

Too Close To The Fence

- *Genesis 13:1-13*

➤ **Let me begin this morning by asking you a question:**

- If you had the choice this morning (which we all do) of either Heaven or hell, which would you choose?
 - This is an easy choice seeing that most of us would surely not want to go to hell & endure its torment for eternity.
- Now let me ask you one other question. If you had the choice between Heaven or this world, which would you choose?
 - Now this is a little more tricky question b/c this doesn't necessarily change your eternal destiny and most people attempt to choose both. As long as people are saved, they will try to get everything that this world has to offer.

➤ **We are facing an epidemic in our world today that is shifting the morals, convictions & the standards of the Christian home.**

- 75 years ago, there was a significant separation between those who were born again, blood-bought & committed Christians & what we would call "the world" or the unsaved.
- But as the decades have clicked by & the generations have come along, the world is continuing to gravitate more & more towards sin (as you would expect), but the church is following suit, and seems to be getting closer to the world.
 - The average Christian today does not hate sin as they should ... at times they find themselves desiring to be more like the world.
- What has been the effect of this?
 - Sin has now crept into the church & has become comfortable in the church.
 - There is a lack of conviction when sin is present in the life of a Christian.
 - Instead of having morals in our lives & in our homes, we now condone sin & at times even justify our participation in it.
 - Our dress.
 - Right here is one of the areas that every single church faces & it's the issue of immodest dress. Most of the time, truthfully, this hovers around our young ladies & our women.
 - There was a time in a fundamental, Bible-believing church that dress & modesty was not really a huge subject, but it is today. Why? Because as time has passed our morals or our convictions have continued to slide more towards the viewpoint of the world.
 - The way we dress doesn't change our salvation & so we strive for what the world has in our dress.
 - Our lifestyle.
 - There was a day when Christians & the unsaved could be picked out of the crowd a mile away b/c of their lifestyle & the way they lived.
 - But once again, as the world moves, so does the church. And now our children & our adults are being taught that it is acceptable & even preferred that we be more like the world so that we can reach them.

- Does this really work? NO! Typically as we draw closer to the world, we in turn become like the world.
- **In our scripture this morning, Abraham has encountered a similar situation in his family.**
- **READ SCRIPTURE**
- **Abraham & Lot, though they were family & loved one another, had come to a serious crossroad in their relationship.**
 - Some have suggested that the problem between Abraham and Lot was over possessions & wealth. Though this was causing some issues among their people, the heart of their problem was a problem of the heart.
 - Lot was at war with Abraham because he was at war with himself, and he was at war with himself because he was at war with God.
 - Lot's heart was centered on wealth and worldly achievement, while Abraham wanted only to please the Lord. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"
- **It was bad enough that this dispute was between brethren; but even worse, the heathen people of the land were watching and listening (v. 7).**
 - Here were 2 believers in the midst of a sinful & perverse nation, and their testimony for God was being destroyed over material things.
 - When Christians have disputes, it hurts the testimony of the Lord.

I. Weak In His Devotion

a. Something Was Missing

- i. The Bible tells us that Lot had "flocks and herds and tents," just like Abram, but Abram had something Lot did not have. Abram had an altar.
- ii. Nowhere in scripture do we see that Lot sought God's face in making the decision to pitch his tent toward Sodom.
- iii. He had no altar. He was weak in his devotions.

b. Something Was Wrong

- i. The issue in Lot's life that produced a weak devotion was the lack of spiritual growth & the lack of priorities in his life.
 1. If serving God is not a priority for you, why would it be a priority for your family?
 2. If coming to church is not a priority in your life, don't expect it to be a priority in your children's lives.
 3. If living a holy life is not a priority Mom & Dad in your life, how in the world will your children ever see that committing to God is necessary in their life?
- ii. Though he believed in God, he was very weak in his relationship & his life was void of any boundaries or priorities & it affected not only his life, but the lives of his entire household.

II. Worldly In His Desires

a. He Was Reminded Of Egypt

- i. Though they were in slavery, though they were in bondage, Lot still longed for the pleasures that he left behind in Egypt. Lot had too much Egypt in his heart.
- ii. This is where we are in the church today. People want to be saved, they don't want to go to hell, but the love for the pleasures of this world is too much to turn from & makes it difficult to commit their lives to God.

1. It's almost as if we are peaking over the fence at what the world has compared to what we have, & if we are honest, we desire many times what they have.
 - a. It looks as though they are living a life of pleasure.
 - b. They don't have any boundaries in their life.
 - c. They do as they please with seemingly no one to answer too.
 2. But the question needs to be asked, "Why are we even peaking over the fence? Hasn't God been good to us?"
 - a. He has provided salvation for our souls.
 - b. He has promised to meet our every need.
 - c. He has promised to protect us.
 - d. He is the only One who can give lasting peace & joy.
 3. Instead of focusing on what God has done, our nature is to want more & more. But there are consequences to not keeping our eyes on God.
- iii. When we are enslaved in sin, we don't see the bondage often times, all we see is the momentary pleasure.
- b. **He Was Focused On The Wrong Things**
- i. He did not ask: "Is this a good place to raise children?" He asked: "Is this a good place to raise cattle?"
 - ii. He had two reasons for choosing Sodom and the well-watered Jordan valley,
 1. a "religious" reason – The Jordan valley was "even as the garden of the Lord"
 2. a real reason - It was "like the land of Egypt"
 - iii. Church, this is a prime example where more money is not always what's best for your family.
 1. "I want to provide for my family."
 2. "I want my family to have the best."
 3. Let me ask you this question, "What is BEST for your family?"
 - a. A nice temporary home here or a home in Heaven?
 - b. Pleasure in sin for a season, or eternal joy in the presence of God?
 - c. A holy, pure life to give to their mates & God's service, or a lifetime of regrets?
 - iv. Lot had enjoyed Egypt. He had not grown closer to the Lord while journeying with Abraham b/c his heart was still in Egypt.

