

Ruin of a Christian

by Glenn Meldrum

The ruin of a Christian is a process of compromise and backsliding that leads to spiritual defeat and separation from God, but it can be avoided by maintaining intimacy with God and being separate from the world.

Duration: 1:00:04

Scripture: Acts 6:5-6, Acts 7:51

Topics: "Ruin"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the decline in passion and intimacy with God that often occurs over time in the lives of Christians. He emphasizes the importance of maintaining a strong relationship with God and not allowing compromise to creep in. The speaker uses the example of Lot, who gradually lowered his standards and allowed worldly influences into his life. The sermon also highlights the need for Christians to bear good fruit in their lives and to be a genuine representation of Christianity to the world.

Transcript

For more messages by Glenn Meldrum and his Presence Ministries, go to www.ihpministry.com. You are welcome to make additional copies of this CD for free distribution. This morning I want to look at a message that I titled, The Ruin of a Christian. And I want to look at what the ruin of a Christian is, how a Christian is ruined, what brings about a ruin of a Christian.

And then, at the end of the message, I will look at the making of a Christian, or looking at a man of God, and what a man of God is, and some of the fruits of what that means. God has not called His Church to defeat, He's called His Church to triumph, to be victorious. But we have to understand that there are certain things that bring about defeat.

There's a pattern with it, there's something that comes about in our lives that brings about defeat, and the sooner we understand what that is, the sooner we'll be able to take care of it and put things in order so that defeat will not happen. God wants us to be victorious. The world is aching to see something real.

And I'm sorry to say that the world has not been curious about Christianity because it's not offered it the real thing. Not just that, it's now we have a plague within the Pentecostal charismatic churches of seeker-sensitivism that is an abomination to God, just compromising the Word of God, becoming as worldly as possible to supposedly let in more and more people. But though we fill churches, and if they're not truly converted, we damn them to hell.

I read a book recently that I had bought just because the title made me curious about it, and then I had a little bit of knowledge of the theologian that wrote it. It was John Warwick Montgomery, and the book was *Damned Through the Church*. It was interesting because he's a mainline denomination theologian, and his whole premise of the whole book was saying that the church today is damning multitudes that come through the doors of their church because of cowardly preachers that are too afraid to preach the truth of the gospel and to allow the truths of the gospel to penetrate the heart to bring about genuine and true repentance.

We have reduced repentance to something that is just raise your hand who wants to have this kind of faith, who wants to know this kind of Jesus. And we damn multitudes through that, where God has called us to be a voice crying in the wilderness, to preach the truth of the gospel. But I want to look at the ruin of a Christian.

The ruin of churches happens because of ruin of individuals, and individuals that make up churches, and the ruin of people who are the leaders within churches. We have to see that there's a pattern, there's something that happens. We're going to look at one individual man in the beginning of the message, and we'll look at another one that is a very successful, very triumphant Christian when we come to a close.

Turn with me to Genesis, the 13th chapter. While you're turning there, let me explain what's going on. We're going to look at a man named Lot, and we're going to see the compromise of Lot.

We're going to see what the compromise of Lot does. I pray that this message is very successful in revealing to your minds the reality of compromise. You see, we can so whitewash sin and make it not to be what it really is, that we make it not that bad, not that big a thing, that we don't understand how devastating it is and the repercussions of it.

And as we look at Lot, we will see this. But let me give you what's going on to the situation. We don't know how Lot came into the family of Abram, but Lot was a nephew of Abram, and Lot ended up coming under the covering of Abram.

And Abram was a man of God. Abram loved the Lord, walked in intimacy with this God that he knew, that God had brought him out of his own people, out of the Chaldean people and separated him unto himself. And Abram walked with God, and Lot walked with God while being under the roof of Abram.

And Lot's herds and Lot's possessions grew as God blessed Abram, so Lot was blessed as a result of it. Eventually, their possessions grew so much that Abram went to Lot and says, look it, the land can't sustain us anymore. We should not be divided as brethren, so let's go and separate lovingly.

You go into one part of the land, I'll go in the other one. That way the land can sustain our herd, and this way we'll be able to remain brethren and remain at peace with each other. Abram, who was the head of the household, and in that day and age, he was the head of the clan.

