

“THE HIGH COST OF LOW LIVING”

Genesis 13:10-13 & 19:1-17

The man Lot bought a lot in Sodom, but when Lot lost his lot in Sodom, Lot lost a lot more than a lot! He chose to live well below the spiritual poverty level and in doing so lost his testimony, his family and his property. We could say that he got into a lot of trouble!

The end of his wife’s life is more well-known than the story of her husband because of God’s judgment upon her – she was turned into a salty statue. Her life can be summed up in the following words: From Sodom to sodium!

But in order to understand why that happened we need to know a lot more about Lot. If ever there was a story descriptive of the high cost of low living it is this story about Lot. He is a glaring example of the costliness of carnality. A great many people who complain loudly about the high cost of living the lifestyle of the rich and famous seem utterly oblivious to another peril – the high cost of low living! Let us look at the life of the man named Lot who chose the low road and paid a high price for living below God’s standard for His children. Think first about:

I. THE COMPANY THAT LOT HAD. Genesis 12:4a

“Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him.”

Lot’s godly uncle was Abraham, who was called *“the friend of God”* (James 2:23). The life of Lot and the life of Abraham are inseparably entwined. In order to understand the depths to which Lot ultimately sank we need to be aware of the heights from which he fell. He had been exposed to a life of faith-living in Abraham but he chose rather the life of flesh-living. Lot had a good beginning but a sad ending.

Lot comes on the scene in Genesis chapter 11. There it is recorded that Abraham’s brother died (11:27,28) and Abraham took his brother’s son, Lot, under his watch-care. Then God then called Abraham to leave his country *and* kindred – I repeat, leave his country *and kindred*, and journey to Canaan. (12:1-3) Don’t miss this statement in verse 4, it is the key verse in Lot’s life: *“So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him.”* Abraham had the company of Lot when he left Ur of the Chaldees.

In order to understand what happened in Lot’s life from this point on, we need to see the contrasts between the life of uncle Abraham and his nephew, Lot. Notice the contrasts between the two:

Abraham ...

- Abraham was a worshipper. (*“altar”* = 12:7,8 and 13:4,18 and 22:9). Wherever he pitched his tent, he built an altar. Abraham is associated with altars. An altar speaks of devotion. Abraham was devoted to God;
- Abraham listened to the voice of God. 12:1-3
- Abraham obeyed God. Gen. 12:4
- Abraham was blessed by God. Gen. 13:14-16

- Abraham was a good example for his nephew, Lot. Now, compare Lot's life with that of Abraham:

Lot ...

- Evidently Lot was a believer for 2 Peter 2:7 speaks about "*righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked*" Beyond that statement there is nothing good said about Lot. He was at best a nominal yet carnal believer.
- All that was said about Abraham is absent from the life of Lot;
- There is no record that he ever prayed and asked God for guidance;
- There is no record of Lot building altars and worshipping God;
- Were it not for the New Testament reference to him, we would hardly suppose that he was a true believer.

Lot was a tag-along! He went along just to get along! Notice several verses:

Gen. 12:4 "*So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and **Lot went with him.***"

Gen. 13:1 "*So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, he and his wife and all that belonged to him, **and Lot with him.***"

Gen. 13:3 "(Abraham) *went on his journeys from the Negev as far as Bethel*" and v.5 "*Now **Lot ... went with Abram.***"

Lot's pursuits appear to be solely for gain, not for God. He had a godly uncle for his role model but there is no evidence that he was spiritual. In fact, just the opposite is true – he was carnal! One can be raised in a Christian home, have a godly heritage, attend a Bible teaching church, be exposed to truth and yet have a carnal, worldly mind-set like Lot.

Illust. There is a man in the New Testament who apparently was just like Lot – his name was Demas. He had the Apostle Paul as his mentor and tutor. He had every spiritual advantage but he, like Lot, had a carnal heart. Paul wrote of him, "*Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me.*" (2 Timothy 4:10)

Lot and Demas had excellent spiritual companions but their hearts were set on things earthly, not things eternal. We would all do well to heed Paul's exhortation: "*Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*" (Col. 3:1-3)

With this background about Lot let us look more specifically at what went wrong in Lot's life. Consider:

II. THE CHOICES THAT LOT MADE. Genesis 13:10-11

When Lot separated from Abraham's godly influence, he went down-hill from that point on. We can see the erosion of what little godly inclinations Lot had in the choices that he made. Notice: Genesis 13:11 - "*So Lot **chose** for himself all the valley of the Jordan*"; Genesis 13:12 "*Lot **settled in the cities** of the valley*"; Genesis 13:12,13 "*Lot moved his tents as far as **Sodom**. Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners*

against the LORD"; Genesis 19:1 "**Lot sat in the gate of Sodom.**" The city gates were where business was transacted and city officials held court. Some have suggested that Lot had become a city official in Sodom.

