

Title: A Poor Choice, Sad Consequences

Text: Genesis 13: 7-13

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Have you ever heard someone say something like this: “Since I am saved by God’s free and sovereign grace, it does not matter how I live in this world.” Indeed, every child of God is saved by the free and sovereign grace of God. But how the believer lives in this world does matter. All we have to do is look at Lot, Abraham’s nephew. In Lot, God shows us a believer—a true child of God, righteous in the Lord Jesus Christ—who made a very poor choice and suffered sad consequences because of it.

The main lesson to learn from this passage is, the way a believer lives in this world will not change the fact that he is righteous in the Lord Jesus Christ but the way the believer lives in this world certainly will affect him and those around him. Our subject is “A Poor Choice, Sad Consequences.”

Genesis 13: 7: And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram’s cattle and the herdmen of Lot’s cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land. 8: And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we *be* brethren. 9: Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if *thou wilt take* the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if *thou depart* to the right hand, then I will go to the left. 10: And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, *even* as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. 11: Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. 12: Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched *his* tent toward Sodom. 13: But the men of Sodom *were* wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.

Abraham and Lot were both true believers. The Canaanite and Perizzite were their ungodly neighbors. So when this strife occurred between their herdsmen, Abraham was very concerned that they do nothing to bring reproach upon God’s name. Abraham made a very gracious and loving proposal to his nephew. But instead of returning the choice back to his elder, Abraham, Lot made a choice.

A POOR CHOICE

Lot made a poor decision because he made it by sight rather than by faith, “Lot lifted up his eyes,…” (Gen 13: 10) He saw a large, well-watered plain which was fertile like the garden of Eden. Lot envisioned a thriving business. He envisioned a good life for his family.

But there was no spiritual Water in Sodom. There was no altar to worship God. In Sodom there was no man like Abraham through whom God would minister the gospel to Lot and his family. There were no fellow believers in Sodom. “But the men of Sodom *were* wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.” (Gen 13: 13)

It was not that Lot liked Sodom’s wickedness or approved of it. He did not. “Lot, [was] vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds;)” (2Pe 2:7-8)

Yet, Lot still chose to turn his back on God, turn his back on God’s altar and turn his back on his brethren for a life in Sodom. He did it for one reason. Lot made his decision by sight rather than faith. He chose a well-watered plain and a comfortable life in this world over having a place to worship God with God’s people. Abraham “endured as seeing him who is invisible” while Lot set his heart upon things he could see in this earth; Abraham was willing to take less land, less fertile and raise his family by God’s altar while Lot chose the great plain, rich and fertile even though it meant raising his daughters amongst reprobate sodomites, who were exceedingly wicked before the Lord.

SAD CONSEQUENCES

In case anyone imagines that the things a believer does in life does not matter, now let's consider the sad consequences that came because of Lot's poor choice to live in Sodom. When we reach Genesis 19, at this point, Lot has been in Sodom for over 20 years. He has been living away from God's altar, without communion with God. Throughout several chapters of Genesis, we see that Abraham had consistent communion with the LORD. But scripture says nothing of the Lord showing himself to Lot for over 20 years.

WEAK IN SPIRIT, STRONG IN THE FLESH

The first sad consequence of living away from the altar of God where God was worshipped with no communion with God was that Lot had grown weak in spiritual discernment. The Lord sent two angels to Sodom in the form of men, "And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing *them* rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways." (Gen 19: 1-2) These same two angels, along with the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus—all appearing in the form of men—had just visited Abraham. At Abraham's invitation, they quickly came into his house and revealed themselves to him. The Lord gave Abraham spiritual discernment to know who they were. But at Lot's invitation, "And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house." (Ge 19:1-3) At first they told Lot no. It took Lot pressing upon them greatly to get them to turn in to join him for dinner in his house. But they still did not reveal themselves to Lot and Lot did not discern who they were.

Furthermore, we see how strong Lot's flesh was ruling over him in that when a great number of sodomites gathered outside Lot's house desiring to have their way with the two men, Lot attempted to handle the situation himself, "And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him." (Gen 19: 4-6) If Lot would have had spiritual discernment to know these were angels of God, surely he would have asked them for help. Instead, Lot looked to his own fleshly wisdom and strength. Lot had become very weak in spiritual discernment and very strong in the flesh.

