

Introduction

In the news this week there was a group of Senators that expressed their opposition to the lifting of some of the post Macondo regulations. The Oil & Gas Journal said, *“Twenty-one US Senate Democrats and Independent Bernie Sanders (Vt.) expressed their opposition to what they said are Trump administration plans to roll back offshore blowout preventer (BOP) system and well control regulations imposed following the 2010 Macondo well’s destruction and subsequent massive crude oil spill.”*

In the oil and gas industry, of which I am a part of, we try to learn from the mistakes that have been made. After the Deepwater Horizon incident, which we call the Macondo, happened on April 20, 2010, the industry and regulatory bodies scrutinized over all the details of the event. From the regulatory side, lots of new regulations were put into place to try to prevent another similar incident. Most of the regulations focused on equipment, even though the mistakes made were primarily people mistakes. There were lots of bad decisions made that led to the disaster. Most disasters are a series of things that have been mishandled, rather than a single mistake. On the training side, lots of items added to the curriculum. Instructors used all of the things that went wrong or were handled incorrectly on the Macondo as examples and lessons to be learned.

In the Scriptures, Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:6 and 10:11 about Moses and the various consequences and judgments that happened to them as examples for us to learn from. He said that we were not to crave evil things like they craved. Then, he wrote that they were written for our instruction. Just like the oil and gas industry, we are to learn from the mistakes made and we are to use them in our instructions or teachings.

(1 Cor 10:6) “Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.”

(1 Cor 10:11) “Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.”

I love the word example in the Greek. The primary word for example is tupos, and this the word used in 1 Corinthians 10:6 and 11. Tupos has five primary meanings and our lesson today is not a word study of tupos. But, one of the uses is a statue or figure. The Romans would make statues of war heroes and famous Caesars. As people passed by them, they would look up to these statues or figures. They were examples for people to follow. On the negative side, they would crucify criminals and leave them up for people to see what will happen to wrongdoers. Jesus Christ was crucified between two criminals. Even though He was innocent, He suffered as a criminal, taking our sins to the cross for us. But, Jesus and these two criminals were put on public display as examples for people to learn from.

Examples do not have to be bad. Elders or pastors in the church are to be examples to the flock. In Peter’s letter, he addressed the pastors and told them to be examples to the flock. That is one of the primary ways to lead people is by our example. The Apostle Paul told people to follow his example. He told the Thessalonians that he had worked day and night and had not eaten anyone’s bread without paying for it. He did this so that he could be an example to the flock. These are positive examples that we are to follow. The word tupos comes from tupto, which means to strike or beat. One meaning is an impression made by a die that leaves an identical image.

(1 Pet 5:3) “nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples (tupos (Strong’s G5179) to the flock.

(2 Thess 3:7-9) “For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example (mimeomai – to mimic, Strong’s G3401), because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, {8} nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you; {9} not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model (tupos) for you, so that you would follow our example (mimeomai).”

In our text today, we have two examples. We have an example of two cities that became exceedingly wicked and the outcry of their sin became so bad that God sent two angels to destroy it. Like the Macondo, it was a fiery disaster that God wants to use as an example to learn from. One of the lessons to be learned is what happens to the wicked. In our text we also have a positive example to learn from. Last week, Abraham interceded for Sodom and Gomorrah, and in our text this week we see the results or fruit from his intercessions.

Two Examples To Learn From

1. The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:1-23)
2. The Answer To Abraham’s Prayers – The Angels Rescue Lot (Gen 19:24-29)

1. The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:1-23)

(Gen 19:1-3) “Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. {2} And he said, "Now behold, my lords, please turn aside into your servant's house, and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way." They said however, "No, but we shall spend the night in the square." {3} Yet he urged them strongly, so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he prepared a feast for them, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.”

The two men that Abraham had entertained are identified as angels in our passage today. They came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. The gates of cities are where the elders sat. We see in Proverbs 31 that the husband of the excellent wife is known in the gates where he sits with the elders. Any trials or legal proceedings would be held at the gates. In the book of Ruth, Boaz went up to the gate to redeem Ruth and take her as his wife. The gates would be closed in the evening to secure the city. So, these angels arrived just before sunset when the gates would be closed.

(Pro 31:23) “Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land.

(Ruth 4:1) “Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there, and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz spoke was passing by, so he said, "Turn aside, friend, sit down here." And he turned aside and sat down.”

Culturally, visitors were brought into private homes. It was considered shameful for visitors to have to sleep in the city square. So, Lot invites them to stay at his house. Like Abraham, he shows great hospitality. He honored the men by bowing down with his face to the ground. He

calls them lords. He humbly offers to wash their feet and provide a place for them to spend the night. He also prepared a feast for these strangers that he had never met. Lot is very hospitable. He also urged them strongly to stay at his house. The Hebrew word is patsar, which means to push or to press. Lot knew the wickedness of the culture that he was living in, and what would happen to these men if they stayed in the square. So, he pressed them and insisted that they spend the night at his home where they would be safe.

