

Disposable Pleasures or a Meaningful Pursuit

Genesis 18:17-21; 19:15-38

By [Justin Pillsbury](#)

March 28, 2010

But there's a few tidbits that we remind them each week, some things to keep at the back of your mind. One, Moses is the author, but who is he writing to? He's writing to the second generation Israelites on the plains of Moab about to enter the Promised Land. Why is that important? It gives us the meaning today and it reminds us that the first generation failed to believe the promises of God. And Moses is writing to reinforce the truths of God's promise. You can believe God is as good as He says He is. You can take Him at His word. And in this text, it allows us to ask, "Is our life going to be filled with a plethora of disposable pleasures or is it going to be marked by meaningful pursuit?" Four things that we're going to look at tonight — the danger of becoming comfortable with sin, there's no escape but one, father's be good to your daughters, and then the fourth, the destructive sequence of sin. But before we look at these let's pray.

Father in heaven, Lord we thank You for another Sunday evening. Father, we get to gather together as Your people. Father, as we go through Your Word, Lord morning and evening, I pray that Your Word would be at work upon our hearts, Father that You would inflict the pain that is necessary as You expose the sin that is there. Father we do, we become very comfortable with sin, so comfortable that we don't even see it. Father I pray Lord that it would be staring us in the face as we hear Your Word. And Father I pray that You would bring us to repentance. And Father I pray that Your Word would teach us and grow us. Lord God we love You and we need You. Amen.

Genesis 18. We'll begin in verse 16. We're going to read through 21 and then we'll jump down to chapter 19 verse 15. Hear the Word of God:

Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way. The Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has promised him." Then the Lord said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, I

will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to Me. And if not, I will know."

Turning a page over to Genesis 19. This is verse 15:

As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you 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 to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. And as they brought them out, one said, "Escape for your life. Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away." And Lot said to them, "Oh, no, my 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, this 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 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.

The sun had risen on the earth 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 those cities, and all the valley, 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 toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward 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 which Lot had lived.

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 in to us after the manner of all the earth. Come, let us make our father drink wine, 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 she lay down or when she arose.

The next day, the firstborn said to the younger, "Behold, I lay last night with my father. Let us 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-ammi. He is the father of the Ammonites to this day.

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God endures forever.

Well the very first thing is the danger of becoming comfortable with sin and we see it in verse 16 — "But he lingered." I remember this past fall watching the Ole Miss v. LSU game. Y'all probably know what I'm talking about right away. One team lingered greatly. I couldn't believe how slowly LSU came up to the line, how slowly they called timeouts. There wasn't a sense of urgency. It was almost as though they were playing with the lead rather than from behind. And to Ole Miss fans' delight, it cost LSU the game. And there's something similar here. We see with Lot, he doesn't grasp the reality of the situation he and his family are in. The men of the Lord had come to him, warned him, but he still lingers. And you would have thought Lot would have been in a hurry-up mode by this point. But the lack of urgency shows a comfort with sin, a lack of obedience, lacking a fear of God. This right here is a warning to the second generation — don't be like Lot. Don't be flippant when it comes to sin and the dangers of sin. Don't be like your parents who doubted My promises. And today, are we slow to leave sin? Do we linger in sin? When it comes to sin are we asking, "How far is too far? When is it really sin?"

God wants us to grasp the dangers of sin and the message of God's Word here and throughout Scripture is clear — Run away from sin. Paul's words, "Flee." We can't take baby steps away from sin. It's not, "Well, you know what? I used to gossip five times a week. Let's just cut that back to one day a week. You know what? I used to look at pornography a lot. Let's just cut that back to Tuesday afternoons and Thursday afternoons. It's been a busy week. Just on the busy weeks, those are the only weeks that I'll cheat on tests or copy my buddy's homework, just those times." That's not how we are supposed to approach sin. We're supposed to run the opposite direction from sin. We're not to look back on our sin and fool ourselves that life was just a little bit better with sin in it. We can't manage our sin. We don't have that ability. It can only be destroyed by the blood of Jesus. To live is Christ, to die is gain. All there is to life lived in sin without repentance is folly and death. But even in this story with Lot we see the God who is rich in mercy. God intervenes even as Lot lingers. God is merciful to Lot and his family. The men of God grabbed them, forced them out of the city, thus saving them. So be careful. Don't become comfortable with sin.

The second point — there's no escape but one. That account in verses 23 through 29 — “The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar. Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven.” The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, it is judgment. The cities are destroyed for their twisted perversity and that same perversity lives in Lot. And there's no outrunning the judgment of God. And as you're familiar with the story of Noah and the arc, men and women who were just going about their everyday lives, and all of a sudden it begins to rain and it rains some more. The waters begin to rise, people go to their rooftops to escape the high waters, and then from there, the young say, “You know what, the water continues to get high. We're going to head towards the hills. We're going to head towards the mountains. We're going to let our strength and our might outrun the rising waters.” But as you know the flood waters covered the entire face of the earth. There was no outrunning the judgment of God, and there is still no outrunning the judgment of God.