Another indication of this is in what Lot said to the sodomites. Lot rightly condemned the desire of the sodomites, "And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly." (Gen 19: 7) Indeed, the desire of those men was wicked. But as if it were more righteous or less wicked, Lot offered these men his own daughters, "Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as *is* good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof." (Ge 19:8) Do you see how weak Lot had become spiritually? In order to get along with wicked men in Sodom, Lot's life had become defined by compromise. Now, at last he is willing to prostitute his own daughters to reach a compromise with these wicked men. Compromise with the world will always cost a believer everything dearest to him.

This is the sad consequence of living in a place where there is no public worship of Christ together with his saints. Without the preaching of the glory of Christ and him crucified with the communion of the Lord by his Spirit, our inward man grows weak while our fleshly man grows strong. We must have the consistent preaching of the gospel through which God strengthens the believer in spiritual discernment and subdues our self-righteous, compromising flesh.

NO RESPECT AMONG THE WORLDLY

The second sad consequence of Lot's poor choice is that Lot had absolutely no respect among the wicked men of Sodom, "They said, This one came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them..." (Ge 19:9) If you compromise the gospel, the world may make you think they respect you. But as soon as you speak the truth concerning their sin, this will be their reply, "What right have you to judge us!" Since Lot's sin was the spiritual equivalent of their carnal sin, what right *did* Lot have to judge them? None! In fact, worldly, wicked men have more respect for the man who stands-fast in the faith than for one who compromises the gospel. They said, "Now will we deal worse with thee, than with them."

NO RESPECT AMONG FAMILY

The third sad consequence Lot suffered from his choice to live in Sodom is that Lot even lost the respect of his own family. After the angels revealed who they were, they told Lot to go warn his family, “For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.” (Gen 19: 13) But all his life, Lot had taught his family that obeying the word of God was not all that important. Now, Lot would have never told them that. He did not think that was the case in his own heart. But that is what Lot taught his family by living in Sodom rather than choosing to live near the place where God would be worshipped. It is what Lot taught his family by choosing the riches of Sodom, rather than the spiritual riches of God. He taught them by example, by where he lived.

But now, Lot’s thoughts on the importance of obeying God—of getting out of Sodom—have changed dramatically. God is about to destroy that place and everybody in it. So in the middle of the night, Lot ran and knocked on his son-in-laws door, “And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, “Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city.” But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.” (Gen 19: 4) How sad! Since Lot had live his life for all those years right there in Sodom his sons in law thought he was joking around.

Brethren, when we hear messages about leading our children by example, God often rebukes us. One young in the faith may not understand how influential the believer’s actions can be. He may even speak against that doctrine when he hears it. But if he is a child of God, God will eventually change his mind. Yet, if he spent years leading his children into error by his example, he will find it near impossible to lead them out. It is far more difficult to lead someone out of temptation if we are the ones who led them into it. God had changed Lot’s mind. But now his family could not hear his words because of his actions.

LOT LINGERED

The fourth sad consequence of Lot’s poor choice is that Lot’s own affection for the riches of Sodom made him hesitate to leave. In the morning, “the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered,…” (Gen 19: 15-16)

Brethren, we make lots of excuses but the chief problem that keeps us from quickly obeying God is our affection for these earthly things. The apostle Paul said, “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” (Col 3:2-3)

WEAK FAITH

The fifth sad consequence that came from Lot’s poor choice to live in Sodom is that Lot’s faith in the Lord had grown very, very weak. Even after the angels brought him out of Sodom, he did not believe God enough to go all the way to the mountain like they told him to do. Listen to this double-mindedness, “Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die.” (Gen 19: 19)

Brethren, when God says “it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe”, it does not mean that he saves us only in the first hour through the preaching of the gospel. It means God continues to save us throughout the life of faith through the preaching of the gospel. “How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?...So then faith *cometh* by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10: 14, 17) We must have ourselves and our family under the preaching of God’s word, together with his saints, because it is the means God has chosen to give his people faith and to grow us in faith the rest of our days. The believer who makes the choice to remove himself and his family from the preacher God has sent to declare the gospel, for whatever reason he chooses to do so, has made a very, very poor choice. He and his family will most surely suffer the consequences, one of which will be a weakening of their faith in Christ. Never, under any

circumstances, make the extremely poor decision to remove your family from the place nearest you where God has clearly sent his preacher.

LESSONS TO LEARN

There are many lessons we should learn from Lot. We will consider two of the most important.

