**DO NOT PITCH YOUR TENT TOWARD SODOM!**

This is the fourth recent lesson from sermon notes that David Riggs posted many years ago. Jesse, Dan, Kevin, and I have been encouraged by David’s notes. The reason I try to post many of my sermon notes is because of the encouragement of David. He told me that if I posted them, then anyone who was interested could put them to good use. Many from different places have let me know they were using my sermon outlines. I encourage all our preachers here to post their sermon notes and powerpoint files.

I have adapted portions of a sermon that David Riggs preached called “**Don’t Pitch Your Tent Toward Sodom**”. David preached this in when Beth and I first visited in Oak Ridge in November of 1990. It was very a timely lesson as we had been made to feel very guilty by brethren in New York who saw us as abandoning the Lord’s work there. However, after much prayer and thought we wanted to find a better place to raise our family. Daniel was 9 months old when we moved to Tennessee. Now when we go back to visit New York, we do not regret our decision. We still try to encourage the brethren there at every opportunity. However we made a choice and the Lord gave us the freedom to choose to live in another place.

**INTRODUCTION – Genesis 13:12**

KJV "Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom."

NKJV “Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom”.

ESV “Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom.”

**Lot’s Choice:**

* Lot chose what was good for his livestock rather than what was good for his family (**Genesis 13:10-13**).
* The wickedness in Sodom was exceedingly great (**Genesis 19:2-5, 9-11**).
* God would have spared Sodom and Gomorrah if only 10 righteous people could have been found there (**Genesis 18:32**).
* Not only did Lot's family live in Sodom, but Sodom lived in Lot's family.

The influence of Sodom was devastating. Let us notice what the influence of Sodom did.

**THE INFLUENCE OF SODOM CAUSED:**

**(1) Respect for elders/parents to decline**

**(2) A reluctance to flee evil**

**(3) Fear to reign in the place of faith**

**(4) Earthly desires were stronger than the willingness to obey God**

**(5) Immorality to take root**

**READ GENESIS 19:12-30 – BROTHER DREW TO READ**

**(1) THE INFLUENCE OF SODOM CAUSED RESPECT FOR ELDERS/PARENTS TO DECLINE**

* It is evident that Lot’s sons-in-law did not him in too high a regard. They did not take the older and wiser Lot seriously (**Genesis 19:14**). If they would have had proper respect for Lot, they would not have been consumed in the fire and brimstone.
* When the world (i.e., Sodom) lives in one's heart today; respect for parents and the elderly declines. We are living in an evil time when much disrespect is shown toward parents and adults in general.

“In 1997 a poll of 504 principals attending the National Association Of School Principal's Convention in Orlando, Fla., 89% said they faced profane language and provocative insults toward teachers or other students on a regular basis (From USA Today, 3-11-97, p. 6).” Gordo can tell you that things have gotten much better in our schools since then, right? God demands respect for the elderly (**Leviticus 19:32, 1 Timothy 5:1-2**).

**(2) THE INFLUENCE OF SODOM CAUSED A RELUCTANCE TO FLEE EVIL**

* The angels had to literally lead Lot and his family by the hand out of Sodom (**Genesis 19:15-16**).
* This wicked place had things that must have been tempting (**Jude 6-7**).
* You would think that Lot and his family would have been "long gone" before now. When the angel gave the commandment to depart, you would think they would have rejoiced and quickly left. Evidently, there were things in Sodom that hindered them. Note: the term “sodomy” at one time a crime in the United States, comes from the wickedness of this city of Sodom.
* Today, Christians are commanded to flee sexual immorality (**1 Corinthians 6:18**). Not only does one face the danger of being infected by some dreadful disease when he commits fornication, but he sins against Almighty God.
* When Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph, he responded by saying, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (**Genesis 39:9**). God, Himself makes the rules, and we are exceedingly wise when we abide by them.