(Gen 19:4-11) “Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter; {5} and they called to Lot and said to him, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them.” {6} But Lot went out to them at the doorway, and shut the door behind him, {7} and said, “Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly. {8} “Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man; please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like; only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof.” {9} But they said, “Stand aside.” Furthermore, they said, “This one came in as an alien, and already he is acting like a judge; now we will treat you worse than them.” So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door. {10} But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. {11} They struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves trying to find the doorway.”

After they had eaten and were getting ready to retire for the night, all the men from the different parts of Sodom surrounded the house and tried to get Lot to bring the two angels out. The NASB and KJV both say “the people were from every quarter.” The NIV says “from every part of the city,” which I believe is more of the concept. I believe this is there to re-inforce the idea that the entire city, from one end to the other was full of sin.

My sister’s daughter, Annie, came to NM this past week. She went out to southwestern NM where they have an observatory for watching stars. It is one of the two darkest spots in America. There are no cities or towns close by with lights on at night, so it is an ideal place to watch the stars. They have a visitors’ center and telescopes that you can use to watch the stars. Sodom was not a place to watch the stars, but it was one of the two darkest places on the earth. The wickedness was in every part of the city.

As the men of the city became more aggressive, they tried to break the door. The two angels pulled Lot back in and shut the door behind him. Then, they struck the men outside the door with blindness, and they had a hard time trying to find the doorway. By this time, Lot obviously knew that these were angels with supernatural and miraculous powers.

(Gen 19:12-13) “Then the two men said to Lot, “Whom else have you here? A son-in-law, and your sons, and your daughters, and whomever you have in the city, bring them out of the place; {13} for we are about to destroy this place, because their outcry has become so great before the LORD that the LORD has sent us to destroy it.”

Then, the angels asked Lot if he had anyone else. Then, they told Lot their assignment. They had been sent by the Lord to destroy the city because of the outcry had become so great. Therefore, they were to go get anyone else that was part of Lot’s family and bring them out.

(Gen 19:14) “Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, and said, “Up, get out of this place, for the LORD will destroy the city.” But he appeared to his sons-in-law to be jesting.”

So, Lot went out and spoke to his two sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters. He told them to get up and to get out of this place. It was evening so they were probably in bed asleep, which is why he told them, “up.” But, they did not take Lot seriously; they thought he was just jesting.

In Matthew 2:13-14, after Jesus had been circumcised and dedicated at the temple, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “*Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him.*” Notice that Joseph’s response was quite different than the two son-in-laws. “*So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt.*”

In the book of Jonah, God sent him to Nineveh. God was going to bring a judgment against the city. When the people of Nineveh and the king heard Jonah’s prophetic warning, they fasted and repented. Therefore, God relented and did not destroy the city. (See Jonah 1:2, 3:5-10.)

When God gives us warnings, do we take them seriously? Do we heed the warnings, exhortations, and reproof from the Scriptures? Do we heed the warnings, exhortations, and reproof from our spouses? Do we heed the warnings and reproof from our pastors? Listen to what God said in Proverbs 1:23-25, “*Turn to my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you. {24} Because I called and you refused, I stretched out my hand and no one paid attention; {25} and you neglected all my counsel and did not want my reproof.*” These sons-in-laws neglected the warning that their father-in-law was giving them. They should have respected him, and his counsel. They paid the ultimate price for not heeding his counsel.

(Gen 19:15-16) “When morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, “Up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city.” {16} But he hesitated. So the men seized his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of his two daughters, for the compassion of the LORD was upon him; and they brought him out, and put him outside the city.”

When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to get up and take his wife and daughters, or they would be swept away in the punishment of the city. The word urge is *uts* (Strong’s H213), which means to hurry, make haste, or to press. They communicated that this was urgent and they needed to get moving quickly. Our text reads that Lot hesitated. We don’t know why he hesitated. He may have been a slow waker-upper. Some of us wake up bright-eyed and bushy-tailed in the early morning. Others are a little slower and might hesitate. It could be that he hesitated out of a reluctance to leave his home and everything he owned. We don’t know why he hesitated, but he did. Therefore, the angels seized his hand, and the hand of his wife, and the hands of his two daughters, and brought them out of the city. Notice the reason that they seized their hands and brought them out. The compassion of the Lord was upon Lot. God was bringing destruction to the city of Sodom and all of its inhabitants, but God, out of His compassion, was sparing Lot and his family.

