

Discipled by Sin

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 03 August 2025

Preacher: Matthew Capone

[0 : 00] Good morning. My name is Matthew Capone and I'm one of the pastors here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church. It's my joy to bring God's word to you today.

A special welcome if you are new or visiting with us. We're glad that you're here. And we're glad that you're here not because we're trying to fill seats, but because we're following Jesus together as one community.

And as we follow Jesus together, we become convinced that there's no one so good, they don't need God's grace, and no one so bad that they can't have it. Which is why we come back week after week to hear what God has to say to us in his word.

This morning we're continuing our series in the book of Genesis, and specifically Genesis chapters 12 through 25, which tell the story of Abraham.

And we're doing that for two reasons. First, to prepare us to return to our series in the book of Romans, we're going to pick up probably in September in Romans chapter 4, and chapter 4 tells the story of Abraham.

[1 : 04] The second reason is it allows us to ask this question, what does it look like to follow God in faith? This morning we're going to come to one of the hardest passages in Genesis, if not the entire Bible, hard for its content, and I'll just be blunt and name it.

This is a story, a story of Lot that's about incest. And so we have to ask this question, how do Christians find themselves in such gross sin?

And I say Christians because in the New Testament, 2 Peter chapter 2 tells us, Lot was righteous. In fact, that's the words they use.

Peter says, righteous Lot. And so there's a warning story for us here. Our question is this, why, how did Lot's daughters fall so low?

Why did they do this? And how can we avoid the same? So with that, I invite you to turn with me to Genesis chapter 19. You can turn in your Bible.

[2 : 11] You can turn in your worship guide. You can turn on your phone. No matter where you go, remember that this is God's word. And God tells us that his word is more precious than gold, even the finest gold.

And it's sweeter than honey, even honey that comes straight from the honeycomb. So that's why we read now Genesis chapter 19, starting at verse 30. Now Lot went up out of Zoar and lived in the hills with his two daughters, for he was afraid to live in Zoar.

So he lived in a cave with his two daughters. And the firstborn said to the younger, our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come into us after the manner of all the earth.

Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him that we may preserve offspring from our father. So they made their father drink wine that night.

And the firstborn went in and lay with her father. He did not know when she lay down or when she arose. Verse 34.

[3 : 19] The next day the firstborn said to the younger, behold, I lay last night with my father. Let us make him drink wine tonight also. Then you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve offspring from our father.

So they made their father drink wine that night also. And the younger arose and lay with him. And he did not know when she lay down or when she arose.

Thus, both the daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father. The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab. He is the father of the Moabites to this day.

The younger also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ammai. He is the father of the Ammonites to this day. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word.

Our father in heaven, we do praise you and thank you again for your word that you've given us. To direct us and warn us and guide us and comfort us.

[4 : 23] Most of all, to show us Jesus. That we would follow him in faith and obedience. We ask that you would help us this morning as we look at this difficult passage.

For people who are pressed in on by the world, the flesh, and the devil. That in the midst of that, you would remind us of what's true. You'd remind us of yourself.

Remind us and show us the way to go. Most of all, we ask that you would make Jesus more and more beautiful to us. That we would see his glory and beauty and majesty and holiness.

His mercy, his grace, and his love. That we'd love him and follow him more and more. And we ask all of these things in his mighty name. Amen. In his book, *The Revenge of the Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell tells the story of a man named Philip S. Formes, who was convicted in 2019 of Medicare fraud.

Over 20 years, Philip had defrauded the Medicare and the Medicaid system of a total of 1.3 billion. That's billion with a B dollars.

[5 : 35] Now, by some accounts, Philip was a great guy. And so there were folks who came to his sentencing hearing to talk about what a great guy Philip was. And one of the men who came to testify was the rabbi that had been with Philip's family for many, many years.

And the rabbi says, look, the problems with Philip didn't start until he moved from Chicago to Miami. Really, this is a problem of location.