The *lust* of the eyes (I Jn. 2:16); the *lure* of Sodom and the *love* of pleasure were too much for Lot to resist and so he made the choice that he regretted to his dying day. He, like his uncle Abraham, had lived a nomadic life as herdsmen and shepherd. Now he abandoned that peaceful life and with his family moved into the most wicked of cities. Lot gravitated toward the worst place with the worst people. Why would a person do that? Some of those who claim to be God's children feel more at home with the devil's crowd than God's crowd. They indulge the flesh while ignoring the Spirit. You cannot do that without suffering great loss!

There are many other examples in the Bible of those who made bad spiritual choices:

- Adam & Eve chose to disobey God;
- Cain chose to offer a sacrifice unacceptable to God;
- David chose to commit adultery with Bathsheba and murder Uriah;
- The rich, young ruler chose to live life without God – he "went away sorrowful";
- Judas chose to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver;
- Pilate chose to allow Jesus to be crucified;
- Felix chose to wait until some more convenient season, etc.

Let us analyze Lot's choices as follows:

- **Lot's Choice was based upon Sight not Faith.** Genesis 13:10
Lot's choice was a selfish choice. Lot chose the land that looked best to him. Lot did not consult God about his choice. It is always dangerous to leave God out of our plans. Worldly desires result in wrong decisions. God chose for Abraham, Genesis 13:14-18.
- **Lot's choice was based upon Greed, not Gratitude.**
Lot was the younger, the nephew of Abraham. Out of respect for Abraham he should have deferred to his uncle in spite of the fact that Abraham gave Lot first choice. Lot never considered his godly uncle, just himself. If it had not been for Abraham, Lot would have had nothing.
- **Lot Chose with Earthly not Eternal values in view.** Genesis 13:12,13
Everyone has to live somewhere – but when a person deliberately chooses the worst environment, substituting the material for the spiritual, that person is on the way down to low living. Why would Lot take his family into that sort of place? God had said of Sodom: "*Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD.*" (Genesis 12:12,13)

When it came to making choices Lot went with what appealed most to his fleshly appetites and was blind to the dangers of Sodom and its impact on his soul. Lot had material gain in mind, not spiritual gain. In moving to Sodom he was risking his reputation, exposing his family to evil and jeopardizing his eternity.

Keep eternities values in view! Think long-term! Keep looking toward the day when we must stand before God and answer for every sinful choice not repented of. All of Lot's problems were a result of making choices without considering God's will for his life.

What kind choices are you making? Our decisions determine our destiny, therefore choose wisely! We make our choices and then our choices make us. The choices we make today are the ones you're going to have to live with and die with and for which we answer to God. Former President, Ronald Regan said: "Ones philosophy of life is not best expressed in words. It is expressed in the choices one makes. And the choices we make are ultimately our responsibility."

Illust. Casey Stengel, colorful Manager of the New York Yankee baseball team said to new players who had joined the ball club: "Don't ever forget, once you put on that shirt with the Yankee emblem on it, you become a Yankee and you stay a Yankee. Great things are expected of you just because you are wearing that uniform. Don't ever let it down!" (Quoted in Yogi Berra's book, Ten Rings, p.211)

The same is more true for those of us who call ourselves Christians. Once we make the choice to declare for God and to follow Christ, we have the responsibility to live like it. We should be an example not only for the family of God, but for the world of sinners around us.

Lot's choices expressed his philosophy of life, he chose on the basis of what pleased him at the moment without taking God into consideration. He chose to live for the here and now without a thought to the hereafter. That philosophy was carried out not only in the choices Lot made but, notice in addition:

III. THE COMPROMISES THAT LOT DISPLAYED.

Before we look at the compromises that Lot displayed, it would be well for all of us to be on the same page regarding what compromise is. What does it mean to compromise? Webster's New World College Dictionary defines moral compromise as follows: "*To weaken or give up one's principles for reasons of expediency.*" In matters of conscience, character and convictions, compromising is always bad.

Consider some of the dangers of compromising:

- In matters of a spiritual nature, to compromise is to weaken your resolve;
- When you agree to compromise you are advertising that you are for sale;
- To compromise your spiritual convictions is to take a half-step toward evil;
- Compromise is simply changing the question to fit the answer;
- Compromise is the strategy the devil uses to get what he can't take by force;
- When we compromise with the world we lose our fellowship with God.

Let us look at the compromises displayed by Lot. He is now living in Sodom and was visited by angelic beings who came to accompany him and his family out of Sodom.

- **Compromise is seen in his Partnerships.**

When the wicked men of Sodom came to Lot's house to molest the two visitors, Lot appealed to them by calling them "brothers" - *"Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly."* (Genesis 19:7) We are told in Genesis 13:13 - *"Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD."*

These were not merely your so-called "good ole boys" having a fun time on Saturday night. These men were sexually depraved, bad to the bone, criminal types. Yet Lot calls these men "brothers"! Compromise!

- **Compromise is seen in his Perverseness.**

"Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man; please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like; only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof." (Genesis 19:8)

Lot offered his daughters to the Sodomites to *"do to them whatever you like."* How much lower than that can one sink? Here Lot's compromising character is clearly revealed.

