choose to follow him?

Would we recognize that even though we go down this slippery slope of sin, Jesus himself comes running down that slope, chasing after us. And once he grabs us, he then climbs the hill of Calvary and climbs onto the cross.

[38 : 41] To take what was supposed to be ours. So in that darkness, in that pit, there is hope and there is light.

I'm just going to finish now and ask Julian to just, and the team to come up to lead us as we take communion. I encourage us to sit in that space for a little bit.

First of all, to sit in that sin that we struggle with. This world that is broken and this brokenness that starts from us.

John Stott says this, before we can see the cross as something done for us, we have to see it as something done by us. It is only when we stand before the cross that we see both the appalling reality of human evil and the unspeakable depth of God's love.

Only when we see the appalling reality of human evil and the unspeakable depth of God's love. Do we appreciate the cross?

[39 : 52] Not something that is done for us, but something done by us. I invite you just to spend a moment now.

Let's bow our heads and close our eyes and ask, Lord, is there any sin in us? Any decisions that we have made that has allowed and enabled human evil to continue?

We look at a story like Genesis 19 and we scoff and we say we would never do that and yet we are still trapped in sin ourselves enabling machines that oppress and manipulate and traffic fellow human beings.

Have we contributed to the social disharmony of this world? And whether we recognize it or not, we are all intricately linked.

One suffers, everyone suffers. So by all means, be outraged with me that sometimes our favorite coffee shops close for a little bit.

[41 : 05] but also be reminded just like I was that there is so, so much more happening in this world. Jesus, knowing this, sits around a table with his family, his friends and he took the bread and he said, this is my body broken for the worst of these, for the mob, for Lot, for his daughters, for the Moabites, for the Ammonites, for Jackie, for Agnes, for Joseph, for Mervyn, for Vanita.

this is my body. Broken for all those who have broken their relationships with me and with each other.