In Chicago, Philip was a great, great man. In Miami, he became a crook. And so you all need to take that into account as you sentence him.

The problem is environment. Now, there is some truth to that. Miami happens to be the headquarters by a large bit of Medicare and Medicaid fraud.

And the book goes into a variety of factors to explain that if you're in Miami, the odds of you participating in that are much higher. Gladwell goes on to say this. This is on page seven of your worship guide.

[6 : 41] Communities have their own stories, and those stories are contagious. Now, you might say, that's silly.

Philip did what he did. His environment had almost nothing to do with that. The reality is this. We are affected by the world around us more than we think.

We're affected by the world around us more than we think. In fact, a study came out a number of years ago that said this. If your friend gets divorced, you are 75% more likely to get divorced.

If a friend of a friend gets divorced, you are 33% more likely to get divorced. The study's subtitle is this.

Breaking up is hard to do unless everyone else is doing it. There's a phenomenon there called social contagion, which is simply saying behaviors and norms spread among communities.

[7 : 46] There's a sense in which sin is contagious. There's a sense in which righteousness is contagious. Now, that brings us back to our question, why did Lot's daughters do this?

Why did Lot's daughters decide it was a good idea to have incest with their father? And there are many reasons. One of them is this.

Lot's daughters had been disciplined by Sodom. Communities have their own stories and those stories are contagious.

And what is the story that Sodom is telling? You guys looked last week. The story of Sodom is a story of sexual sin. And so those things had become normalized, right?

Week by week, year by year, decade by decade, Lot's daughters had become desensitized. They lived in a world of sexual sin.

[8 : 50] Sexual sin seemed less and less scandalous. Of course, I don't say any of this to excuse anyone's behavior, right? Philip S. Formas is responsible for his \$1.3 billion of fraud.

Lot's daughters are responsible for what they did with their father. The point is this. The world and its values are always pressing in on us.

The world and its values are always pressing in on us. What was disgraceful 50 years ago is normal in 2025, often and sadly, even of Christians.

We have immodest celebrities, and so guess what? We have immodest Christians. We have a materialistic culture, and so guess what?

We have materialistic Christians. We have politicians who are crass and cynical, and so guess what? We have Christians who are crass and cynical.

[10:05] We have a world that takes marriage vows lightly, and so guess what? We have Christians that take marriage vows lightly.

The environment around us is always discipling us. The environment around us is always discipling us.

We are pulled along by the path of least resistance, changed little by little by osmosis. Is there anything I need to do to try to fix this?

No? Okay. We're going to continue. What do we do? All right, if we say they're disciplined by Sodom, that's the challenge, that's the problem, that's one of the answers to why Lot's daughters did this, many people are going to be tempted, right, to say, well, if Sodom is the problem, then getting away from Sodom must be the solution, right?

If the challenge is that the world around us is pressing in on us, then what should we do? Well, we have to create a holy huddle, right? We can circle our wagons and make sure the culture doesn't get to us.

[11:20] It's what I call the dandelion theory of Christianity. Why do I have dandelions in my yard? It's my neighbor's fault. If he didn't have dandelions, they wouldn't blow it.

My yard's perfect, except for those things outside, right? And we know that's not true. As I've told you many times, Alexander Solzhenitsyn said, the line between good and evil cuts through every human heart.

And so the holy huddle is tempting, not the solution. And we know it's not the solution because of what we've already read. John told us from John chapter 17, Jesus says, I want my disciples to be in the world, but not of the world.

So at first glance, what's intuitive is, okay, disciplined by Sodom, let's run away from Sodom.

Disciplined by the culture, let's circle the wagons. The problem is that Jesus says this, verse 14, you guys can go to page three of your worship guide.

I have given them your word and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. But verse 15, I do not ask them, ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.

[12:34] They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Okay, so part of the problem is Lot's daughters have been disciplined by Sodom. The solution, however, is not to hide from the world because Jesus tells us to be in it, but not of it.