III. **Wrong In His Decisions**

- **This is where Lot's spiritual life went spiraling out of control. He thought he was a much stronger believer than he really was.**
 - "I don't have to be right under Abraham. I will be alright to move across town."
 - "I can handle the temptation. It won't hurt to try it one time."
 - "I don't have to go to church this week, I'm doing OK."
- **The problem was, God had already marked Sodom for judgment & this was the last place that Lot & his family should have been.**
- a. **He Changed His Direction**
 - i. The first bad decision he made was that he moved in the direction of Sodom.
 1. Now maybe some of you today, you haven't moved into Sodom yet, you haven't given your life over to habitual & gross sin, you haven't suffered

severe consequences yet ... but if you'll look at your life this morning, you are moving in that direction.

- a. Are you compromising today on things you did not compromise on several months or years ago?
 - b. Are you living a life today that you would be surprised several years ago that you would be living?
 - c. Are there things that you're watching or things that you participate in that you would not have participated in before?
 - d. Have you begun to tolerate certain things in your life that once you would have made a stand against?
- ii. You don't normally just dive into some great sin; it starts with just a change in direction.

1. Here was a man who pitched his tent toward Sodom.

b. He Changed His Decision.

- i. It wasn't enough to be looking at Sodom, he made a decision to move into Sodom.
- ii. Where once was a place that he just looked at the sin, now he has made this sinful place his home (Gen 14:12).
 1. You see, first he just moved toward Sodom. Now he is at home in Sodom.
 2. Perhaps he just pitched his tent closer and closer and compromised here and compromised there. And then perhaps he moved a little closer into the middle of town in Sodom. And now, finally, he is in Sodom.
 3. Lot moves in & perhaps convinces himself, "Well, I don't have to partake of Sodom's sin. I can just live here. After all, it's a good place to live. It's a nice place to work."
 4. And we tempt ourselves with the same scenarios each & every day never realizing that we are moving closer & closer to sin.
 - a. "I don't agree with everything my friends do, but I'm not going to ever do it."
 - b. "Well they're my family. I have to put up with it."
 - c. "I'm just going to go out with them. I'm not going to do as they do."
 5. I'm sure Lot's intentions were to never allow the sin of Sodom to destroy his life, but in the end it cost him everything.

c. He Was Deceived. (19:1)

- i. How in the world could a man of God even look towards a place like Sodom, but then he packed up & moved closer to it. Now, he has become one of them.
 1. "And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom..."
 - a. Now what does that mean to sit in the gate? In essence it means that he had become a part of the city & he now had power and influence.
 - b. Now he has become a part of Sodom. He is one of Sodom's solid citizens.
 2. His wife is interested in Sodom society.
 3. His girls are dating the boys of Sodom.
 4. This world has conformed him and moved him an inch at a time.

- **Lot chose all the plain of Jordan and separated himself from his godly uncle. Before long he had his tent pitched toward Sodom, and the Holy Spirit adds the significant note: "But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly."**
- **Because of Lot's Wrong Devotion, it led him to Wrong Desires & then eventually to a Wrong Decision. What was the result? What were the consequences for these choices?**
 - We are told in chapter 19 that the doom of Sodom was beginning to fall. God had enough of their sexual perverseness & though His hand of grace had been held back for years, now the wrath of God was about to be poured out.
 - 2 angels were sent to Sodom & the reports were devastating. Where once sin was his in the alleys & in the shadows of the city, now the sins of the people were being paraded around in public & the rulers had begun endorsing these sins.
 - Lot had set up his home in this wicked place for all the wrong reasons & it had impacted his entire family.
 - His wife is absolutely committed to this city.
 - His two girls had gone on to marry into Sodomite families.
 - And the Bible goes on to tell us that God reigned down fire & brimstone & destroyed the city of Sodom for the sin they had committed against the Lord.
 - Lot & his 2 daughters survived, but there were many consequences for the choices they had made.
- **I want our church to be a holy church, don't you? I want my family to be holy & pleasing unto the Lord. I want my children to live a holy life. A Christian needs to be different. A church needs to be different, and it needs to be different starting with you & me.**
 - Spend a few moments and ask the Lord about you, not anyone else, just you. Would you be so bold as to ask the Lord this morning to search your own heart?
 - Have you pitched your tent toward Sodom?
 - Are you allowing your convictions to be compromised?
 - Are your priorities out of order today?
 - I ask you to pray this morning that God would make you a person of holiness, a person of purity and godliness.
 - Our kids need some adults to set some standards for their lives to protect them.
 - They need a church that's a holy church that is willing to stand up for the things of God & commit to live by them.
- **If you are here this morning & you have never accepted Christ as your Savior, I trust that you will step out where you are right now & come to this altar of repentance & ask Christ to come into your heart & save you from your sins.**
- **Perhaps you are here this morning & you need to change the direction of your life & begin focusing more on God, why don't you come today?**
- **And perhaps you are here & you desire protection for your family from the sins & the consequences of sin in this world, why don't you take this time to come this morning?**