*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

July 25 – July 30

*Walking with Abraham*

**Monday, July 25 Genesis 19:1-11** *“But the two angels reached out, and pulled Lot into the house”*

 As the mob gathers at Lot’s house to harm his guests, Lot pleads with it to do them no harm. He appeals to their sense of morality, but they will not listen. He offers them a distraction, but they will not listen. Though his intentions are good, Lot is quickly learning how futile it is to argue with sin in the world.

 We often do the same. In the face of sin, we try and plead with it. We make compromises in the hope that it will leave us satisfied with the ground it has gained in our lives. The truth, of course, is that no amount of compromise will detour sin. We may say to it, “You can have this part of my life, but this part is off limits.” Unfortunately, sin doesn’t work that way.

 The famous Reformer John Calvin wrote about the *total depravity* of the human heart. By this, Calvin intended to suggest that there is no corner of our lives unaffected by sin. Every square inch of our hearts has been tainted. For this reason, compromise is pointless. Sin wants all of us.

 Thankfully, so does God. Like the two angels pulling Lot back into the house, God has reached out and pulled us into his arms where we find our protection. In Christ, we are truly safe and secure. God excepts no compromise. He embraces the totality of our hearts, cleaning them in his grace.

*Lord, thank you for not compromising on your love for me. Amen.*

**Tuesday, July 26 Genesis 19:12-16**

*“When Lot still hesitated…”*

 Despite multiple warnings from the angels, Lot continues to drag his feet. The destruction of the cities is immanent, but Lot hesitates to heed their commands and leave with his family. Finally, in the eleventh hour, the angels take matters into their own hands and rescue the dazed and confused family. In verse 16, Lot’s rescue is attributed to the mercy of God.

 How often do we drag our feet when God has given us a command? Like Lot, we fail to see the urgency of the situation. We think to ourselves, “Oh, I’ve got plenty of time. I’ll get to it later.” Little do we realize that our lack of attention can often lead to serious consequences. Thankfully, we serve a God who rescues us. Like the angels leading Lot out of the city, the Lord takes us by the hand and pulls us to safety. Because he is merciful and loves us, God will not let us perish in the destruction around us. We are not left to realize the full consequences of our inaction. Through the gift of his Son, God takes our sin upon himself and rescues us.

*Lord, thank you for showing me mercy. Amen.*

**Wednesday, July 27 1 Corinthians 10:13**

*“He will show you a way out so that you can endure”*

 It is easy to imagine that Lot is feeling overwhelmed at this point in Genesis 19. Fleeing for his life, he is surrounded by destruction. His home is about to be consumed by fire. His neighbors have sought his death. It seems as though nothing has gone right for Lot.

 In moments like these, it is easy to wonder whether God really cares. We ask ours

ourselves questions like, “What did I do to deserve this?” or “How could God be good in light of all that is happening?” When we ask these questions, we often blind ourselves to the very faithfulness we are questioning. As 1 Corinthians 10:13 notes, God makes a way out for us and equips us to endure the hardship we face. When all we can do is bemoan our circumstances, we miss all that God is doing to help us overcome them. If we are to endure, we must allow the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to all that God is doing on our behalf.

*Lord, open my eyes to your faithfulness. Amen.*

 *DAILY DEVOTIONS*

July 25 – July 30

*Walking with Abraham*

**Thursday, July 28 Genesis 19:17-23**

*“…don’t look back…”*

 Do you ever find yourself fixated on the past? Perhaps there is something you did or was done to you that you just can’t seem to shake. Many of us have moments that command an inordinate amount of energy and time in our daily lives. We mull over thoughts of what should or could have been until one day we realize that we’re spending more time living in the past than the present!

 The Lord’s command to Lot: *Don’t look back*. God is at work in the present. His desire is for us to live as new creations in the Kingdom that he is building now and will complete in the future. Though the past can teach us lessons, it ought never to command more than a cursory glance. When we fixate on what is behind us, we betray one of the great gifts of God’s mercy: freedom. Dwelling in the past is a sure path to finding oneself unable to move forward, trapped.

 In the grace of God, the past is no longer our master. That role belongs solely to God. He has set us free and placed us on a forward trajectory. He has called us into a new hope in which the only identity that matters is the one we share as his children. Don’t look back!

*Lord, help me focus on what you are doing in my life in the present. Amen.*

**Friday, July 29 Genesis 19:24-29**

*“But God had listened to Abraham’s request and kept Lot safe”*

 Remember back in chapter 18 when Abraham spoke with God asking him to spare Lot and any other righteous inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah? In Genesis 19, we see the fruits of Abraham’s request. Verse 29 tells us that “God had listened to Abraham’s request and kept Lot safe.”

 As a pastor, I’m often asked whether I believe that prayer really makes a difference. I suppose it is easy to doubt that it does. We often pray to the Lord, asking him for a particular outcome that may not come to pass. In the wake of these experiences, we often wonder if prayer is worth our time and energy. *Does prayer really make a difference*?

 The answer is “Yes!” The story of Abraham is full of examples of people who speak with God and receive a clear response. Jesus commands his followers to pray as an act of trust in God’s providential care. While we may not always experience God’s response directly, prayer is powerful. Take time today to trust in the one who hears our prayers and speak to him with the confidence that he is listening.

*Lord, I approach confidently in prayer knowing that you are listening. Amen.*

**Saturday, July 30 Genesis 19:30-38**

*“he went to live in a cave in the mountains”*

 In Genesis 13, Lot left the company of Abraham, traveled east, and settled amidst the plains of Sodom and Gomorrah. In doing so, he left the land promised to Abraham, the land of the covenant. Following the destruction of the cities, one might expect Lot to return to Canaan, but he doesn’t. Instead, he travels to the village of Zoar, and from there, into the mountains. The events of verses 30-38 make it clear that Lot has chosen a path riddled with pitfalls. He has wondered from the Lord.

 When faced with the embarrassment and shame of our sin, we often run for the mountains. We seek shelter in places that cannot protect us. We travel further from our home. Let Lot’s story be a reminder that when we stumble, we must run for the home of our merciful Father. The land of his grace calls us to settle and dwell with him.

*Lord, let me run to you and find my home in your grace. Amen.*