And then you have that sad part in the verse in that passage where Lot's wife looks back. She looks back at that city of sin that she loved and turns to a pillar of salt. And it highlights she felt more comfortable in a town without God than outside a town with God. It begs the question, “Do we love the things of God, or like Lot's wife, again are we just more comfortable with sin — we'd rather live in a town without God than outside a town with God?” And in verses 27 through 29 it gives us a snapshot of Abraham. Abraham knew the only way Lot and his family would have been saved was by the merciful hand of God. It's the same story for us today. The only escape from judgment of God is the mercy offered by God in sending His Son, the Christmas story, every day of our lives. And we should, we should live in astonishment that God would send His Son so that bad guys like us can live.

Then there's from this judgment, there's two side topics, arguments, questions, that can come up from time to time. A popular question — How can a loving God bring judgment like this or how can a loving God send people to hell? But the truth is, no one seeks God, no one loves God, no one wants God on their own choice or desire. And Paul reminds us of this fact in Romans 3 — “What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written: ‘None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.’” The true picture of salvation is that all people want hell until God intervenes. I have a two year old son, Jay. He is a prime example of this. I have not had to teach him to sin, just like my father didn't have to teach me to sin. The goodness of the Gospel — all of us deserve hell, but God saves some of us.

And the second topic in this passage, some folks in Christian circles will come to this with a little bit of glee, kind of thinking, "Yeah, thank goodness God finally got the bad guys. Those twisted and perverted people finally got what they deserved." But the truth is, some bad guys do get smoked, there's no denying that. But some bad guys get mercy, and the same thing continues for us today. We're a bunch of bad guys in here who have received the mercy and the grace of God.

The third point — fathers be good to your daughters. If any of you are familiar with John Mayer, even as lost as he is, he understands the importance of fathers being good to your daughters. And this is another aspect of Moses training the second generation. And one of his objectives in these writings was to provide training for men how to become husbands, how to become fathers, how to become patriarchs, the one responsible for his family to grow in grace. That dynamic of fathers and daughters - with Lot we see what happens when a father fails to lead his family to grow in grace. And fathers need to see the difference between boys and girls as they raise their children. Young boys will come running through the house, shirtless with a plastic sword, yelling at the top of their lungs. Girls want to play dress-up. They want to have tea. They want to know if they look pretty. Boys need food, water, air to breathe — shelter's optional. Girls, they need those things, plus shoes, lotions, accessories, additional hair products, and they'll actually take a bath without being forced.

So there's a difference when fathers raise daughters compared to sons, but there is one goal that stays the same. Ephesians 6:4 reminds us not provoking them in anger but raising them up in the knowledge of the Lord, to know their sins, to confess their sins, to love Jesus and worship Him. And fathers need wisdom to lead, but daughters need hearts that are receptive, hearts that are tender. And one of the problems is that girls today can be a little bit like Lot's daughters. Even though Lot and his daughters are out of Sodom and Gomorrah, Sodom and Gomorrah has been destroyed, but Sodom and Gomorrah still live in Lot and still live in his daughters. They are living in a cave. They are isolated. And their concern is for sex and for a child. And those things lead them to the unthinkable. They are still so sinful, still so dirty in their Sodomite thinking, that they look to their father for sexual pleasure and a child. Fathers, teach your daughters to live in the culture and not for the culture to live in them.

Some of the things today — today it's a given that in order to have a meaningful relationship outside of marriage you have to have sex. That's just what you're supposed to do. I remember the summer that I was engaged. Me and a buddy would play in a weekly golf scramble and the guys along the way found out that I was engaged, found out that he was dating a girl and then they proceeded to ask us about our sex life. And when we told them that we're waiting until marriage, they fell over laughing at us and for the next five minutes just continued to laugh and say different jabs, different jokes. "Are you crazy?" And then the rest of the

round was spent with playful jabs toward us. The culture's norm is sex is just a part of any meaningful relationship, but Scripture is clear that is not the case. And then many girls today are confused is because one of the many things culture will say is that what a girl needs the most is self-esteem, a favorable or embellished impression of herself, so it leaves you with many girls today who are very wicked, but at least they feel good about themselves.

And fathers, this is where you come in. This is where you love your daughters. And you love them because you love them. It's not because of their great intellect. It's not because of their athletic prowess or they're just sweet and encouraging demeanor. They need to know you love them as they miss the game-winning free throw, when they make the game-winning free throw. They need to know you love them when they fail a test and when they ace a test. They need to know you love them when a guy disappoints them and they need to know you love them when a guy proposes to them. It is key for your daughters to know they are loved by their fathers in every season of their life. And ladies, daughters, be grateful when your dad tells you to put more clothes on or imposes a curfew when you're on a date because the dad who embarrasses you with his care and concern, he does so because he knows there are men out there who want to destroy you. And until you're married, dad is the man in your life.

