

Bible Study #9
Community Lutheran Church
4/22/2020

1. Genesis 19
 - a. Story of contrasts from Genesis 18
 - i. Hospitality offered and Hospitality denied
 - b. **The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. "My lords," he said, "please turn aside to your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning." "No," they answered, "we will spend the night in the square." 19:1-2**
 - i. Lot extends hospitality.
 1. In the ancient middle east, hospitality was not merely a question of good manners, but a moral institution which grew out of the harsh desert and nomadic existence led by the people of Israel. The biblical customs of welcoming the weary traveler and of receiving the stranger in one's midst was the matrix out of which hospitality and all its tributary aspects developed into a highly esteemed virtue in Jewish tradition. Biblical law specifically sanctified hospitality toward the other ("stranger") who was to be made particularly welcome **"for you were strangers in a strange land"**. Foreign travelers, although not protected by law, could count on the custom of hospitality.
 2. It was a major breach of civility to not offer hospitality and if a guest was in your home, you offered protection to them as well.
 - ii. They decline.
 - iii. Angels could be also be defined as human messengers
 - iv. Is this 2 of the 3 people who visited Abraham in Genesis 18?
 - c. Lot insists...
 - i. **But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate. Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house. They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them." 19:3-5**
 - ii. Well that escalated quickly...
 - iii. This is about power over people and the breaking of the hospitality code.
 - d. The idea of caring for the stranger is so strong that Lot proposes something horrible...
 - i. **Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him and said, "No, my friends. Don't do this wicked thing. Look, I have two daughters**

who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don't do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof." 19:6-8

- ii. Take my daughters instead because caring for the stranger is almost a sacred duty.
- iii. It was a horrible thought that he proposes this but he is between a rock and a hard place.
- e. The crowd doesn't like this proposal at all
 - i. **"Get out of our way," they replied. And they said, "This fellow came here as an alien, and now he wants to play the judge! We'll treat you worse than them." They kept bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door. 19:9**
 - ii. Lot has no credibility because he is an outsider too. This shows you why God was not pleased with Sodom and Gomorrah.
- f. OK. Take breath and let's take a look at what is really going on.
 - i. This story is a breach of hospitality (sin).
 - ii. This story is about gang rape/ sexual assault (sin).
- g. Sexual assault is a form of sexualized violence, that is, violence enacted in a sexual way. Like many other crimes, sexual assault is about power and control. Sexual assault happens because perpetrators put their desires of power over the survivor's agency to consent.
 - i. The church is against sexual assault/violence of any kind.
 - ii. Somehow this became a proof-text against homosexuality.
 - 1. This is non-sensical. By subscribing to that interpretation you would also have to approve of the gang rape of Lot's daughters as an acceptable outcome.
 - 2. It doesn't matter who the victim is... gang rape is bad.
 - 3. The residents of Sodom were attempting exercise power over and humiliate the outsiders. This wasn't about sex other than to use it in a violent fashion.
 - iii. Some of have called homosexuality "the sin of Sodom."
 - 1. They would be wrong.
 - 2. The Bible actually articulates the "the sin of Sodom."
 - a. **" 'Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen.'" Ezekiel 16:49-50**
 - b. They exploited others... especially the poor and the needy... the stranger looking for a safe place to spend the night.
- h. The "guests" take matters into their own hands...
 - i. **But the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door. Then they struck the men who were at the door of the**

house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door. 19:10

- ii. Definitely men with divine power... or angels.
- i. Judgment is coming...
 - i. **The two men said to Lot, “Do you have anyone else here—sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here, because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the Lord against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it.” 19:12-13**
 - ii. I guess God didn’t find 10 righteous people in the city (see Genesis 18:32)
- j. Lot attempts to save his extended family
 - i. **So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were pledged to marry his daughters. He said, “Hurry and get out of this place, because the Lord is about to destroy the city!” But his sons-in-law thought he was joking. 19:14**
 - 1. Not so hard to believe. Some people think the pandemic is a hoax or not as serious as the mainstream medical community is tell us.
- k. Time to go...
 - i. **With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, “Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished.” When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the Lord was merciful to them. As soon as they had brought them out, one of them said, “Flee for your lives! Don’t look back, and don’t stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!” 19:16-17**
 - 1. So much to digest... they hesitated
 - 2. Some of the hesitation might also be that the son in-laws aren’t going along.
 - 3. Don’t we hesitate sometimes?
- l. Lot didn’t have time to pack his camping gear and asks to go to a small town instead (Zoar means small)
 - i. **But Lot said to them, “No, my lords, please! Your servant has found favor in your eyes, and you have shown great kindness to me in sparing my life. But I can’t flee to the mountains; this disaster will overtake me, and I’ll die. Look, here is a town near enough to run to, and it is small. Let me flee to it—it is very small, isn’t it? Then my life will be spared.” He said to him, “Very well, I will grant this request too; I will not overthrow the town you speak of. But flee there quickly, because I cannot do anything until you reach it.” (That is why the town was called Zoar.) 19:18-22**
- m. Lot’s wife has second thoughts...
 - i. **By the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen over the land. Then the Lord rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the**

Lord out of the heavens. Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, including all those living in the cities—and also the vegetation in the land. But Lot’s wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

19:23-26

1. Jewish commentary on Lot’s wife from the Midrash...
 - a. **This woman’s sorry end teaches of her life: even though she was rescued from the upheaval of Sodom, she was stricken together with the other inhabitants of the city, from which the Rabbis conclude that her actions, as well, were no different from those of the rest of Sodom’s populace. Jealous of others, she offered no hospitality to guests. The angels did not initially want to be her guests, but rather those of her husband Lot, since he was more righteous (*Num. Rabbah* 10:5); she even tried to bar their entry to the house. Lot’s wife divided their house into two parts and told her husband: “If you want to receive them, do so in your part.”**
 - b. Jewish scholars love to fill in the blanks!
- n. The end of the story...
 - i. **Early the next morning Abraham got up and returned to the place where he had stood before the Lord. He looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, toward all the land of the plain, and he saw dense smoke rising from the land, like smoke from a furnace. So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived. 19:27-29**
 1. God remembered Abraham and saved Lot.