

Osaka International Church

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Title: Lot's Choice

Scripture: Genesis 13

Key Verse: 2 Peter 2:7-9

Communion, Children's Message

I. Introduction

Good morning! In life we are faced with many choices, and all of our choices have consequences. Sometimes we choose well, and good things result. Sometimes we choose poorly, and troubles follow.

The Bible often uses a farming analogy of sowing and reaping to speak about choices and the results. If you plant one kind of seed, then that is the kind of crop you will get. Another kind of seed will bring a different crop.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul warns us. **Galatians 6:7-8, "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life."**

Today, we will be looking at the story of Lot and learning some things about wise choices from his example. We will also see how the grace of God is renewed and revealed even after bad things happen. Let's begin by reading Genesis 13:5-13



II. Scripture: Genesis 13:5-13 (NIV)

[5] Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. [6] But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together. [7] And quarreling arose between Abram's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time. [8] So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers. [9] Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left." [10] Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) [11] So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company: [12] Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. [13] Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord.

III. Teaching

Abram, who is later renamed as Abraham, and his nephew, Lot, were moving about together, living a nomadic life. They had herds and flocks, cattle and sheep in abundance, and many workers to care for their animals. Having an abundance sounds good, but in this case it led to fighting among the herdsmen, probably over grazing pastures or water sources. There were simply too many animals in too small an area. Abraham wanted peace, so in **Genesis 13:9**, he told Lot, **"Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left."** As head of the family and as the recipient of the Lord's promise, Abraham had the right to choose first. But Abraham releases his rights and gives Lot first choice. This is an excellent example for us.



There is another, less joyful, lesson here. Wealth often divides families. Abraham and Lot were family and they stuck together - until their many possessions forced them apart. Many people assume that they would be happier if they were rich. But often rich people have more sorrows than average people.

Genesis 13:10-11, “Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company:”

Lot chose some very beautiful land for himself. The land was very green and well-watered. Many people think Lot made his choice out of greed, but nowhere in Scripture is Lot ever said to have had bad motives. The Bible simply tells the story and lets the reader study it and learn. However, there is a hint of trouble to come. **Genesis 13:12-13, “Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord.”**

Lot chose the plain where Sodom and Gomorrah were located. Then Lot moved his tents near to Sodom. And, within a few years, Lot had moved into the city of Sodom, maybe for business reasons, or to get a nice house for his family, or so that his wife could enjoy convenient shopping. Maybe Lot’s intentions were good. But Lot’s choices lacked wisdom. You cannot choose to move into a place of wickedness and expect to be untouched. Lot probably thought he would be okay. Maybe he said, “The Lord will protect me.” But the scripture says, **“A man reaps what he sows.”** If you sow foolish choices, what will you reap?

We will take a brief look at how Lot’s choice turned out for him. But first I want to mention that Lot’s struggles did not begin with his unwise choices. Lot’s struggles began in his heart. Lot was a believer, but somewhere along the way Lot’s heart went off the path and Lot began to make choices guided by earthly values rather than by spiritual wisdom.

Trouble begins in the heart. Unwise choices come from an unwise heart. Sinful choices come from a sinful heart. Pastor Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel puts it this way, *“Stealing a horse does not make you a horse thief; it only proves that you are a horse thief.”* Maybe in Japan we should use the example of a rice thief instead. But the point is this, if a man does not already have the attitude of a thief in his heart, there is no way he would steal. The problem begins in the heart. A lot of people are caught up in some kind of habitual sin or bad habit and they try and try to stop. But your actions won’t change unless your heart attitude changes first. Guard your heart from dark and evil thoughts and ask the Lord to purify your heart first, and then your behavior will also change.



Lot chose to live among wicked people, and consequences soon followed. A few years after Lot moved to Sodom, Bera, the king of Sodom, got the city involved in a war and Lot and his family, were taken captive and hauled away. Fortunately for Lot, Abraham came and rescued him. But Lot went right back to Sodom and continued living there. In Genesis 19, the Lord decides to destroy Sodom because of its great wickedness. But first the Lord sends two angels to rescue Lot.