He was the one that controlled and ruled the whole household, and everybody, every servant, every family member that was under him. He had the right to say, this is what we're going to do, and everybody had to say, yes, that's the way it'll be. But Abram was a kind and tender man, and he went to Lot, and instead of himself saying, Lot, I will take this land, you will take that land, he goes to Lot and he says, Lot, you can choose.

I'll let you choose whatever you choose, then I'll go the opposite direction. What a kind and generous man that he was to allow his nephew to make that decision when Abram had the total right to be able to make that choice. And so he makes a choice, and this is what we're going to look at.

We're going to look at the choice of Lot. In Genesis 13, in the 10th verse, it says, Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt toward Zor. This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company. Abram lived in the land of Canaan while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom.

Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord. Now before I go on and bring some explanation with a little of that verse, I want to develop a particular point. When you go into ancient rabbinic writings, the ancient Jewish writings, you will find something within those writings that none of them ever thought that Lot was a righteous man.

They all thought that Lot was a very wicked man. But there's something interesting that comes out which is very strange and would not go in the train of normal Jewish thought, where you get into Peter and Peter brings out a statement from the revelation of God that I think is interesting. In 1 Peter 2, in verses 7 and 8, it says, And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked.

It's interesting that Peter referred to him as just. But you know, I want to bring out a point here, is that Lot was just only to a point. He only wanted so much of God in his life.

He only wanted so much of righteousness. He only wanted to walk so close to the Lord. And it says that his righteous soul was vexed from day to day with what went on.

But you know, we can be vexed to a point, but not vexed to a righteous point that really motivates us. Let me portray it in this way. We can go and turn on the television, watch the evening news.

We can see some horrendous crime go on and it can infuriate us. We look at that thing and it can just anger us with what we see going on. It can be righteous indignation in one sense that rises up, but is it enough that we go out and we strive to change our world? You see, Lot hated what went on in Sodom and Gomorrah.

He didn't like the sin and everything else that went on, but yet he still loved the glamour of Sodom and Gomorrah. He still loved being in the world, but he just didn't want to do all the bad stuff. He wanted all the benefits of being worldly, but didn't want the consequences of it.

You see, he was only righteous to a point. And as we get into his life, you will see that he came to a point to make some decisions, and there is heart decisions that reveal a depth of sin within this man, a worldliness that was so great that he devastated his family. There's a scripture that's disturbing.

It says in 2 Timothy 3, 5, that there are those who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. I believe this is where Lot was. Lot had a form of godliness.

Outward, he had the form of it. He looked like a pious man. He had some basic piety in his heart, but he was desirous of the world.

I want you to think of how Lot came to the decision of why he went to Sodom and Gomorrah. And let's look at this, because this becomes the foundation of the ruin of a Christian. What ended up happening is he went and he looked over the lands.

He went and stood on top of a big mountain, and he went and looked, and he saw, well, that's desert, and that's pretty barren over there, and ooh, that valley over there. Man, look at that. And he made a decision by the lust of his eyes, by the pride of his life.

He made a decision by what he saw with his eyes, and he says, look at that. Look at how green that land is. Look at how plush everything is.

Look at those cities that are prosperous. My herds and flocks were just, man, they would grow left and right down there, and I'd be so close to the marketplace. He made a good business decision.

But you know what he did not see, or what you don't see in the Scripture, is you don't find a man who got on his face before God. You find absent absolutely 100% in the life of Lot a man of intimacy, a man of desperate prayer, a man of desperate relationship with the living God. He does not get on his face and say, God, what would be your will? He just looks with his eyes, and he says, that's what I want, or this is what I want.

That's the way I want to go. And we can justify it in our own minds. We can justify our own worldliness by saying, well, I want to offer my kids something.

I want to give them a good future. I want to make sure they have college. I don't want them to grow up as I grew up with a little bit.

I want them to have much. We can justify our own worldliness through all kinds of ways, but we've got to get down to the reality of what it really is. William Law in his book, *A Devout and Holy Life*, made this statement.

He says, devotion is not prayer, but prayer is part of devotion. Devotion signifies a life given or devoted to God. The devout man, therefore, is one who lives no longer to his own will or to the way and spirit of the world, but solely to the will of God.