**(3) THE INFLUENCE OF SODOM CAUSED FEAR TO REIGN IN THE PLACE OF FAITH**

* The angels told Lot and his family to escape to the mountains, but, incredibly, Lot was too afraid. He said, "I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die." (**Genesis 19:19**).
* Later, he became afraid to dwell in Zoar, and goes to the mountains (**Genesis 19:30**).
* The influences of the world encourage and breed fear. God does not give the spirit of fear to his people (**2 Timothy 1:7**).
* Fear resides with those who are habitually fearful. Let us not dwell on our fears, but wholly trust in the living God who replaces fear with power and love (**1 John 4:18**).

**(4) THE INFLUENCE OF SODOM CAUSED THE EARTHLY DESIRES TO BE STRONGER THAN THE WILLINGNESS TO OBEY GOD**

* The command was, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you..." (**Genesis 19:17**).
* Lot's wife probably didn't look back simply because of her curiosity. She had ties and interests in Sodom. Like the rich young ruler, she seemed reluctant to leave behind all her worldly possessions (**Luke 17:28-33**).
* When she disobeyed God, she was turned into a pillar of salt and died immediately (**Genesis 19:26**). God said, "Don't look back." God said to Adam and Eve: "Don't eat." (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:23-24). God said to Uzzah: "Don't touch." (Numbers 4:15; 2 Samuel 6:6-7). Jesus tells us “Don’t forget” or “Remember Lot‘s wife”.
* We like to think that we can disobey God and still get by with it. We can't. God is severe. He is to be feared and reverenced (**Hebrews 12:28-29**).

**(5) THE INFLUENCE OF SODOM CAUSED IMMORALITY TO TAKE ROOT**

* The influence of Sodom was still very much in the hearts of Lot's daughters, even though the city itself had been destroyed. No doubt, they, along with their father, had seen and heard the filthy conduct of the wicked, and its influence had rubbed off on them (**2 Peter 2:6-8**).
* Instead of committing adultery and incest with their father as recorded in Genesis 19:30-38, they could have gone back to be with Abraham and his household and there found men to marry. Sadly, they had been so influenced by Sodom that fornication and incest no longer seemed all that evil.
* In similar fashion, we cannot feed our mind on the garbage of this world without consequences.

"When one lies down with dogs, he will rise up with fleas." "In describing one of the new movies of the day, a critic wrote, 'The plot moves rapidly down the sewer.' He adds, 'It would not be so damaging to those who watch such trash if the mind could be equipped, like your kitchen sink, with a garbage disposal. Then, you could flush away all the filth and be done with it, but the mind does not work that way. It stores up impressions for a lifetime. The only way to protect the mind is to expose it to only the BEST!'" (From Bible Illustrator)

* If one chooses to do so today, there is a mountain of garbage he can focus his mind, not only by means of television and movies, but through books, magazines, and the Internet. Let us obey Jesus and think on holy, righteous, and spiritual things (**Philippians 4:8**).
* We need to remember our mind is part of our body and is to be kept holy and pure (**Romans 12:1-2**).

**CONCLUSIONS**

* Do not pitch your tent toward Sodom! Remember all the trials that Lot endured because he made that choice. Choose wisely where you live and the Christians present in that area.
* As a Christian, when you choose to be a part of a local church of Christ, make your choice based on God’s will;
  + A church where you and your family can grow in the Lord;
  + A church where you can be an active part of the work rather than a wall flower; and where you can be the most useful to the Lord (e.g., Brandon and Emily; they choose to worship with us and to develop new talents).
  + That type of attitude helps a family grow stronger in the Lord and the Lord’s church to grow stronger (**Ephesians 4:13-16, Colossians 2:19, 2 Peter 3:17-18**).
* We need to remember that we can choose to pitch our tent (and our hearts) toward Sodom (or the world), no matter where we live!
  + We must be careful not to let the world get into our hearts.
  + Rather, we must be living with the Lord in our hearts wherever we are!

***Are you a member of the Lord’s Saved Body today?*** If not, we encourage you to turn from your sins and be baptized to wash then away. Then you will be a child of God with Christ at your side as you make big decisions in your life.

***If you are a Christian who has been letting the world influence your heart away from God, why not change that now and repent?***

If we can help in any way, please come forward while we stand and sing!