

# Ministry of Grace Church

## 2 Peter 2:5-8 - Speaker Notes



### Background

Once again, we're in the book of 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter. In this part of his letter, Peter is focusing on the problem of false teachers in the church. We found out last time that New Age heresies (actually, New Thought heresies) have already infiltrated many churches today. Typically, these churches are the popular ones that draw large crowds week after week. There are three reasons that these churches are large. First of all, many people are there because they like being part of a large church. Secondly, people are going there simply because the preaching makes Christianity sound like fun. Thirdly, people are going there because they have been fooled into believing that what is taught there is truth.

Also, a lot of Christians think that the most important part of the church service is the "worship" time. Unfortunately, instead of glorifying God, this part of the service has devolved into what some are calling "worshiptainment." When I encounter people who have recently changed churches, I usually ask them why. The reason that I hear from people about why they don't like a particular church often sounds something like this, "the music is too slow and boring," or "the music is too loud," or "the music is too modern," or "I like the old hymns, and they never sing hymns there." And when I ask people what they think of the preaching in their new church, the response is often something like, "Oh, he's a great preacher. He tells really good stories and makes us feel really good about what we believe." Sometimes I hear, "I like the woman preacher that they have. She's much kinder and gentler."

2 Peter 2:4-5 (to maintain the context, we have included verse four.)

**For if God did not spare angels who sinned, but cast them into the pit and delivered them to chains of darkness, being kept for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;**

As we learned last time, Peter started his announcement of coming judgment with the angels who sinned. Now he gives us a second example of those who have not escaped the judgment of God in spite of His longsuffering. Peter says God did not spare the old world, that is the world of people that existed before the flood. He did, however, save Noah. The Greek text says,

And He did not treat the old world leniently but preserved Noah the eighth, a righteous preacher ...

The expression, “Noah the eighth” is an idiom that was used by many of the Greek writers of that era. It means that Noah was one of eight people who were saved, Noah, his wife, and his three sons with their wives. No one outside his immediate family believed the message he preached. And - because they did not believe, they were not saved.

Noah is an excellent example of a patient preacher of righteousness. For years he labored, building the ark. We are never told how long Noah worked on building the ark. Some speculate that it took 120 years because of what it says in **Genesis 6:3**,

Then Yahweh said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever because he indeed is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be 120 years.” (**Genesis 6:3**)

However, this verse actually says nothing about how long Noah labored. Others claim that it took Noah 100 years to build the ark because in **Genesis 5:32** we are told that Noah was 500 years old when he became a father and in **Genesis 7:6** it says:

Now Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of water came upon the earth. (**Genesis 7:6**)

But, here again, we are not told anything about how long he labored building the ark. And it is likely that he was ridiculed by all those around him while he was building it. But, yet again, we are not told that specifically. What we do know is that Noah labored obediently while others lived wantonly. He believed that God was going to bring a flood while they believed that things would simply continue on as they always had.

Peter declares him to be a preacher of righteousness, which implies that he was not a silent builder. Apparently, he warned the people of his time that God was going to judge their sinfulness. But they, like the false teachers of Peter’s day, didn’t believe that God was going to judge them. The false teachers today claim to represent God, but they don’t really believe He is the holy, righteous judge who will condemn them.

Peter tells us that God, “brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly.” The word “flood” is translated from the Greek word *kataklusmos*, from which we get our English word cataclysm. This is made up of *kata*, an intensifier and *kludzo* which refers to the surging, washing effect of an ocean wave.

Why does God let false teachers continue on in their deceptive, sinful ways? It seems like the wicked continue to prosper and the righteous continue to suffer, doesn’t it? That just doesn’t seem right for a righteous God. Peter will address this in the next chapter, but let’s take a quick peek at it right now:

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some consider slowness, but is patient toward you, not willing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

The word translated patient literally means “long suffering.” It grieved God when the people before the flood were living in wanton sinfulness without a single thought toward God. He could have judged them many years before He did, but he delayed His judgment. He did this for two reasons. First, to give the unsaved every opportunity to hear the salvation message and, second, so they would have no excuse when they were finally judged. It’s the same with the false teachers in the church today, God may appear to condone their actions by not doing anything about it, but - their judgment is surely coming!