So what are we supposed to do? We're supposed to be in it, but not of it. We don't want to be disciplined by the world. What's the answer? Thankfully, Jesus does not leave us to wonder that either.

Verse 17, he gives us the answer. Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth. How do we avoid being disciplined by the world?

We avoid it by being formed and shaped by God's word. How do we avoid being disciplined by the world?

We avoid it by being shaped and formed by God's word constantly over and over again. The problem is not just that Lot is in Sodom.

[13:41] The problem is that Lot is a lone ranger. Remember, he's separated from Abraham. He's been years away from anyone who could remind him of what the truth, the reality really is.

If communities tell stories stories, and those stories are contagious, the answer is not to run from the world. The answer is to be in the community that's telling the true story.

That's what we're doing this morning. We are here to be in the community that story is true and contagious as we're pressed in on by the story of the world.

Kids, I hope if you want to go to college, and you don't have to, that you go to the best college you can get into, the best college you can afford.

But, is there a church there? Is there a good church?

[15:00] Is there a church that's going to shape you and form you, right, as the world is pressing in on you? If there isn't, don't go. Don't go.

Right? Nothing else matters. Now, I know many of you are in the military. You don't have a choice about where you move, right? You are told, and if you don't go, you have the joy of being arrested and being put in prison.

Some of you, though, do have a choice. When you're thinking about moving to a new place, your first question is this.

Are there Christians there? Is there a community that is telling the truth? Is there a place where I can be shaped and formed?

I don't care how good the job offer is if you don't have that. Nothing else matters.

[16:11] Hebrews chapter 3, verse 13, says, exhort one another every day as long as it's called today that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

She's telling us this. Day by day, we're tempted. Should I just switch to this mic? Oh, I'm already on this mic. Oh, okay. It explains so much. Exhort one another as long as it's called today, right? Because the sin is deceitful, we need other people around us telling us over and over again what's true. The new members class, we talk about the importance of actually being here on Sunday morning, that we want our members to be here unless something providential is keeping them away.

And I say that not because we're legalists, not because I'm a pastor and that's what I'm supposed to tell you. I say that because the world, the flesh, and the devil press in on you every week.

And you need to be reminded and shaped and formed every week by a different story. And remember, it's not just the world and the devil, it's also the flesh.

[17:26] Some people will say, oh, well, you know, I've been a Christian a long time, I'm not going to lose the plot, you know, and really what they mean by that is I'm not going to commit adultery or murder anyone. You know, I'm not at risk of that if I don't go to church.

What about your greed? What about your cynicism? What about Jesus being more precious than anything else?

What about a tender heart? Exhort one another every day, as long as it is called today, that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Why did Lot's daughters do this? They did it because they were disciplined by Sodom. That wasn't the only reason though. It's not just that they're disciplined by Sodom, they were also disciplined by Lot. There's an old cliché in parenting that says that values are more caught than taught. God. It's a way of saying your kids care a lot more about what you do than what you say.

[18:41] Lot's daughters very well may have been taught about the one true God. But what was it that Lot's daughters caught?

What Lot's daughters caught is that none of that matters when the going gets tough. What they caught is that when you're in a bind, you can throw everything God has said out the window.

And you know that if you were here with us last week, chapter 19 at the beginning, what happens? Lot has these visitors who come to him, they're threatening violence to Lot and his guests, and he says, Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man.

Let me bring them out to you and do to them as you please. What did Lot's daughters catch? When problems arise, it's totally fine to use your family members sexually.

That's what they caught. Doesn't matter what Lot had taught them, that's what he showed them.

When you are up against the wall, God's law can go out the window. And so there's this rich irony, this tragic irony here.

[20:00] The beginning of chapter 19, Lot offers his daughters up. The end of chapter 19, Lot's daughters offer him up.

Lot's pragmatism, his fear, his selfishness come back. They boomerang onto his own head. What he thought was the smart move, comes back to catch him.

