

Thought for Sunday 7th March 2021
Pastor Gordon Hamilton

Communion; Please have a piece of bread or cracker and a drink ready. We will share together later in the service.

Read Genesis 18:16-19:38 I realise this is a long reading but I believe that it deals with one whole situation in one hit. As we read last week Abraham has his promise confirmed when the Lord says it in the ear shot of Sarah. Both of them had laughed at the possibility of Sarah having a baby at 90 years of age. But as the men went to leave, Abraham doesn't just wave them off. Did the Lord say what he had to say in 18:17 onwards purely to see what Abraham's reaction would be. I'm sure that Abraham would have known that Lot and his family were living in the area of Sodom, yet in the last verses of chapter 18 we don't once see Lot's name being mentioned. The Lord says to his companions; *'shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?'* and then goes on to imply he is going to do something to Sodom, with Abraham no doubt knowing the sort of thing that was going on in Sodom, Abraham questions the Lord. Six times he challenges the Lord, verse 24; *'what if there are fifty righteous people in the city?'* verse 28; *'forty-five?'* verse 29; *'forty?'* verse 30; *'thirty?'* verse 31; *'twenty?'* verse 32; *'ten?'* and chapter 18 ends with the Lord saying to Abraham; *'for the sake of ten, I will not destroy it.'* *When the Lord had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.'* Chapter 19 begins with just the two angels arriving at Sodom, Lot is sitting in the gateway to the city, and Lot, like Abraham recognising them as someone special, bowed down with his face to the ground. And we see him give the same greeting as Abraham gave; *'my lords.'* I am sure Lot knew what the people of Sodom were like and knew he had to get them into his home, out of harm's way. That really begs the question, what was Lot doing living in a place like Sodom? The fact that only two men, or angels, went to judge Sodom also raises the question, was the Lord one of the two? Verse 18 says that Lot said to them; *'No, my lords, please!'* had the third man / angel / Lord, gone to check out Gomorrah, that is a question we cannot answer. Finally the two men go in with Lot and accept his hospitality. Verses 4-6 see it all kicking off, with the words of the men of Sodom in verse 5 making a statement; *'Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.'* The problem we have is that verse 4 says that; *'all the men from every part of the city of Sodom – both young and old – surrounded the house.'* So where did Lot and his family fit in to all of this? When Lot's sons-in-law are told in verse 14; *'Hurry and get out of this place, because the Lord is about to destroy the city!'* *His sons-in-law thought he was joking.'* They paid the ultimate price, they stayed and we are told in verse 24, burning sulphur rained down on Sodom. The problem with the city, as we have just read, was that the men there believed that gang rape was acceptable. A few years ago there was a case in New Delhi, India where a young woman, travelling on a bus was raped by a gang, and the gang didn't believe they were in the wrong, they believed they had the right to abuse her, to rape her without fear of retribution. Because she fought back, they killed her. The bus driver said if she hadn't fought back they would have just let her go. Lot was obviously aware of the situation of living in Sodom and the way he offered his daughters for the men's pleasure wouldn't win him any brownie points with the Lord. Very sadly some men, even today, treat some women like toys, to be played with. What about Lot's wife, did she have feelings for the people of Sodom? We're not told, but the fact that she looked back after being warned not to, makes me wonder where she put her faith. I found this some years ago: What does it mean to be crucified with Christ? To be crucified with Christ means three things; 1. The man who is crucified is facing

only one direction, he is not looking back. 2. The man who is crucified has said goodbye to the world, he is not going back, and 3. The man who is crucified has no further plans of his own, he is totally in God's hands, whatever the situation he says, 'Yes Lord.' Paul, when writing to the Galatians puts it this way in 2:20; *'I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!'* Lot didn't have the same relationship with God as Abraham did. We need to have a relationship with Jesus in the way Paul did. We don't know how Abraham felt after Lot was rescued by the Lord, but we see that because Abraham pleaded or interceded with God for Lot, as we read at the beginning of our reading today, Lot's life was spared. It is possible that Abraham felt for Lot's wife being turned into a pillar of salt. Abraham could only do what he did and we can only do what we can do. Some people don't want to leave their old lives, their old friends, and doing the things that are familiar. We may pray for people to come into a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ but we cannot force people to believe. The last nine verses of Genesis 19 tell of another sad story. The two daughters of Lot being concerned that now their husbands were dead, that they may not have children, they decided between themselves to get their father, Lot, drunk and have intercourse with him. Both became pregnant, they both had sons but neither family's were to be like Abraham's, they would not receive God's blessing. The elder daughter's son was called Moab and you can read the end of the Moabites in Isaiah 15 & 16 and Jeremiah 48. The younger daughter's son was Ben-Ammi, the father of the Ammonites. Nehemiah 13 tells us; *'On that day the Book of Moses was read aloud in the hearing of the people and there it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into the assembly of God,'* I pray we live in accordance with God's will and know His blessing on our lives, and that we can recognise that our prayers will be answered if we walk in step with the Lord. Amen.

Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 and then let us share in the Lord's supper together.

What kind of love is this, that gave itself for me?

I am the guilty one, yet I go free.

What kind of love is this, a love I've never known;

I didn't even know His name— what kind of love is this?

What kind of man is this, that died in agony?

He who had done no wrong was crucified for me.

What kind of man is this, who laid aside His throne

That I may know the love of God— what kind of man is this?

By grace I have been saved; it is the gift of God.

He destined me to be His son, such is His love.

No eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard,

Nor has the heart of man conceived what kind of love is this.

Bryn & Sally Haworth.
Copyright © 1983 Signalgrade/
Kingsway's Thankyou Music.