He considers God in everything, and he serves God in everything. He makes every aspect of his common life into an aspect of piety by doing everything in the name of God and to his glory. You see, God has called the true Christian to a place of such intimacy that every dimension of their lives, every decision of their lives, every heartbeat, in essence, is to come unto the Lordship of Christ.

But what we want to do so often as Christians, we want only dimensions. Well, Lord, I'll let you have this part of my life. I'll let you have that part of my life.

But then we move so much after what we see with our eyes. We go to the stores and we buy what we want just because we want them. We have a relative, Jess and I have a relative that they walk through the doors of Walmart and the employees say, hello, how are you? And they name them by name.

I mean, they live at that store. They love that store. Their house is so packed with stuff you can't imagine it.

And they do it just because it's an obsession. They go after everything they want with their eyes. They walk in this.

Wouldn't this be nice? Wouldn't that be nice? And soon everything is so cluttered. But we can say, well, I'm not like that. God has called us more than just the aspect of how much we necessarily spend.

He's called us what we do exactly with our life. Has my life totally come unto the Lordship of Christ? The real issue with Lot is who is in control. Who was going to lead and dictate the life of this man and ultimately this family? Who would make those choices? Would Lot be the man to make those choices or would God be the one to make the choices? And you find with Lot that God was not the one who made the choices.

Lot is the one who made the choices. That was the beginning of the downfall of Lot. Compromise, backslidings can happen over five years, ten years, twenty years.

It can be a slow process that can go on. Like divorce. No person gets married and a week later they get divorced.

If they love each other and they get divorced down the road, it is because they make choices to stop loving one another. They make choices to let sin enter in that builds walls. It is deliberate choices to not forgive and to allow ways and ideas and mannerisms that cause division to allow them to fester and grow and grow and grow.

It is choices of a husband and wife to allow that to happen. It never just happens. It is never that two people are not compatible.

It is always a situation that sin enters in and when sin enters in, compromise happens and Christians separate as a result because they allow those little foxes to come in and spoil a whole vineyard. When you look at Lot, you find a situation that is interesting. It says, first of all, that Lot moved outside of Sodom and Gomorrah.

When you read on a little bit more in his life, you see that Lot moved into Sodom and Gomorrah. And then when you read a little further, you find that Lot now sits at the gate of the city of Sodom and Gomorrah. And what that means for a man to sit at the gate of the city means that he became a ruler of the city.

I want you to see what went on here. His Lot went and first pitched outside. He did what his eyes wanted, what he wanted with his own heart, with his own desires.

He went after that. He pitched outside knowing that Sodom was a wicked city, knowing that it was a vile place and that God hated the sin of that city. But yet he went and justified it in his own mind.

Not that big a deal. Not that bad of an issue. Not that much trouble.

You know, well, maybe this is a blessing of God. I think many times what we call blessings of God may be curses of the devil because we don't sit down and look at its source and look at the fruit that it starts producing in our lives. Is what supposedly God has given, is it drawing me closer to Him? Or am I getting more worldly? Am I getting more arrogant? Am I getting more self-willed? Am I longing for God more than getting on my face more and more and more because I ache and I yearn for Him? Or am I getting further from Him? And my heart growing colder to the things of God.

What is the actual fruits of it? But you see, Lot could justify it all. He had good reason because he went after the lust of his eyes. It's an interesting thing on how the selfish are always trying to get God to agree with them.

It is so interesting how when we're selfish we want God to agree with us. We want somehow to get that little Jesus stamp of approval on our actions, on what we do. Oh Jesus, I know you agree with this.

It's not that bad of a thing. It's not that big of a deal. But you see, that's not what he wants.

What he wants more than anything is absolute 100% surrender. More than anything. And that's why it is so hard because surrender is a difficult thing to give.

We want control of our life. We want control of our wants, of our purchases, of everything. We want control of what we do.

And we don't really want to relinquish that to God because what if He tells me to do something that I necessarily don't want to do? Lot pitches outside of Sodom. It made perfect sense to move into Sodom. I mean, if he moved into Sodom, it would be so much easier to do business.

I mean, it would just be that much better. And so, well, I can still be good. I can still do right.