Years ago, I was a deacon at another church in another part of the country, another time, and we had this joint meeting between the elders and the deacons because there was an ugly divorce that was happening in the church.

And it was sort of this he said, she said situation. The wife said the husband was terrible, and the husband said the wife was terrible. And the senior pastor sat down with all of us, and he said, look, we really don't know the truth here.

We don't know who's telling us what's right. And then he said something I'll never forget. He said, the only people who know the truth are the kids.

[21:12] brothers and sisters, our children always know.

You can fool many people. You cannot fool your kids. The reason is this. They see you behind closed doors.

They see you at your best. They see you at your worst. They know what you really care about. They know what makes you angry.

They know what makes you happy. They know what you're willing to sacrifice for. They know what you're willing to spend your money on and what you're not willing to spend your money on.

They know when you love comfort and money and respect and convenience and honor and power more than God. the children always know.

[22 : 18] One of the most painful parts of parenting is seeing your own sins reflected back to you and your kids. The point here is this.

Your children need your godliness more than anything else. your children need your godliness more than anything else.

They need it more than your money. They need it more than your success. They need it more than peak experiences and great vacations. They need it more than being on every sports team.

I'm not saying those things are bad. I'm not saying they don't matter. I'm saying they're secondary. Lot's daughters were not just disciplined by Sodom.

They were disciplined by Lot. The children always know. Proverbs chapter 15 verse 17 tells us better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a fattened ox and hatred with it.

[23 : 37] Do you want your children to be blessed? You need to do two things.

More than anything else, you need to love God and love your spouse. Other things matter.

They don't matter as much. If you want your children to be blessed, love God and love your spouse. Children always know.

Remember we're asking this question about why Lot's daughters did this. We saw they've been disciplined by Sodom. They've also been disciplined by Lot. There's a third reason that they do it and that's this.

They have no future. They do it because they're desperate. Look at me at verse 31. The firstborn said to the younger, our father is old and there is not a man on earth to come into us after the manner of all the earth.

[24 : 49] In other words, if we don't do this, there's no future. there's no other option for us to have children. Same thing in verse 34.

Let us make him drink wine tonight also that you may go in and lie with him that we may preserve offspring from our father. We can throw Lot's daughters under the bus all day and we should, right? What they do here is wicked and we can also understand, right? This is in the ancient Near East. What's more important than having a future? What's more important than the next generation? And where has Lot left his daughters? He's left them with no other option. Why? Because Lot loved the world and the things of the world.

Why are they even in a cave? Verse 30. Because they are in this city, Zoar, and that city is so dangerous that they fled. We might say, wow, how the mighty have fallen, right?

[26 : 06] Chapter 13, Lot is given this choice to choose land and he chooses the land that is most likely to give him the good life, the land that's right next to Sodom. In the next chapter, chapter 14, we find he's not just next to Sodom, he's moved into Sodom because Lot wants the good life more than anything else.

Remember 13, he looks and he sees how great this land is. And so we're meant to look here and see the contrast. Lot chose the very best land.

And where does he end up? Hiding in a cave. Brothers and sisters, brothers, the point is this, when we choose the good life over God, it always ends in a cave.

It may not be a literal cave, maybe you'll die surrounded by money, but it will be a spiritual cave, it will be an emotional cave.

You will find that everything you chased at the end tastes bitter. There's a quote in your worship guide, again on page seven, attributed to Sophocles.

[27 : 26] He says this, one must wait until the evening to see how splendid the day has been. I'm sure there were times in Lot's afternoons that were really great.

I'm sure that Lot went to some fantastic restaurants in Sodom. I'm sure that Lot went to some great parties.

I'm sure he went to some fantastic concerts. There were moments when Sodom made total sense, right? but in the end, in the evening, it no longer made sense.

As I've told you all before, sin is a player. Sin can arouse, it can entice, it cannot satisfy, it will not fulfill.

fail. It's easy in the middle of our lives to be fooled, but as we get near the end, as we get older and older, it becomes clearer and clearer.