This 1498 painting by Albrecht Durer shows Lot and his daughters fleeing while Sodom burns in the background. The angels gave Lot the chance to bring others out with him, and Lot tried to convince the men who were engaged to his daughters to flee. But Lot had no influence over them, they thought he was joking and they refused to leave the city. By the way, can you see Lot’s wife in this painting? I think that is her on the road at the back. The angels told Lot and his family in Genesis 19:17 to flee and, “Don’t look back.” But in Genesis 19:26 Lot’s wife looked back and she became a pillar of salt.



Lot lost his home and his wife. But Lot’s troubles were not over. Lot and his daughters end up living in a cave. And, after a while, Lot’s daughters decided that they had no possibility of finding husbands, so they got their father drunk and lay with him so that they could have children.



These children became the idolatrous nations of Ammon and Moab. On the map, you can see them East of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea. They are mentioned many times throughout the Old Testament. Sometimes Israel was on good terms with them, but often they were enemies. But these nations disappeared from history long ago.



The Bible gives much more detail, but this completes our brief summary of Lot's life. What do you think of Lot? Do you think he was a good guy? Would you like to meet Lot? I hope that you will not be too hard on Lot. Lot was basically a good man. In **2 Peter 2:7-8**, Peter is explaining about how God saves the righteous and he uses Lot as an example, saying, **“and if he [God] rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard).”** The Scripture calls Lot a righteous man who was distressed by the wickedness around him.

Here is a mystery for us. We see it in the story of Lot, but you can also see it in the lives of many people, perhaps even in your own life. Lot was miserable living in Sodom; he was tormented by the lawless sinfulness of the place. But Lot chose to live there. Lot was a wealthy man, he could have easily moved away. But he stayed in the place of wickedness. Why do good people choose to remain in places of wickedness or bad situations that make them miserable? The answer to this mystery is somewhere in the heart attitude.

Lot was basically a good man. But because of his unwise choices, he lost everything, not only material things, but also his spiritual influence and good reputation. Lot is an example of a man who is saved, but unfruitful. **1 Corinthians 3:14-15** speaks of the judgment of the works of believers, saying, **“If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.”** Lot was saved, but he suffered defeat and shame. What about us? Knowing the Lord and being saved is essential. Christ Jesus is the foundation. But after we are saved, we should begin to build on the foundation of Christ so that we can live victorious Christian lives.

IV. Conclusion

Peter explains it this way. **2 Peter 1:5-8**, **“For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; [6] and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; [7] and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. [8] For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

What do we see in the story of Lot? First of all, we see the amazing love and mercy of God. Despite Lot's poor choices, the Lord rescued Lot multiple times, honored Lot's faith and declared him righteous. It is a big encouragement to know that God's love prevails over our foolish choices. Did you know that God even honored Lot's children? If you like to circle things in your Bible, open it to Matthew 1 and circle the names, “Ruth,” and Rehoboam in Matthew 1:5 and 1:7. Ruth was a Moabite woman, and 1 Kings 14:21 tells us that Rehoboam's mother was an Ammonite woman. Lot and his daughters sinned in drunkenness and incest. And yet, God loved and honored their descendents by including them in the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah. This is an amazing testimony to the grace and mercy of the Lord.

The second thing we see in the story of Lot is a warning against unfruitfulness in our Christian life. Yes, we can make foolish choices and mistakes and the Lord will still forgive us. But who wants to lead an ineffective and unproductive life? Why should we settle for a defeated life when we could be living the victorious Christian life? May I encourage you today? Don't settle for a life like Lot's, saved but unfruitful. Trust in Jesus and then add to your faith. Build on the foundation of Christ. Sow righteousness into your life and reap a harvest of the fruits of the Spirit and of the salvation of your family and friends. Lead a victorious life for the glory of God! Let's pray.

V. Closing Prayer