## **2 Peter 2:6-8**

**and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter; 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),**

Now that Peter has told us about God’s judgment of the world before the flood, he tells us about the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. But before we dig into this section, I want us to see two truths about Lot. The first is that it’s easy to ignore sin when everyone around is doing it. That’s not unlike the world around us today. We have become calloused to the constant presence of sin and the constant references to sinful acts. As a result, we have learned to ignore them. The second truth about Lot is that living alongside the people of this world and being constantly exposed to their behavior has a corrupting effect on our behavior. We see it so much around us that not only have we learned to ignore it but we begin to act just like them. That grieves God and it’s tragic!

Now, getting back to false teachers. Peter has been talking about the false prophets of the past and the false teachers of his time (and ours). Through their smooth words they deliver a message that is designed to line their own pockets rather than to edify the body of Christ. Though they seem to be doing so with impunity, Peter said in verse 3 that their long-standing judgment is definitely not idle, and their punishment is definitely not sleeping. In other words, their day of reckoning is coming and they will not escape, so keep in mind what James says about teachers in **James 3:1**,

**Do not, many of you, become teachers, my brothers, knowing that we will receive a stricter judgment. (James 3:1)**

In order to give us an example of how judgment will eventually come to these false teachers, Peter talked about the angels who sinned and are now incarcerated in Tartarus as well as the wicked people of Noah’s time who perished in the flood. Here he gives us a third example, that of Sodom and Gomorrah. A literal translation of the Greek text reads,

And having incinerated Sodom and Gomorrah, he condemned them with a catastrophe, making an example of them to those intending to live ungodly.

You can read the account of the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis chapter 19. There you will see that the people of Sodom had become so wicked in their sexual lusts that they had abandoned all semblance of civility, seeking to violate even strangers that wandered into their town. Spiritually, this is no different than the false teachers who Peter has been talking about. The people of Sodom were content with their lifestyle. They saw nothing wrong with it. They even accused Lot of being a self-righteous prude because he confronted them concerning their sinful practices.

And, reading the account of Sodom and Gomorrah carefully you will see how even righteous Lot (yes, that's what Peter calls him) had become calloused and even tainted by their wicked ways. Though Lot acted to protect the visitors, he was willing to sacrifice his own daughter to the lusts of the townspeople. Even his perspective had become distorted; his spiritual sensitivity had been obliterated.

And - even though it appears that the townspeople were about to prevail, God's judgment first blinded them, allowing Lot and his family to escape their wrath, and then He destroyed them because they refused to hear the message of "repent and be saved." They would not listen to sound teaching.

Peter tells us that Lot was, "**oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men**" The word translated "**oppressed**" is *kataponeō*, made up of *kata*, meaning "down," used as an intensifier, and *poneō*, meaning "to labor." In other words, Lot was laboriously worn down or vexed" by the people of Sodom.

Given Peter's subject matter, the question that we have before us is, "Was Lot saved spiritually, or just physically?" We read in Exodus chapter 13 that after Abraham and Lot left Egypt and returned to the land promised by God, Lot departed from his uncle Abraham and chose to pitch his tent near Sodom (**Genesis 13:12**). Later we find that he had moved into town and had become one of the magistrates, sitting in the gate of that wicked city (**Genesis 19:1**). When the townspeople learned that strangers had come to stay with Lot (the two angels who came to destroy the city), they surrounded his house and demanded that the strangers come out so they could perform sexual acts with them. Lot refused. Instead, he offered his own virgin daughter to the men of the town if they would leave his guests alone.

Lot's association with the people of Sodom had worn him down and had influenced his reasoning in a negative way; otherwise, it seems unreasonable that he would have offered his own daughter to satisfy their lust. And later, when the angels warned Lot to flee for his life, he didn't want to leave Sodom. They had to literally grab them and drag Lot, his wife, and his two daughters out of town.