In our lives, all of us are sinners and deserve to be judged and destroyed. Paul wrote in Romans 6:23 that the wages of sin is death. What you and I earn is not salvation, but death. Our sins have separated us from God. We can't earn our way to heaven with good works. God does not grade on a curve. But, God is a loving and compassionate God. John wrote that God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son to die for our sins. All of us are saved by the love and compassion that the Lord has on all of us. Some reject His love and will be destroyed in the judgment to come. Some receive His love and His provision for our sins and will be saved.

(Gen 19:17) "When they had brought them outside, one said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the valley; escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away."

After they had been brought outside the city, one of the angels told them to "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the valley; escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away." Again, there is an urgency. They are to run for their life and they need to get out of Dodge in a hurry or they will be destroyed.

(Gen 19:18-23) "But Lot said to them, "Oh no, my lords! {19} "Now behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have magnified your lovingkindness, which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, for the disaster will overtake me and I will die; {20} now behold, this town is near enough to flee to, and it is small. Please, let me escape there (is it not small?) that my life may be saved." {21} He said to him, "Behold, I grant you this request also, not to overthrow the town of which you have spoken. {22} "Hurry, escape there, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there." Therefore the name of the town was called Zoar. {23} The sun had risen over the earth when Lot came to Zoar."

Lot's response to them was, "Oh no, my lords!" Lot had chosen the valley land when Abram gave him a choice. This was fertile land. His herds were doing well. This was his home and his territory. Lot did not want to go to the mountains, and so he asked if he could stay in a small town renamed Zoar, which means small or insignificant. When the four kings of the north fought against the five kings of the south, the town was called Bela, which means to swallow up. (Gen 14:2) The angels granted him his request, and told him to hurry, and escape there. They said that they could not do anything until they arrive there safely. God's compassion and love was going to make sure that they were safe before He brought judgment on Sodom.

Now, we have covered the first part of our text today, the example of the destruction of Sodom. Now, I want us to turn to the book of Jude. Starting in verse seven we read, "*just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example (deigma, Strong's G1164 – specimen, thing shown) in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties.*" (Jude 1:7-8) Notice that Jude says that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them was an example for us to take note of. There is going to be a judgment on those that defile the flesh, reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. Sodom had gross immorality and were involved in homosexuality. Our culture today has gross immorality and is involved in homosexuality. It is not just homosexuality that our culture is involved in. Fornication, adultery, homosexuality, and pornography are rampant in our culture and in our cities. There is going to be

a fiery destruction in the day of judgment. The church needs to heed the warnings of the Scriptures. The world needs to heed the warnings of the Scriptures. We need to heed the warnings of the message given by the angels to Lot. Get up and leave the ways of the world behind, or we will be destroyed in the judgement to come.

Jude also tells us that they rejected authority. A few weeks ago we looked at the rescue of Lot. The four kings of the North came down and defeated the five kings of the South, which included Sodom and Gomorrah. Why did they come down and attack Sodom and Gomorrah? Because they rebelled against the king and his rule. (Gen 14:4) When Saul did not do what Samuel told him to do, he said to him, “For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry....” (1 Sam 15:23) God takes rebellion very seriously.

How is our culture? Are we a rebellious people? Do people follow the laws of the land? Do people follow the laws of the road and drive the speed limit? Do people follow the immigration laws. We have cities in America that have declared themselves sanctuary cities and are in direct rebellion to the laws of the land. We have cities that have stated that they will not cooperate with the federal agents. We are a rebellious people. It is our culture. Sodom and Gomorrah are an example to us of what happens when there is gross immorality and rebellion. There is an outcry against America just like the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah. Jude is telling us that we need to pay attention to the example of Sodom and Gomorrah or we will face a similar consequence. I would recommend that you take time to look at the rest of Jude. It is only one chapter. Jude gives us some very practical exhortations and applications.

2. **The Answer To Abraham’s Prayers – The Angels Rescue Lot** (Gen 19:24-29)

The second example we have is the example of answered prayer. God remembered Abraham’s prayers. Let’s read on.

(Gen 19:24-26a) “Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven, {25} and He overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. {26} But his wife, from behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt....”

God said He was going to judge and destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, and that is exactly what He did. The Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire out of heaven, and He overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. There was nothing left; everything was destroyed. God always does what He says He is going to do. Notice that Lot’s wife did not make it out alive. The angels had told them not to look back, but Lot’s wife looked back and became a pillar of salt. She was disobedient to the clear instructions of the angels. When God is rescuing us from the world and the coming destruction, we should not look back. We can’t have one foot in the church and one foot in the world. In 1 John 2:15 we are told not to love the world, or the things in the world. If we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us. I believe that Lot’s wife had a love of the world. In Matthew 6:24 Jesus said that we can’t serve two masters, for we will hate the one and love the other. He finished by saying you cannot serve God and wealth. We can’t look back at the world. We have to keep moving forward. We have to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. All those other necessities in life will be added to us. We have to keep our eyes on Jesus.

