



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

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Jump Start # 1194

2 Peter 2:7-8 "and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds)."

Lot was a good man. He gets beat up often in our sermons. When talking about Lot's men and Abraham's men, and the area being too crowded, Lot chose the area of Sodom to move to. It was fertile and great for raising sheep. It wasn't a great area to raise a family. Abraham was Lot's uncle. Abraham was older. Abraham was following God's command. Lot was tagging along. It would make sense for Lot to let Abraham pick first. It didn't happen that way.

As Genesis unfolds, Lot moves closer to Sodom. Then Lot is in Sodom. Then it seems Sodom is in the lives of Lot's family. God told Lot to flee. He was putting an end to the wicked and vile Sodom. God said to flee, but Lot delayed. God sent an angel to lead Lot out. They were told not to look back. His wife looked back. She became a pillar of salt. Then Lot's daughters, fearing that there were no one left to marry and have children, got their father drunk and had sexual relations with him. Tragic disaster for a good man's family.

There's a lot of finger pointing and negative preaching about ole' Lot. Poor choices. Poor leadership in the home. But that's not a complete nor true picture of Lot. Our verse tells us that God viewed Lot as righteous. The text calls him: righteous Lot, that righteous man, righteous soul. God saw righteousness in Lot. Sometimes we don't credit Lot with anything worthwhile. It helps us to see as God does. God rescued righteous Lot. The Lord didn't rescue the wicked.

Some lessons:

1. It is possible to be righteous when those around us are wicked. How easily Lot could have said, "I can't help it." But he could be righteous. He was righteous. He chose to be righteous when others were wicked. Imagine walking in the shoes of Lot. He didn't have a congregation to attend where folks are trying to do right. No encouragement. No reminders from the pulpit. No daily Bible readings. He lived with men who had no principles. They had no anchor, foundation nor moral compass. Their deeds were called lawless. They were saying and doing wicked things. Lot didn't become like them. He remained righteous.

- You may have your own Sodom. It may be the school you attend or the work place, or sadly, even your family. The language is rough. The attitudes wrong. Greed, gossip, and filthy talk fill the air. Making fun of people becomes sport with some. Cheating and dishonesty is a game. These folks don't care, especially about others. They don't care about the hurt, the harm and the trouble they cause others. It's all about self.

- Lot's example reminds us that we can be righteous when in Sodom. It's not easy. It's hard on families. You need to work hard to keep yourself faithful to the Lord. It is always easier to go downhill than it is to go up hill.

2. What happened in Sodom bothered Lot. Our text states that he felt his righteous soul tormented day after day. Older translations use the word "vexed." Lot felt his soul vexed. This wasn't a one time situation. This happened every day. "Day after day," is how the passage reads. He was bothered. He was tormented. He was vexed. To say what others do does not bother me, is not the situation here. It did bother Lot. The wrong of others hurts. It hurts God and it hurts those who love God. It hurts because the air is filled not with the glory of the Lord, but with sin. They live mockingly of God's existence and authority. It hurts because righteous people care about others. These people were destroying their lives. Sin doesn't add value nor years to one's life. Sin drains life. Some of the consequences of sinful living is poor health, addictions, diseases and a calloused heart. God made us for better things. Some folks have more compassion on an abused puppy than they do an abused soul.

- there are many bad, ugly and unrighteous activities taking place today. It ought to bother us. Hearing little kids cuss isn't cute nor funny, it's shameful. Seeing college kids guzzle alcohol until they pass out ought to break our hearts. The cheating, dishonesty, breaking vows, ought to trouble us. These days are not safe. This is the time for prayers. We need to pray for our safety and pray for people to change.

3. The flow of our passage indicates that Lot was having little influence upon Sodom. Things were not getting better. They were getting worse. Lot remained true, but it doesn't seem that anyone was joining him. So it may be with us. You may feel that you are losing the battle. You may feel that no one is listening to you. That may be true. From Lot, we learn that he remained righteous even when no one was listening. That's discouraging. That makes you feel like you are wasting your breath and your efforts. Lot journeyed on with the Lord. The discouragement didn't defeat him. He remained righteous. He didn't get disillusioned thinking that maybe they were right. There are so many of them. How could they all be wrong. He didn't go there. He didn't compromise to get along. He remained righteous. There were lines drawn in the sand that could not be crossed. Lot was in Sodom but Sodom was not in Lot.

- this is the point where many of us stumble. We feel compelled to find a bridge of compromise to make things peaceful with others. The unprincipled ones do not feel that way. It's in your face. It's rude, obnoxious and offensive. They have no intention of crossing a bridge half way. They want nothing to do with decency, goodness or helping others. If there is any bridge crossing, it will be by the righteous people. The unprincipled ones are determined to continue in their ways. Maybe, instead of building a bridge that we must cross, it's time to cut the ties. Maybe some bridges shouldn't be built. When some refuse to show kindness, but rather they continue to ridicule, mock and put down the very things you cherish, what bridge do you intend to build? Why do you want to cross over to that side? Wicked hearts that do not care nor want to change, ought to be left alone, even if in the family and especially in the family. For the sake of the children, if loudmouth uncle can't keep from cussing, putting people down, mocking religion, talking offensively, then tell him to stay home. He'll blow a gasket and chew you out. But it's your home. Family or not, don't put yourself nor your kids through that ugly display of immaturity. Even if it's a family reunion or home for the holidays, parameters and boundaries need to be established. The unprincipled want no one talking religion, however, they expect everyone to give an audience to their spew of poison that comes from their mouth. No sir. Not any more. It's not a one way street here. It's not you get to call the shots. If that's the way family gatherings are going to be, then firmly, but kindly say, "I won't be there."

Why be tormented and tortured emotionally and spiritually for the sake of getting the family together. The guy is uncontrolled and he is hurting himself and others.

Lot was tormented. God got Lot out of there. It wasn't safe-physically, morally, emotionally or spiritually. Sometimes we must do the same. You may have to find another job-and that's hard in this economy. You may have to put some distance between some in the family-and that's really hard. You do this for the sake of your soul and the souls of your family.

Lot was righteous. He remained righteous. That's what God wants from you. Stay righteous. Do what you must to remain righteous. Do not become unrighteous. Do not throw in the towel with God. Do not become like those around you. We may live in Sodom, but Sodom doesn't have to live in us.