I can still work with God. But I'll just move into Sodom a little bit more. You know, it's just for business purposes.

I'm going to give my children a good education then. But you see, a little bit later, he's ruling Sodom. But you have to understand something here.

There's a difference between a man who goes into Sodom to win Sodom and a man who goes into Sodom to be won by Sodom. Lot was going to be won by Sodom because he had no ambition to win Sodom. He was not a man who was intimate with God and had the heart of God for a perishing world.

He was a man who had a heart for the world and wanted to be worldly, wanted worldliness, wanted that in his life, did not want a God that would lead him and guide him and direct him. He wanted to be directed by his own passions, his own desires. It's interesting what Paul Smith said.

Paul Smith says, lack of separation from the world always indicates a lack of separation unto Christ. Whenever we see worldliness in our life, it is always because we've not relinquished an area of our life to God. Worldliness is a sure sign of us not being in a spot with Jesus that we should be.

When we're seeking after the things of this world, when the passion of this world is what motivates us and drives us, it is a sure thing of a worldly heart, of a worldly spirit. God has given us things, whether homes or cars or whatever, and all they are is tools. It's all they are.

Do you know the problem we have with tools? We like setting them up on altars and making them items. That's what we like doing. He gave us tools.

Paul had the greatest understanding of this. He says, I've learned how to be a base. I've learned how to abound.

And he says, I don't care. I don't care if I have little. I don't care if I have a lot.

He says, I count it all dung compared to the greatness of the excellency of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. It does not matter if the things in the way of God, it's gone. I don't care if it's a big house.

I don't care if it's a car. I don't care what it is. It doesn't matter because all that matters is the excellency of knowing Christ Jesus.

Is it my sport? Is it my entertainment? It doesn't matter because my desire is to know Him and for Him to rule and reign in my life. But you see, so often when people look at the issue of holiness, they don't understand that holiness is an aspect of intimacy with God. Holiness is so often reduced to legalism.

And I have heard time and again where people say, well, preacher, you just preach legalism. No, I don't. You better listen to the preaching because you got to understand holiness is an absolute command of God.

God said without holiness, no one will ever see God. It is an absolute holiness does not come from the works of the law or the works of the flesh or a good deed because none are good. Holiness can only come from intimacy with the living God, with relationship, because you see how it works when we begin to look at Him.

We see the eyes that burn with fire. We see a God of holiness, a God of power, a God of goodness. We gaze upon Him and we are awestruck by Him and we begin to fall in love with Him.

Then we go and they say, God, anything, what do you want in my life? What do you want me to do? What's displeasing to you, God? What is pleasing, God? Holiness is not a burden to those in love. To those not in love, holiness is a tremendous burden because they say, well, it's robbing me of my fun. It's, it's, I don't know if I want to do that.

I don't know if I want to give those things up. I don't think that's really the way God does it. But it's just the justifications of men.

During Genesis 15 through 18, you have something happening. You have Abram drawing near to God. You have Abram having a new name that God gives him and calls him Abraham.

God makes covenant with Abraham. I'm not going to take time to get into the covenant, but you have to understand how phenomenal is the very aspect that God would give covenant, that God would enter into covenant, binding covenant with us. In essence, God signing a contract, a legal contract with us.

We don't understand how phenomenal it is. Here's the God who spoke everything into existence with a word. Power beyond what we can even fathom.

And then he condescends, comes down to us and makes covenant with us. That he says, if you will do this, I will do that. Commits himself to us.

That Abraham now becomes the friend of God. The total opposite is going on with Lot. Lot is becoming more worldly because through this time as Abram is drawing closer to God, it was the same time that Lot was moving into Sodom and was the same time that Lot became a ruler of Sodom, was the same time that Lot was destroying his own family.

I want to take a few minutes and I want to look at some of the low standards that Lot had. I'm just going to touch on a couple of them. Lot had an unbelievable amount of standards that are low.

But you know, it's really interesting. I want you to think back in time when you first became a Christian, when you first gave your heart to Jesus and the passion you had to walk near him, the passion you had to have your life free from worldliness and the ambitions of the things of this life. And when you first gave your heart to Jesus and it burned in your heart to know him and to walk with him.