First, learn that we will never be used of God for the good of men's souls, not even amongst our own families, if we live in opposition to God and his word. Perhaps, Lot thought, as many do, that he could bear witness of Christ in Sodom and God might save some.

Some stay in a church where a false gospel is preached, thinking they can bear witness of Christ. Others move away from the gospel, for various reasons, only to end up living in the world among wicked men, thinking they can make a difference among worldly men. Others reject God's express command despite God's warnings because they are insistent they will do as they please while expecting they will still be heard by those around them.

It is impossible to expect folks to even listen to us, if our example contradicts our doctrine. God did not use Lot to save anyone. Not one person in Lot's family believed God. Nor did God save even one person in Sodom. And had God not intervened, Lot himself would have lost his own soul.

Brethren, please heed this warning. Read this then read it again. Let this sink in. We can do nothing unless God bless his word. And God will not bless his word if we are doing the opposite of what God commands his child to do. What does God command his child of grace to do? Concerning the place where men preach a false gospel, God says, "Come out from among them and be ye separate." (2 Cor 6: 17) Concerning the place where God has established the gospel, God expressly commands the believer to "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." (Heb 10:25-27)

When Christ sanctifies his child, making us stand-fast in his gospel, making us assemble with his people under the consistent preaching of his God-sent preacher then are we showing forth his praises in our life. When God plants us under the sound of the gospel in faith, God is already using us to bear witness of him. It is because that is obedience which only Christ works in his child! Forsake a false gospel but never under any circumstances leave the true gospel!

Secondly, learn that we must never make a choice based upon sight rather than faith. That means we must never seek carnal profit at the expense of spiritual profit. It means we must never let our fleshly pride or emotions or affections be the ruling cause for the choices we make.

When making any decision in life—least to the greatest—from the most important to seemingly unimportant—remember the words of our Savior, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Mt 6: 33) When faced with a decision, if we would seek Christ and his righteousness—if we would seek Christ and that which Christ teaches us is right—here are the questions we should ask ourselves:

- What will bring glory to God my Savior before all and bring no reproach on his name?
- What will promote his kingdom, the furtherance of his gospel?
- What will be best for my brethren, Christ's people, Christ's church, promoting peace?
- What will be best for my own family?

Whatever best answers those questions, do that first! God will see to it that we are provided for! God gave his only begotten Son for you, believer! Christ laid down his life, shedding his precious blood, to purchase you, child of God! God gave his unspeakable gift, for you, who he has called by his grace. God freely gave you eternal life, righteousness, holiness, eternal redemption and all spiritual blessings! You can be certain, God shall freely provide

every lesser thing you need in this life! “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Rom 8: 32)

But what about what is best for my own self? What about my feelings? What about my reputation? What about me? Back when that quarrel first came between Abraham’s herdsmen and Lot’s herdsmen what did Abraham do? Consider those questions which we just went over as you consider what Abraham did.

- For the glory of God,
- to prevent the world reproaching God’s name,
- to keep peace with his brethren,
- to provide for Lot and Lot’s family,
- and not even giving the least consideration for himself,

Abraham said, “Let there be no strife. Lot, you take what you will, I’ll take whatever is left.” When Lot took the better land, Abraham ended up with the smaller, less fertile ground. You might say, “Well, see there, a man can’t get ahead that way!”

Let’s see. Go back and read Genesis 13: 14-18: “And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, [While Lot lifted up his eyes as he walked by fleshly sight, Abraham’s eyes were down as he walked by faith. Now, to show us God will provide, the LORD said to Abraham] Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, [not his permanent house like Lot had but his temporary tent] and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, [It means he came and dwelt in Strength and Fatness. It means Abraham came and dwelt in Christ] which is in Hebron, [it means in association. When we dwell in Christ we dwell in association with God our Father] and built there an altar unto the LORD.

Lot sought first what was best for Lot and only what was best for Lot. He looked for a city which had no foundations, whose builder and maker was man. God burned up that city and stripped him of every lesser thing he had. He saved his child Lot, but he saved him by fire, burning up all his wood, hay and stubble.

Abraham sought first, the kingdom of God and his righteousness. He looked for a “city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.” God gave him that eternal city. Plus, God gave him all things!

Child of God, will you go the way of Lot or the way of Abraham? Oh, may God give us grace now to follow the example of our father Abraham. God called him “the friend of God.”

Amen!