

THE SURVIVOR

I believe that we are living in the last days and many people lack conviction. Much of Christianity has lost the power of influence on society. In my country, the Netherlands, pornography and homosexuality are rampant everywhere. Drugs are available at all the coffee bars and in some cities like Amsterdam they are distributed free of charge to cut down crime of drug addicts. It is very common in the churches for young men and women to live together for a few years before getting married and many never do get married. There is no voice against the sins of society. Christians are barely surviving and many churches are losing members by the day.

We want to learn from the Word of God about such a survivor who personally and privately was called a 'righteous man' but who was continuously seduced by the world and who had lost his convictions, his testimony and his influence on society. We want to learn some lessons from a biblical prototype of a surviving Christian. His name was LOT. In 2 Peter 2:6-9 we have a good overview of everything the Bible teaches about Lot.

“If He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if He rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men (for that righteous man living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deed he saw and heard) if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment.”

Actually Lot is also an object lesson, showing that God can deliver a righteous man from calamity. Note that it says Lot was a “righteous man”. He was a believer living in the midst of the worst kinds of sin and grossest perversions. Yet Lot remained a man of faith. He was not a man of great faith like his uncle Abraham but he was a man of faith nevertheless.

Almost everything we learn about Lot is negative. The only solid proof that he was a righteous man is that God ushered him out of Sodom before the fire and brimstone of divine judgment rained down upon that place. Some people believe that it is possible to be a Christian and to have no righteous appetites, have no fruits of the Spirit and have no genuine love for the things of God. This is a popular view in America and Europe today. People who

hold this view often point to Lot as an example of a carnal or worldly Christian.

But the Apostle Peter, writing under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, tells us that Lot a righteous man was distressed by the filthy lives of the lawless men around him and his soul was tormented by the sin in Sodom and Gomorrah. He hated sin and he longed for righteousness even though he was a spiritual weakling. Yet he failed miserably and is certainly no role model for us to follow. It has been suggested that what we observe in Lot is exactly what's wrong with many believers today.

What was wrong with Lot? Why was he so captivated by the world? As we look at his life a number of clues emerge. There are 4 reasons for the failures of Lot's life.

1. Lot walked by sight when he should have walked by faith.

Both Abraham and Lot traveled to Egypt when a famine hit Canaan. When Abraham and Lot left Egypt to return to Canaan both were wealthy men.

We read in Genesis 13: 5 that the land could not support both men with all their families, servants and cattle. Their servants were quarreling about pastureland. So Abraham told Lot that it would be better to separate. He said, "If you go to the right I'll go to the left and you go to left I'll go the right". Lot looked the land over from a high position above Jericho and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan River was well watered, like the garden of the Lord. So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan right down to the Dead Sea. So we note that Lot is walking by sight, not by faith. In the first place it was selfish for him to take first choice because Abraham was the elder.

It says in Genesis 13:12 that Lot pitched his tents near the city of Sodom. There is no suggestion in the Bible that he was attracted by the sins of Sodom. But Sodom promised a comfortable life for him. On the other hand God chose for Abraham and promised the land of Israel to him forever. Abraham was walking by faith and he was content with whatever God gave him.

2. The second reason for Lot's failure was that he compromised when his situation called for confrontation.

First he pitched his tents near Sodom but in the next chapter we see that Lot is actually living in the city of Sodom. There is no record that Lot ever spoke up against the sins of Sodom.

When God told Abraham in Genesis 18 that He is going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham pleaded with God to spare the city for the sake of the righteous. May be Abraham assumed that because Lot lived there, there must be other worshippers there also. In Abraham's famous prayer he secures the promise of God to spare the city if there were 50 righteous people.

He finally bargains with God and gets the number down to 10. Surely there were 10 worshippers of God. Lot's own household included hundreds of herdsmen, household staff, and administrators with all their families.

Whatever Lot was doing in Sodom it was certainly not evangelism! After living several years in Sodom he had not influenced a single convert to turn from the sin of Sodom to worship Jehovah. We may observe that surviving Christians also have little concern and enthusiasm for soul winning.

Lot was a hospitable man. When two men – angels sent by God – came to Sodom one evening they were given hospitality by Lot. Then the unbelievable happened. In Genesis 19:4-5 all the men of Sodom, young and old surrounded Lot's house and demanded Lot's visitors for a perverted sex party. They were apparently all homosexuals with such a horrible sexual appetite that whenever visitors came to town these men of Sodom saw them as prospects for the most depraved kind of group sex. There is no way for anyone from our culture to understand what happened next. He offered these evil men his own daughters instead of his guests. This is another classic example of how Lot always practiced compromise when the situation called for confrontation. Instead of straightforward rebuke to their wickedness Lot offered them an alternative that is every bit as evil. How could a man offer his daughters to an immoral mob?

When the mob was about to break down the door of the house the visiting angels were compelled to intervene, striking the men of Sodom with blindness. God delivered Lot from a mob of degenerate perverts and next He will deliver Lot from judgement He is about to rain down on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The angels told Lot that God is about to destroy the city and told him to take his family and hurry out of the city. Lot talked to his 2 son-in-laws but they thought he was joking! They obviously did not respect him as a man of faith.

3. The third reason for Lot's failure is that he delayed when he was told to depart.

This is truly amazing! The angels told him in Genesis 19:15 to hurry, take your wife and 2 daughters or you will swept away when the city is punished. He hesitated! He knew these men were angels sent by God. He knew they had supernatural powers. He should have obeyed them instantly and without delay. He procrastinated and stalled. Lot had spent most of his life spiritually paralyzed and now, when he had to move quickly he could not do it on his own. The angels physically pulled him out of the city. But Lot's wife continued to delay, she looked back and was destroyed.

4. The fourth reason for Lot's failure is that he talked when it was time to listen.

Even after the angels had delivered Lot and his 2 daughters out of the city, while the judgement of God was already beginning to rain down, he stopped to argue with the angels and secured yet another compromise! The angels told him to escape, don't look back, flee to the mountains, or you will be destroyed. But Lot said please let me run to the town. God is unleashing His judgment and Lot wants to strike a bargain! He still longs for the comforts of a town. Here we see the grace of God. God grants Lot permission to live in the town of Zoar.

So we see the Grace of God in the life of Lot. He was certainly not a mighty man of God. His name is not listed in Hebrews 11, the list of heroes of the faith. Yet he is in heaven. But empty handed. He influenced no one to become a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ not even his own sons-in-law.

How not to fail? The lessons we learn is that:

When life brings us to a crossroad we must walk by faith and not by sight.

When we are faced with evil we should never compromise.

When God says to move we should not delay.

When God speaks we should not argue but to trust and obey.

May God give us grace to be more than a survivor but to be filled with His Holy Spirit, filled with the life of Jesus Christ and allow Him to live and function His miraculous life in and through us.

Then we will experience victory and power, joy and peace, and introduce others to a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.