We have another picture of Lot in this passage that just hits you in the gut. But Lot's a clueless parent. Lot gets so drunk he doesn't even know he slept with his daughter and then the same thing happens the next night. He's clueless. So students, guys and girls, be grateful that you don't have parents who aren't clueless, that they ask you who you're hanging out with, where you're going, when you'll be home. They may even keep you from hanging out with someone that you want to. Be grateful that they are inserting themselves into your lives.

The fourth thing that we see from this passage but also looking back at the life of Lot is the destructive sequence of sin. You have a series of choices that has brought Lot to this point in his life, this deplorable situation. It wasn't that Lot was living this righteous life and then all of a sudden one night things went crazy. It wasn't out of the blue. And then there's questions that we can ask ourselves to prevent the destructive sequence of sin. One of those questions is simple — Where are you going to live? This began with Lot choosing to live near Sodom and then eventually he ended up living in Sodom. Lot moves toward a more sinful lifestyle. And then for the second generation reminding them, "Beware of where you will live" and us today. It's not just what city are you going to live in, but what neighborhood are you going to live in? Who are your friends going to be? How is living here going to affect my church life? Where are you going to work? Where are your kids going to go to school? The places we put ourselves in has a direct impact on whether us and our family will grow in godliness or in sinfulness like Lot. And what we know about Lot is that he's failed to be obedient or surrounded by other believers and he's been cut off from fellowship by living in a cave. Look to put yourself in a place where you'll be in fellowship with other

believers. When I stand here before you that has been one of the greatest blessings having been a part of First Pres for almost four years is to be a part of the body of believers. Just the number of texts and emails I received today alone was one of the greatest encouragements. But this is an incredible church body. Love it. Enjoy it. Be a part of it.

And then Lot, he failed his daughters by not living in a place where there were godly men for them to marry. And Lot had become so corrupted by Sodom he had lost sight of the protection and chastity of his daughters. But not only where are you going to live, but it also brings up a second point — some of you in this room are already married, some of you aren't. But who are you going to marry if you're not married. Lot married the wrong woman. He was probably just thinking, "She is really good looking." And that was probably the only thing on his mind at that moment, and not, "What type of wife will she be? What type of mother will she be?" In Proverbs 31:30 — "Charm is deceitful and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised." It's a very good thing, very good thing, to be attracted to your spouse, but marry someone who loves and fears God. Always marry someone who loves God more than they'll love you so that you will not become the object of their worship because I promise every time you will disappoint. This is why marriages struggle and this is why dating is so stinking hard because we're looking at the other person to save us instead of looking to the only One who will save us. And if you are married, pray every day that your spouse will love God more than they will love you because with Lot's wife we saw a woman who wanted to stay in sin instead of leave sin. And she dies. This marriage led Lot to further sin. He chose to live near Sodom leading towards more sin. Lot's life was filled with disposable pleasures, events that would never satisfy, but also ruin him in the long run instead of a meaningful pursuit. What you do today, it is, it's building toward the rest of your life. And it's that question — Are you growing in the faith or are you regressing like Lot?

So many truths from this passage. And there's one truth if you continue reading on in Scripture that is incredibly comforting and reminds us of the depths of the mercy of God because that first son who was born to Lot was Moab, the father of the Moabites. Does that ring a bell? Does a Moabite show up later in Scripture? She actually has a book of the Bible named after her, Ruth. And she's in the line of Jesus. So we have incest, out of wedlock children, and from this line comes Jesus? It reminds us there is room in the family of God for the dirty Moabite. It means there's room for anyone no matter how vile the sin because the mercy of God runs that deep. And if God can work in this dysfunctional family, then we are assured that He can work in the mess of our lives.

Let's pray.

Father, as we read passages like this tonight we are reminded of Your inerrant Word. Father passages that Lord they do, they hit us in the gut when we read them. Why is that there? And Father as we come to the end of that passage, and

Lord that out of incest, out of wedlock children, Your Son is in that line, Father that You love us in the mess of our lives, Father that You cover our sins. Father some of us think that our sins are so deep, but Lord Your grace runs much deeper. Father, we need You, we love You, and we praise You in Your name, Jesus' name. Amen.

Will you stand for the benediction.

Hear the blessing from the only one who saves — grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

©2013 First Presbyterian Church.

This transcribed message has been lightly edited and formatted for the Web site. No attempt has been made, however, to alter the basic extemporaneous delivery style, or to produce a grammatically accurate, publication-ready manuscript conforming to an established style template.

Should there be questions regarding grammar or theological content, the reader should presume any website error to be with the webmaster/transcriber/editor rather than with the original speaker. For full copyright, reproduction and permission information, please visit the First Presbyterian Church Copyright, Reproduction & Permission statement.

This article is provided as a ministry of [Third Millennium Ministries](#) (Thirdmill). If you have a question about this article, please [email](#) our *Theological Editor*.

Subscribe to *Biblical Perspectives Magazine*

BPM subscribers receive an email notification each time a new issue is published. Notifications include the title, author, and description of each article in the issue, as well as links directly to the articles. Like BPM itself, **subscriptions are free**. To subscribe to [BPM](#), please select this [link](#).