- **Compromise is seen in his Powerlessness.**

When Lot saw that Sodom was to be destroyed, *"Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, and said, "Up, get out of this place, for the LORD will destroy the city." But he appeared to his sons-in-law to be jesting."* (Genesis 19:14) Lot had no godly influence upon his would-be sons-in-law. His testimony was powerless! When we compromise with the world we lose our spiritual power. Samson is a good illustration of the same principle.

Back to the definition of compromise: *"To weaken or give up one's principles for reasons of expediency."* That is what Lot did and now his compromises are bearing bitter fruit. Yes, Lot lost a lot when Lot bought a lot in Sodom!

Illust. Did you hear about the bear hunter who compromised with the bear? Well, Winter was coming on and a hunter went out into the forest to shoot a bear out of which he planned to make a warm coat. By and by he saw a bear coming toward him and raised his gun and took aim. "Wait," said the bear, "why do you want to shoot me?" "Because I am cold and I need a coat," said the hunter. "But I am hungry," the bear replied, "so let's sit down and talk about this." Later, the bear patted his stomach, having had a good meal. And the hunter? He was covered with fur! We always lose out when we try to compromise with sin. It will consume us!

Illust. The Cadets at the military academy at West Point have what they call "The Cadet Prayer" which they repeat every Sunday in chapel services. Listen to it:

"Make us choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong, and never to be contented with half truth when whole truth can be won. Endow us with courage that is born of loyalty to all that is noble and worthy, that scorns to compromise with vice and

injustice and knows no fear when right and truth are in jeopardy." We would do well to memorize and repeat that prayer regularly.

Lot has been paying all along for the choices and compromises that he has made, but the highest cost is yet to come. Note:

IV. THE COSTS THAT LOT PAID.

Every sin has a bill attached to it. Pay day is coming someday. And for Lot, payday has arrived. Notice what Lot's choices and compromises cost him:

- **He was pauperized.** Genesis 19:15-17 and v.30
"When morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city." But he hesitated. So the men seized his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of his two daughters, for the compassion of the LORD was upon him; and they brought him out, and put him outside the city. When they had brought them outside, one said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the valley; escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away." And v.30 "Lot went up from Zoar, and stayed in the mountains, and his two daughters with him; for he was afraid to stay in Zoar; and he stayed in a cave, he and his two daughters."

Lot had been well-to-do. When he left uncle Abraham he was a rich man. Now he was a pauper. He had lost all of his possessions and now lived in a cave! But that's not all.

- **His sons-in-law were penalized. Genesis 19:14,24 & 25**
"Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, and said, "Up, get out of this place, for the LORD will destroy the city." But he appeared to his sons-in-law to be joking." And v.24 & 25 "Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone 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."

Fire and brimstone rained down on the cities, destroying all in them. Like the people of Noah's day, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed – this time, not by water but by fire!

- **His wife was petrified.** Genesis 19:26
"His wife, from behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt."
- **His daughters were perverted.** Genesis 19:31-35
Lot's daughters had become morally perverted in Sodom. Together they planned to make their father drunk and while he was drunk each daughter was involved in an incestuous act with their own father and conceived and gave birth to a son. Persons who live low usually drag others down with them.

A high price indeed for low living! Lot is one of the best examples in the Bible of the truth of Gal 6:7 – *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.”* And of Proverbs 13:15 *“the way of transgressors is hard.”*

SUMMATION

The lives of Lot and Abraham are vastly different. Lot obtained what he wanted – earthly prosperity, social acceptance and pleasure. But there was no witness for God, no blessing on his home and in the end he came to spiritual and social disaster. Abraham, on the other hand, sought God’s favor, lived for God and was blessed by God.

Abraham was called “the friend of God.” His nephew ends in a scene of incest, living in a cave! Let’s face it – Lot was a loser! He lost a lot when he bought a lot in Sodom!

CONCLUSION

How in the world did Lot end up in such a mess? How can I avoid such a disastrous life? What can we take away from the story about Lot that will benefit us for time and eternity?

1. Chose and keep the best companions. Why? Because 1 Cor. 15:33 says, *“Bad company corrupts good morals.”*
2. Make good choices by consulting God’s Word and spiritual advisers. And, remember the words of the West Point Cadets Prayer: *“Make us choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong “*
3. Spiritual and moral compromising leads to defeat! No one has ever been better off by making spiritual or moral compromises. To retain your integrity determine now not to compromise your conscience, character or convictions.
4. Keep eternities values in view! Do not fall for the lure, lust and love of this world.

Illust. Let us all make the decision to always choose the higher ground. The words of the song “Higher Ground” should express the desire of all who have been changed and challenged by Jesus Christ:

*“I’m pressing on the Upward Way,
New heights I’m gaining every day;
Still praying as I’m onward bound,
‘Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.’”*

*My soul has no desire to stay
Where doubts arise and fears dismay;
Though some may dwell where these abound,
My prayer, my aim is higher ground.”*