

GENESIS 19

It's easy to get upset about the little inconveniences in our lives—like a favorite coffee shop temporarily closing—while ignoring the brokenness and injustice of human trafficking just down the street. Genesis 19 isn't a comforting passage like Psalm 23. It makes us confront the broken reality of our world and our own hearts.

Lot shows us a sobering picture of the slippery slope of sin. He started by looking at a lush valley, moved near the sinful city, and eventually ended up at its gates as a compromised leader. Lot's sons-in-law paid no attention to his warning of judgment because his life looked no different from the rest of the city. How often do we tell ourselves we can handle a little compromise? Before we know it, we're at the bottom of the slippery slope.

When it is time to flee, we, like Lot, tend to linger. We hesitate to leave our comfort and convenience, even when we know we are in spiritual danger. The desire to linger killed Lot's wife, turning her into a pillar of salt. The chapter ends with Lot's daughters taking advantage of their compromised father to bear children for themselves out of fear.

But there is hope hidden in this dark story. Lot wasn't rescued because he was completely righteous. He was saved because his uncle Abraham interceded for him, and because God mercifully grabbed him by the hand and pulled him out of the fire.

We must recognize that the line dividing good and evil cuts straight through our own hearts. Yet, God takes unspeakable evil and redeems it for good. Out of Lot's lineage from his daughters came Ruth the Moabite, King David, and Jesus, our Savior. Jesus is the one who runs down into the mess of our slippery slope, grabs us by the hand, and takes our judgment upon the cross. Let us stop lingering. Let us intercede for our loved ones, and cling to the Savior who rescues us from the fire.

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

In a busy, modern city, it's easy to insulate ourselves from the suffering around us. We may care more about a coffee shop closing than people being exploited and dehumanized a short walk away. What are some practical ways we can open our eyes and cultivate Christ-like empathy for the brokenness in our city?

QUESTION TWO:

Lot became a compromised leader in a broken city not overnight, but through a series of small, gradual steps that started with just admiring a lush valley.

Where in our lives do we tend to say, "I'll just get close, but I won't cross the line"? If we truly believed that our private sins create social disharmony that hurts others, how would we handle those "harmless" compromises differently?

QUESTION THREE:

It's fascinating that 2 Peter 2:7-9 calls Lot a "righteous man" distressed by wickedness when we see his compromise and desire to linger in a sinful city. Lot wasn't righteous by his actions, but because God reached out, grabbed him, and rescued him.

Can you share a time in your life when you were lingering in a bad spot, and God mercifully grabbed you by the hand to pull you out?

QUESTION FOUR:

When reading about extreme wickedness, we can react with moral superiority. But the cross demands we admit that the same selfishness, pride, and exploitation exist within our own hearts.

How should this realization change the way we view, pray for, and interact with a secular or hostile world? How does acknowledging and confessing our sin lead to a deeper experience of God's grace?