And prayer was a joy and it wasn't a burden. But then as time goes on and life gets complicated and all this stuff starts happening and prayer is put aside and intimacy gets to be lost and Christianity is reduced to rituals and forms and things that we do rather than a relationship and how so much changes. Compromise doesn't happen overnight.

The things he started letting in his life did not happen overnight. It happened through little choices. A little bit at a time.

The little foxes coming in and taking a grape at a time. Just a little grape. It's not a big deal.

Not that much but a little bit here and a little bit there. What we wouldn't watch at one time on television. The violence and the sexual jokes and all the sex scenes and everything else.

What we wouldn't even tolerate, now we tolerate. What we wouldn't even allow to be entertainment in our life, now we make it to be the norm. And it's a process that goes on.

But look at how we justify each step of the compromise. Look at how we justify. We say, well, it's not that big a thing.

It's not that bad. Well, God understands. It's just one scene or it's just some different music, you know.

I don't have to listen to Christian music and one thing after another and how we justify it. Where at one time we knew we wouldn't. And it wasn't out of law.

It was out of relationship. It was out of desire of God. You see, low standards come in through time.

I believe when Lot walked with God, when he was with Abraham, there were high standards. Lot walked in a place of intimacy with God, at least to a point. But when he got away from his uncle's influence, then he started going downhill.

It says that God sent in two angels to get Lot and his family out of Sodom and Gomorrah. To rescue them because God was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. And so these two angels come into town and Lot, knowing it was a wicked town, compelled the men not to sleep the night in the town square, but to come into his home, into a place of safety, which these two angels did.

He did not know they were angels at that time. They come into his home and it says when it was dark that the men of the city gathered around the house and started beating on the door and says, open to us. Release these men that we might know them.

That was a very nice way of putting that it was homosexuals coming, beating on the house, saying let these men out that we might rape them. That's the reality of it. Now scripture will never change about homosexuality no matter what liberal churches will say, no matter what the media says, no matter what the ability of the media to try and manipulate us to call us homophobes.

It's not true. I'm not a homophobe. But I'm a man of God who says that sin is sin and homosexuality is absolute sin and will always be absolute sin before God, just as fornication is absolute sin, just as adultery is absolute sin, just as lying is absolute sin.

They are all just as damnable. But it was interesting when the men come around the house and they're beating on the door, it says that Lot opened the door, went out and closed the door behind him. And he did something that is very revealing.

And you know, we can read over this and have it not even faze us, but I want you to think about this for a minute. It says that he walked out there and the first thing that he said was, brothers. And this is very important.

This is very revealing about the mentality of Lot and what went on with Lot. First off, we have to see, according to the flesh, nobody in that city was brothers. None of the sodomites were brothers.

None of the people in that town were brothers or relation of any way, shape or form. He went into a town as an alien. They were not relatives.

So he wasn't calling them brothers on a standpoint of that. They were not believers. They did not serve the Lord God, not in any way, shape or form.

But he comes before them and he says, brothers. Let me put it to you like this. How many times have you gone to a funeral? And you know, the majority of times, at the majority of funerals, they lie through their teeth at the funerals.

I mean, this is what they do. I mean, for some reason, we have the idea that here can be a man who is abusive to his family and all kinds of things and he's dead. And the children go, oh, dad was so good.

No, he wasn't. He was abusive, drunkard. What are you doing saying that? We all want to make it all feel a little bit better.

And well, maybe he went to heaven before he did. And how often I've heard people come up with means to try to justify. Their relative lived in rebellion against God.

They died in rebellion against God. And we try to say, well, maybe just before he died, he might have said something. I believe that God showed me he went to heaven because we want to make it feel better.

The reality is, if your parent didn't walk with God, they're in hell. But man will try and coddle it and everything else. It becomes a slow compromise that we do to try and justify it.

It makes us feel a little better. You see, something happened with Lot as he had lost absolutes in his life. Do you know, I remember reading a while ago, one of Barnum's polls, and they were polling people on the aspect of absolutes.

And when they looked at the church, the church was almost equal with the world in the sense that there were no more absolutes. That everything had become relative. Situational ethics.