[28 : 40] I was up in Denver last Saturday in a quirky used bookstore, and I came across this poem, part of which I put on the back of your worship guide. And yes, Charles Bukowski is a weird dude, but this poem is about aging.

And how when we make choices, we make the wrong choices, it does not end well in the final chapter. Age is the total of our doing.

They have aged badly because they have lived out of focus. They have refused to see. Why is Lot here in a cave being raped by his daughters?

Because Lot lived out of focus, and he refused to see. And it was good for a time, it's not good forever.

Brothers and sisters, I'm really saying one thing to you this morning. I am begging you to live in focus. I am begging you to see.

[29 : 54] I am pleading with you to put first things first. Not just because that's what brings honor and glory to God, but it is because it is what is good for you.

Remember in Romans, we've talked about this, it's in God's glory that we discover our good. Abraham was willing to make sacrifices. He gave up the good life at various points to honor and please God.

Which has the better ending, Abraham's story or lots? Lots every time. Christian, live in focus.

Do not refuse to see. Live in focus knowing what matters more than anything else.

live in focus and know that it really is at the end of the day in God's glory that we discover our good.

You may not believe it now, you may not see it now, trust me.

[31 : 02] Even more than that, trust God's word. Remember that one must wait until the evening to see how splendid the day has been.

these are heavy things that we've talked about. I told you it was a heavy passage and it's heavy less because of the content and more because of the warning. So what do we do with all of these things?

The reason that fleeing from Sodom is not the solution is because Lot's problems started before Sodom. Lot's problem is not fundamentally Sodom.

Lot's problem is the heart that was attracted to Sodom. Lot's problem was, remember chapter 13, that his eyes saw what was good.

His problem was that he was out of focus. He loved the good life and chose that over loving God.

[32 : 09] And so when we talk about being sanctified by God's word, being part of a counterculture, participating in a community that tells the truth and that is contagious, we are not doing it for its own sake, that we would merely or simply grow in knowledge.

No, the goal is that unlike Lot, we would love what is good. That our eyes would not be captured by the land of Sodom and seeing what's good and beautiful about that, but our eyes would be captured by God and his kingdom.

We're already saying it. Hast thou heard him, seen him, known him? Is not thine a captured heart?

What can strip the seeming beauty from the idols of the earth?

Not a sense of right or duty, but the sight of peerless worth. God is to see Jesus as more beautiful than anything else.

The problem was not that Sodom was fertile. The problem was that that was what Lot thought was the greatest good.

[33 : 29] And the beauty of Jesus is this. Jesus gives what the world only offers. The world offers Sodom but gives you a cave.

joy. It's Jesus who actually gives the forgiveness and restoration that leads to real joy.

It's Jesus who gives real safety and security. The safety and security that can't be taken away when the stock market crashes. It's Jesus that gives humility and repentance.

The humility and repentance that actually allows for real deep connection. The connection that we long for. It's Jesus who gives us real meaning and purpose in our work.

Now as I mentioned at the beginning Lot's still a Christian. Lot focused on wealth and comfort and ease and somehow in the midst of that Lot is still a part of God's people.

[34 : 41] So passages like this give me a lot of hope. If Lot is going to be in heaven, man, I think there's some hope for me. Right?

I think there's some hope for us. In fact, you're going to see Lot in heaven if you go there. Man, but it could have ended differently. Right?

Lot's story did not have to finish in a cave. May it end differently for us. May we see Jesus and his kingdom as more beautiful than anything else.

May we live in focus and not refuse to see. And we praise God because in the midst of that, his mercy is more.

Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we do praise you and thank you for your word as it encourages us and challenges us. We ask that you would be at work in our hearts and our minds, that you would help us to live in focus, that we would see Jesus as more beautiful than anything else, that we would choose him over anything this world tries to offer us.

[35 : 59] We thank you that he is beautiful, beautiful because of his mercy and his grace and his love to us, and we ask these things in his mighty name, amen.