

It's Evening in Sodom

Pastor Steve Berger June 28, 2015

Pastor Steve's personal declaration to continue...

- **Balance in scripture**
 - going to unpack all of it, not just what is comfortable or convenient
- **Balance in love**
 - not going to withhold truth, in fear that it isn't in line with society's view of love
 - not going to withhold love in proclaiming truth
- **Balance in politics**
 - not trusting a political party to enforce Christian values
 - not retreating from public policy when matters of righteousness are being debated
- **Continue to love...**
 - ...and welcome all people in hopes of introducing them to Jesus—where they can find salvation through their own repentance and faith and God's grace
 - Mark 1:15; Ephesians 2:8-9
- **Continue to preach...**
 - ...the entire gospel with love and boldness without apology or compromise
 - Acts 4:29-31; Acts 20:27
- **Continue to equip...**
 - ...people to be passionate servants of Jesus Christ
 - Ephesians 4:12; Matthew 28:18-20
- **Regardless of what that costs me...**
 - ...here on earth because I know I'll have the approval of heaven

It's Evening in Sodom

Background on Sodom

- **Genesis 13:10,13**
 - And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD.
 - the land was like Eden, the people were wicked
- **Exekiel 16:49-50**
 - Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit.
 - much like America us today
- **2 Peter 2:6-8**
 - God turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)

Word of compassionate clarity and spiritual warning on the subject of homosexual practice

- **Genesis 18:20-21**

- And the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know.

**Homosexual practice is a very grave sin
that causes a great outcry in heaven that gets God's attention,
He shows his compassion and justice by "going down to see"**

- **It is a grave sin because of what it does to people — on strictly secular level...**
 - from the short duration and multiplicity of relationships — diseases, all forms of abuse, shorter life expectancy, greater suicide rate
 - does not take into account the spiritual and eternal danger of living a homosexual lifestyle
 - God's blessing isn't on the lifestyle or the marriage

The story

- **Genesis 19:1-3**

Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. And he said, "Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way." And they said, "No, but we will spend the night in the open square." But he insisted strongly; so they turned in to him and entered his house. Then he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.

- Lot insisted strongly because he knew what would happen to them

- **Genesis 19:4**

- Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house.
 - generation, mob-threatening, violent spirit behind this; result of its long-term acceptance of that behavior that had gone unchecked

- **Genesis 19:5**

- And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally."

**These people had become so corrupt through their on-going sexual sin
that they wanted to gang rape these two visitors...totally depraved behavior**

- **Romans 1:27-28**

- Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting

**There is ZERO in scripture which approves homosexuality,
many places in scripture which forbid it —
Leviticus 18:22; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 2 Peter 2:6-8, unless you twist it**

Highly symbolic illustration

- **Genesis 19:6-7**
 - So Lot went out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him, and said, "Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly!"

Interesting — Lot went through the door and shut the door behind him

- **John 10:9**
 - I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

Notice — Lot positions himself between the Door, Jesus, and sinful humanity. Lot pleads with them, "please don't do this wickedness," "you can't enter the Door in your current condition with your current intention."

- we need some Lots who will courageously and lovingly position themselves between the Savior and sinners — and plead with them to stop their wickedness...
- we need some Lots who will not approve, excuse, or condone sinful behavior and tell people they can enter the Door while defying God and acting wickedly...
- **Ezekiel 3:18-19**

When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.

Lot's crazy appeal

- **Genesis 19:8**
 - See now, I have two daughters who have not known a man; please, let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish; only do nothing to these men, since this is the reason they have come under the shadow of my roof."
 - offered his daughters, because he knew they wouldn't take them
 - hoped the offer might awaken them to the heinousness of their intentions

Lot's understanding

- angels were there to bring judgment due to sexual sinfulness
- Sodom's sins were many; their defiant sexual sin is what brought God's judgment

Their undeterred callous response

- **Genesis 19:9**
 - And they said, "Stand back!" Then they said, "This one came in to stay here, and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them." So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door."
 - stand back, get of our way; unrelenting unrighteousness — same today
 - don't judge us
 - **John 7:24** —Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.
 - deal worse with you (Lot); threats, pressed hard against — *today Christians get ready for the same*
 - break down the door; Psalm 2:1-3, raging, plotting, breaking off restraints

**Sinners want God/church out of the way, to stand back.
Jesus wants us to stand in front of the Door and beg them to stop,
regardless of threats and opposition!**

More important symbolism

- **Genesis 19:10**
 - But the men reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door.
- angels bring righteous Lot in the house, then shut the door on the wicked

**A clear picture of God delivering the righteous,
and judging the wicked**

- **Genesis 19:11**
 - And they struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary trying to find the door..
- depraved sinners gets shut out and blinded so they can't find the door!

**Hardened sinners, regardless of sin, can get to the point
where God judges them with spiritual blindness
so they can never find the Door, Jesus, salvation**

- **Luke 13:25**
 - When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from'
- **2 Thessalonians 2:9-12**
 - The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion that they should believe the lie that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.
- **Genesis 19:12-14**
 - Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city—take them out of this place! For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it." So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, "Get up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city!" But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking.

Mission

- **Rescue people by proclaiming God's truth in love — because judgment and destruction are coming**
- it's no joke
- still evening in Sodom
- morning Judgment hasn't come yet
- stand between the Door and this sinful world and beg them to stop their wickedness before it's too late for them

**Don't hold back truth in the name of love, that's hate!
Don't be unloving when you proclaim truth!**

Personal Questions for you

Will you let Jesus rescue you from sin today?

Will you come to the Door in humility and repentance?

Or will you continue to try to enter the Door on your own terms that ultimately leads to your own eternal spiritual death?

- **Proverbs 14:12**
 - There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.
- **John 14:6**
 - Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
- **Titus 2:11-14**
 - For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works

Discussion Questions

1. Where would you rate yourself on a scale of #1-10
#1) withholding truth in fear of it not being in line with society's view of love
#10) withholding love when proclaiming the truth.
2. Read Ezekiel 16:49-50. How is America like Sodom? Is there anything that we in America already do, or can do, to stay God's hand of wrath on America?
3. Knowing that there are zero scriptures that approves homosexuality, and many scriptures which forbid it — how does this help you in speaking the truth in love?
4. Has anyone had the opportunity to speak the truth in love to an individual, and brought them through the "Door" to life in Christ? How was this person's eyes opened to the truth?
5. What are some practical and tangible ways we can be Lots standing outside the door?
6. How will you react when someone says "Who are you to judge?"
7. How do you respond when you see a Christian friend on Facebook telling their LGBT friends that they are supporting them, and also blocking any friends who are not supporting gay marriage? (true story)
8. Is there a way to use social media as a positive platform in this hotbed for verbal hounding and attack?
9. How do you (as an individual) show your gay friends that you are not a hater, bigot, or homophobe?
10. How do we (as a church) show the LGBT community that we are not haters, bigots and homophobes?

The House of Prayer will not be meeting corporately this Tuesday, June 30th.

Instead we ask that you hold your own House of Prayer.

We ask that you would lift up the July 4th event, salvations at UnCamp, the supreme court ruling on marriage, and our brothers and sisters in Charleston, SC.

We will resume our regularly scheduled corporate prayer night on Tuesday, July 7th.