Everything became relative. Well, it's only from your viewpoint whether that's bad. Only from your viewpoint if homosexuality's wrong.

Well, it's only from your viewpoint if sleeping with somebody's wrong. You see, today, we don't look down upon it anymore that two people move in, not married with each other. Give it ten, fifteen, twenty years, and you'll see how acceptable, supposedly, homosexuality will become.

You haven't seen nothing yet. Because as we open Pandora's box, more and more of the filth will rise. More and more of it will come out.

More and more of it will be revealed. He called these people brothers because absolutes were lost. There was no more white and black.

It had become gray. I remember while I was pastoring in Detroit, I was driving on 96 heading west once. There was an intense storm in front of me, and it was pitch black.

But there was an interesting thing as I'm watching it, driving into it. All of a sudden, by the time I got into the storm, it wasn't black anymore. It was gray.

And the deeper I got into that storm, the grayer it became. And I felt like the Lord speaking to my heart, says, this is what compromise is. When we walk in holiness, we look back at it, and we see white and darkness.

We see a contrast. We see the God of creation. We see the devil.

We see the world. We see what worldliness is. We see what compromise is.

We understand it. But as we start to compromise, it gets all obscured. We don't see those fine lines anymore.

We don't see the differences. Now it gets gray because it's easier for us to deal with. My, how we can justify grace.

There's a man of God. His name was Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He died for his faith in World War II.

And he, in his book, Cost of Discipleship, brought up the situation of cheap people. Cheap grace. And how at that time, he was coming against the Lutheran church because of their cheap grace.

But today, America is filled with cheap grace. Our Pentecostal charismatic churches are filled, full, overflowing with cheap grace. The idea that we can do anything we want, and there's this big mushy God of grace that'll wash anything away.

And we are deceiving our own people by a perversion of grace. Grace is never for the justification of sin. Sin is always, absolutely, 100% wicked before God.

I don't care what it is. I don't care if it's a little lie or if it's murder. Jesus went so far to equate murder as hating a brother.

And he went so far to equate adultery as lusting after a person. Because Jesus went deeper than what the law went. Jesus went to the heart.

Because he was out after the character of the being, not just the external actions of the individual. Lot had a lot of these low standards. Paul Smith says, Israel power was effective as long as they maintained a wall of separation between themselves and the heathen tribes round about.

But the moment that barrier was removed, the people of Israel lost their power. Look at it in Scripture. When they were holy, the power of God was there.

When they were holy, God would be their defense and their buckler and their shield. When compromise came in, God allowed them to be taken in by the devil and allowed them to be mistreated and abused that they might come to genuine repentance. But you know, there's something else that happened here.

And this is interesting as well. You see, compromise always produces fear of man. You know, that's why we compromise, because we're afraid.

One of the reasons why we compromise, because we're afraid of what people will think. What will they think if I become a fanatic? Do you know what the definition of fanatic is? Anybody who loves Jesus more than you. Well, the reality is they love Jesus more than you.

They've given everything and you've not. And so it's easy to go and say, well, they're just a fanatic. I don't know if that's the way it should be.

Well, if you went and read the New Testament, if you read the Gospels the way that it is really there, took it verbatim of what he went and said, then you would see Jesus so phenomenally radical. And that's what Christianity is to be. And are we even close to living what the Gospel says, much less what the epistles say? If we could but live the Sermon on the Mount, I'll tell you what, we'd be changing our world.

Just the Sermon on the Mount, much less everything else. But think about the fear of man and how it produces compromise. You know how often we can be so ashamed of the Gospel when we go into the workplace? We're too afraid to speak.

What do they think of me? What if I lose the promotion? What if this happens? What if that happens? The fear of man manipulates us. We allow ourselves to be manipulated. Do you know how bizarre this is? I want you to think of how bizarre this is.

This is really strange. Here, Christians, true Christians, are the bearers of truth. But yet we allow the devil, who is the author of lies, to manipulate us and make us afraid of the truth, so we give in to the lie.

How bizarre, how absolutely bizarre that we would give in to the lie when we know we got the truth. We know what we're saying is true. We know it's the only hope.

But yet we're afraid, and so we keep it in because we're afraid of what people say. Why? Because pride is so deep-rooted in our characters. But I want you to think about this.