(Gen 19:26b-29) “Now Abraham arose early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood before the LORD; {28} and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the valley, and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land ascended like the smoke of a furnace. {29} Thus it came about, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot lived.”

Abraham arose early in the morning and went to the place that he had met with the Lord. I think that it was his normal place to meet with God. We need to have a time and place to meet with God. Abraham built altars everywhere he went. He had a place to worship and call upon the Lord. So, he arose early and went to that place and looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah. All the land of the valley was full of smoke.

The verse that I want to focus on is verse 29. *“Thus it came about, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot lived.”* God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow. Abraham had interceded for Lot in Genesis 18. He asked God if He was going to destroy the righteous with the wicked. He asked God if there were ten righteous people in the city not to destroy the city at all. God had agreed, and God remembered Abraham’s intercessions. The reason that Lot was spared was because Abraham had interceded.

I mentioned last week that we are sons of Abraham, according to Galatians 3:7. I said that Sodom and Gomorrah represent the world, which is full of sin. I believe that we are to be praying for our cities, and the inhabitants of those cities. God hears and remembers our prayers.

I want to go back to Jude, where he gives Sodom and Gomorrah as an example.

(Jude 1:20-23) “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, {21} keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. {22} And have mercy on some, who are doubting; {23} save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.”

Jude tells us to keep building ourselves up on our most holy faith. We get built up in our faith by staying in the word of God, praying, fasting, and fellowshiping with other believers. These disciplines are vitally important and necessary to keep building ourselves up in the faith. Jude tells us to keep praying in the Holy Spirit. The early church was devoted to prayer. Jesus said His house shall be called a house of prayer. We are to keep praying individually and corporately. Jude then exhorts us to keep ourselves in the love of God. We can’t love the world and love God. We can’t serve two masters. We can’t be looking back at the world. We have to keep ourselves in the love of God. That’s not all.

Jude tells us to wait anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are to have mercy on those who are doubting, save others, snatching them out of the fire. Abraham snatched Lot out of the fire. He snatched him out by interceding for him. God remembered Abraham and had compassion on Lot. When Lot hesitated, the angels seized his hand, and the hands of his family members and brought them out. God was moved with compassion because Abraham had interceded on Lot’s behalf. We have to pray for the people in our neighborhoods and cities.

As we intercede and reach out to those in the world, we are to have the right attitude. Jude tells us to “have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.” God wants us to keep our faith holy. We are to intercede and reach out to those in the world, but we are not to participate in their deeds.

Conclusion

In 1 Corinthians, God gives us examples to learn from. God reminded us in the book of Jude about the example of Sodom and Gomorrah. We have two lessons to learn from these examples. First, the Lord is returning with His angels to bring judgment on the earth. It will be a fiery judgment, just as it was in Sodom and Gomorrah. He is going to be judging the gross immorality, rebellion, and other sins. God is a holy God, and He is going to judge all that is not holy. The only ones that will escape that judgment are those who have believed and received His compassion. In John 5:24, we are told that when we hear His word and believe, we have eternal life and do not come into judgment. We have passed out of death into life. When we receive Christ, our sins are forgiven and we are counted as righteous. It is by His mercy and compassion that we escape the coming judgment. We can't earn our way to heaven. It is receiving Christ and His mercy and forgiveness by faith that we escape the judgment to come.

(John 5:24) “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

Jude told us to keep building ourselves up on our most holy faith. We are to keep praying and interceding. There are “Lots” in our city to be saved. We need to have mercy on them, and snatch them from the fire. You may have loved ones in your family that have not received Christ. I am going to ask you to make a list of your family members and begin to intercede for them. You may have people that work with you or for you that do not know Christ. I am asking you to make a list and begin to intercede for them. In Colossians 4, Paul asked the church to devote themselves to prayer. He asked them to pray that God would open up a door for the word, so that they could speak forth the mystery of Christ – that is the gospel. He asked them to conduct themselves with wisdom and make the most of the opportunities. I will preach on this sometime, but not this morning. But, pray for open doors and opportunities. Pray for wisdom so that you can make the most of the opportunities.

(Col 4:2-6) “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; {3} praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; {4} that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. {5} Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. {6} Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”

Finally, you may be here today, and you have never received Christ into your life. If you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He came in the flesh and died for our sins, and was raised from the dead, you simply need to confess Him to be your Lord. If that is you, and you would like to receive Christ this morning, pray with me...