So, I ask again, "Was Lot saved spiritually?" Before we answer the question, though, let's see what God said about Lot's uncle Abraham. In **Genesis 15:6** we read,

**And he (Abraham) believed in Yahweh. And He (Yahweh) counted it to him (Abraham) as righteousness.**

God declared Abraham to be righteous because he believed God's promise. That's the Old Testament way of saying that he was saved. Notice that it was Abraham's arguing with God regarding a few "righteous" people (that God surely would not destroy the righteous with the wicked) which prompted the angels to remove Lot, the righteous one, from the city before it was destroyed. In addition to that, Peter refers to Lot as "righteous Lot." So, to answer the question, "Yes, Lot was saved!" And Peter's point is that even though God judged the people of Sodom, just as he will judge the false teachers of today, he protected and saved Lot because he was righteous.

Was Lot living like a righteous person? Certainly not, or he would not have offered his daughter to satisfy the sinful lusts of the townspeople. Lot did not lose his righteousness (his salvation) just because he was living in sin, just as we do not lose our salvation today even if we are living a sinful, selfish lifestyle. Did Lot have peace? Not at all! Was Lot being obedient to God? Certainly not! Was Lot's behavior pleasing to God? Absolutely not! Was Lot still saved? God says that he was! And God delivered "righteous Lot" who had been tormented by the lustful behavior of the lawless people of the city.

(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), (2 Peter 2:8)

The word "tormented" comes from the Greek word *basanidzō*, which means "an examination by torture." This verse reiterates the fact that the actions of the people of Sodom had a tormenting effect on Lot. Peter started off this verse restating Lot's righteousness as if to make the point that, in spite of his constant exposure to and oppression from the acts of the inhabitants of Sodom, Lot was indeed righteous. But he was not at peace!

### **So What?**

Our commission, like Noah's, is not to brow-beat people into believing the Gospel message. Our job is to share the message of salvation by grace through faith. And we are to do it both in word and in deed. We must proclaim the message, and we must live the message, because He is risen, and He is coming back soon! It could even be today!

We have just learned that as Lot was living among these people, day after day. He was seeing their actions and hearing them talk about them. Apparently, the thoughts and actions of the people of Sodom were constantly focused on their sinful lusts. I can just imagine all their billboards and all of their television and internet commercials were laden with sexual innuendos and overt sexuality. I can imagine their Wall Street advertisers saying, "Sex sells our products."

Today's society, like Sodom of old, is controlled by lust. What we see today is a world totally focused on eating, drinking, partying, and sexuality. The constant focus is me, me, me! The effects of it are all around us, from alcoholism and drug abuse to an epidemic of obesity and cancer, to the blinding lust for power and riches, to overtly depraved sexuality. In 1 John 2:16 it says,

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

It's all around us. We are living in the midst of it day after day. Lot was being tortured by it. We all know what happens to people who are tortured, they will say and do almost anything just to end the torture. We need to be careful in our condemnation of Lot for his own perverse reasoning, offering his daughter to protect the angels. He was being tortured!

How about you? Does your behavior distinguish you as a Christian? Is your way of life obviously different from those around you? Or - have you allowed the world around you to corrupt your behavior and dull your conscience? If so, you are not pleasing God, and you will have to stand before Him some day and give account of your actions (or lack thereof)! Or are you committed to doing what is right in God's eyes no matter what everyone around you is doing?

The only way to protect ourselves from the overwhelming influence of the world system is to immerse ourselves in the Bible. I know I sound like a broken record, but – How much time do you spend every day reading and studying the Bible? If you're not daily being washed by the Word, you're being soiled and stained by the world. Do you know what Jesus, as our Husband wants to be doing to us daily? Here's what the Apostle Paul told the believers in Ephesus.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, (Ephesians 5:25-26)

He can't wash us with the Word if we are ignoring it all the time! Read your Bible, my friends. Read your Bible EVERY DAY. Read your Bible and let Jesus wash you with the Word of truth.

Listen, my friends, it's time to wake up! Because He is risen and He is coming back soon! It could even be today!

Let's pray.