And here is an expression of the depth of compromise with Lot. And women, I want to ask you this question. Would you want Lot to be your daddy? Would you want Lot to be your daddy? In Genesis 19, verse 8, as the men of Sodom kept pushing upon Lot, Lot ends up saying this.

He says, Behold, now I have two daughters who have not known a man. Let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes. Now, it doesn't take much imagination to imagine what would go on if they would have taken him.

Now, is that a good daddy? I mean, is that a man you'd want to have as your father? He says, Well, here, take my daughters and rape them. Do all the perverted stuff you want with them, but don't touch these men. You see, Lot was a coward.

He was a coward. He did not have the guts to say, You will not touch my home. You will not touch these men.

He was a coward. He was too afraid to stand up. He was too afraid to be ridiculed.

He had a place of position among people he didn't want to be thought of to be bad. He was too afraid. He was a coward to walk the walk of a Christian.

He was a coward to be true and holy in the workplace and in each situation. But you know, the church has done the same thing. Instead of raising the standards and thus regaining the power of God, the policy of most churches has been to lower the standards and to increase their membership.

That's what goes on in the majority of large churches. Ninety-five percent of the people in large churches are all transfer growth. There are hardly any large churches that are soul-winning churches.

There's only a few of them. And the majority of the large churches have gone seeker-sensitive. They are too afraid to preach the gospel.

I have a videotape of Jim Cimbala speaking at a large minister's meeting. And in this message he was imploring the preachers to preach the truth. And he says, I have minister after minister after minister coming to me, weeping, because they are now so controlled by their people, because they've become big.

And they're afraid to preach the truth, but they know they need to do it. They know they're guilty before God, but the pressure of the people is so great, they can't do it anymore. And they weep, how do I do it? And he says, preach it.

If they leave, let them go. But you see, rarely is there a pastor that has that courage as the churches get larger. It makes for some real challenges.

God is calling us to raise the standards again, to get the power back, not to compromise and think that numbers means growth. If there's a church of ten people and they're all spiritually dead, and you have a church of 10,000 that are all spiritually dead, what's the difference between the two? The difference is the one of 10,000 just stinks worse. That's all it is, just stinks worse.

But you know what we do? We make our posts to children, that's success. But that's not necessarily what success is. The true criteria of success is the glory of God.

When God descends, the power of God descending. There are Pentecostal churches in this area, I know this for a fact, that will not allow any gifts of the Spirit anymore. They don't want the manifestation of the power anymore in their church because they don't want to offend anybody.

But you want to know what? Jesus offended. He said he came not to bring peace but a sore. He was an offense.

He says that he was a rock of stumbling, the rock of stumbling, that he was an offense to the religious people. If we want a gospel of no offense, it's never going to be the gospel of Jesus Christ because the gospel of Jesus Christ will always be an offense. Now let's take this a little bit further.

It's interesting when the time comes for them to flee Sodom. Morning comes and the angels come and say it's time to go. But you know, you would think that if you had a couple of angels come up to you and say,

look, we're going to destroy this city in a short bit.

Pack up and get out of here. You would think that that man, they would be in a panic. They would just grab a couple of things of bare necessities and be out of there.

But you know, there's this couple of little words that are so revealing about the heart and the reality of Lot. It says in Genesis 19 in the 16th verse, it says, when he hesitated. You see, God says, I'm going to destroy this town.

And they hesitate. Oh, well, I don't know. I like this town.

Oh, the worldliness. Oh, the glamour, the lights, the life. Oh, I like this stuff.

I like it. They didn't want to leave. And as you continue reading the verse, it says that the angels went and grabbed the hand of Lot and grabbed the hand of his wife and had to drag them out of the city, had to drag them out of the world.

They didn't want to get the world out of them. They wanted to be as worldly as they could be. I want to be worldly and go to heaven, God.

I'll tell you what, I don't want to take a chance that there can be such a thing. Not just that, as worldliness robs of the pearl of great price. It robs of the treasure, which is Jesus intimacy with the living God.

There is no greater privilege given to any human being than the gift of intimacy with the living God. Worldliness robs us of intimacy, robs us of the place of being able to draw near, robs us of the privilege of sitting at his feet as Mary sat at his feet and heard the voice of Jesus. The gift of God is robbed and people don't understand it.

