

Sermon Notes

Abraham: Culture Wars – Genesis 13, 19, 18
The National Presbyterian Church, August 17, 2014
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Genesis 13 – The Defeat and Saving of Sodom

- (1) Lot, Abraham's nephew, moves to the city of Sodom.
- (2) The king of Sodom is defeated by rival King Chederolamer;
- (3) The inhabitants of Sodom, including Abraham's nephew Lot are captured;
- (4) Abraham defeats King Chederolamer by stealth
- (5) rescues Lot and (6) refuses a reward from the King of Sodom

Genesis 19 – The Sin and Judgment of Sodom

- (1) Two men visit Abraham's nephew, Lot, in his adopted town of Sodom;
- (2) Lot is like his uncle Abraham: he shows hospitality to these strangers unaware that they are angels.
- (3) The men of Sodom in an enormous breach of hospitality, turn into a threatening mob, bullying Lot, wanting to gang rape the seemingly defenceless guests in Lot's house.
- (4) Lot is by no means untouched by the culture of Sodom. He is scared and descends to their moral level: in a terrible act he offers his daughters to the mob. (Note the parallel in Judges 19:22-25).
- (5) The two men/angels protect and rescue Lot as well as
- (6) those of his extended family who wish to be rescued (not all do; they like the Culture of Sodom and simply do not believe that there will be any accountability for their actions!).
- (7) and bring judgment on the city for their wickedness.

Ezekiel 16:49-50, 58: "*The sin of Sodom was pride, excess food, prosperous ease, did not aid the poor and needy, haughty, abominable things/lewdness.*"
Jude 7 *Sodom and Gomorrah indulged in sexual immorality and pursued "other flesh."*

Genesis 18 – The Prayer of Abraham for Sodom

- (1) Abraham knows he is accountable to God, and that Sodom deserves God's judgment.
- (2) But Abraham is scared that God's judgment may not be absolutely fair, and may not be accompanied by mercy.
 - a. Abraham takes God on like the Psalmists (see Ps.22)! Challenging God -- "*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*" (18:25)

- b. Abraham prays to God five times,
 - out of concern that no innocent person is judged unfairly;
 - and with the hope that even the wicked might be saved from judgment by the presence of a handful (50, 45, 30, 20, 10) of innocent/righteous people.

(4) Abraham's prayer embodies

- Jesus' teaching that we should be really slow to want others to be judged. See his parable of the wheat and the weeds in Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
- The Christian hope that the presence of even one innocent person (Jesus-the-truly-innocent-one), can save many ("*the grace of the one man Jesus Christ has abounded for the many*") Romans 5:15)
- The Love of God which sends Jesus into the world "*not to condemn the world but that the world might be saved*" (John 3:16-17) through Christ's death, "*while we were yet sinners.*" (Romans 5:8)

Presbyterian Church (USA) Constitution: Confession of 1967

Man's perennial confusion about the meaning of sex has been aggravated in our day

- (1) by the availability of new means for birth control and the treatment of infection,
- (2) by the pressures of urbanization,
- (3) by the exploitation of sexual symbols in mass communication,
- (4) and by world overpopulation.

The church, as the household of God, is called to lead people out of this alienation into the responsible freedom of the new life in Christ.

Reconciled to God,

- (1) each person has joy in and respect for his own humanity and that of other persons;
- (2) a man and woman are enabled to marry, to commit themselves to a mutually shared life, and to respond to each other in sensitive and lifelong concern;
- (3) parents receive the grace to care for children in love and to nurture their individuality.

The church comes under the judgment of God and invites rejection

- (1) when it fails to lead men and women into the full meaning of life together,
- (2) or withholds the compassion of Christ from those caught in the moral confusion of our time."