We think that when we're calling for liberty, we don't understand when we call for liberty, all we're doing is crying for our own selfish desires and we miss the greatest treasure, which is Christ. He loved the world, but I want to bring out something here that's so important and I want to bring out a couple of points that I'm going to go backwards just a little bit. You have the situation of where Lot goes and he stands before the door and says, here, take my daughters due to them, but don't touch the men.

I believe that God has an order within the home that he has placed men in the place of authority. And according to what the man is, according to what the household will be. If you have a man of God, you'll have a house that is godly.

If you have a man of compromise, you will have repercussions of it. And we're going to look at the repercussions of a man of compromise. I want you to hear about this man, especially if you're, if you're compromising your Christianity, I want you to understand a little bit about this.

I preach just last Sunday. I was in Kentucky where I preach was at a place called pure life ministries. I had a pastor come up to me afterwards, a man in his later fifties, come up to me with tears in his eyes.

And he says, I never understood what compromise was. I didn't understand what I did to my children. All my children are in the world.

None of them are walking with God, my three girls. And it's because I lived a compromise life. And I thought I was going to give him something and they're all rushing to damnation.

They will not listen to me at all. We don't understand that when we compromise, we can damn our children. Let me give you an illustration here.

Here a lot goes and says, here, take my two daughters. The crowd would have taken their daughters. They would have raped them and perverted them, robbed them of their, of their virginity.

But what we do in our compromise is a slow motion taking of our children and say, here they are devil, take them, rape them, pervert them, get them off in the drugs. Cause all they see is hypocrisy in the home. All they see is compromise.

They see a nice worldly Christianity here and they, it makes them sick and they don't want that. Here devil take them. I'm across this country and I see people after people weeping over their children, weeping over their children after they grow up and they're gone astray.

And you look at their life and you say, you don't understand your children went astray because you live such a compromise Christian life. What your children need more than anything is a power of God. What they need more than anything is the glory of God to walk in the church and be spent by the power of God, not to have secret sensitive stuff or compromise or make it easy believism.

But they need to see the reality, the true thing, the living Christ living in the midst of his people, living in the midst of a home. They need to see that there is a God that is worth serving. And if I walk in compromise, I can just like Lot throw my children off to the devil.

Here devil rob them of their virginity, get them strung out on drugs, abuse them, go for it, go for it because I really don't care. I want to be a worldly man. I want to be a worldly woman.

Two angels dragged Lot out and his wife out. And the angels warned him, says, don't look back. The idea was not looking back in and of itself.

It was the aspect with longing desire. And it says that she turned back. She looked with longing desire.

And Jesus speaks of this. He says, remember Lot's wife. And then he says this immediately after.

He says, whoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it. And whoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. Remember Lot's wife.

Jesus said that to his saints. He says, remember Lot's wife. Remember Lot's wife.

You seek to save your life. You think that you're going to get something by being more worldly, by being more compromised, that a bigger house, a bigger this, a bigger that's going to satisfy, that a bigger bank account or bigger stuff or more things or whatever is going to satisfy and meet the needs of a family. It's not what you need is more of Jesus.

It's better to have a little and have the glory of God in the midst of a family than to have great revenues and have it all fall apart. I want to touch on a couple more points before I turn to the aspect of the making of a Christian. Compromise always, always, always 100% robs us of authority.

Robs us of the power of God. Robs us of the ability to speak. One reason why the church has no voice in society now is because the church is so full of compromise.

There's so much compromise in the church, it has no voice so society does not listen. It becomes a joke with what the church says so often. Lot had no authority.

He had no authority with the men of Sodom. When the men of Sodom were around him, they make joke of him. They make jest, who are you? You're an outsider coming in here.

Why should we listen to you? They wouldn't listen to him. They didn't want to because he had no authority with them. But you know what's really interesting is the aspect of when he goes to speak to his sons-in-law.

This is real interesting. Lot goes to speak to his sons-in-law and says, look it, they weren't married yet. His daughters hadn't married these men.

They were betrothed. And he goes to them and says, God is going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. He's going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah.

Flee! You know what his sons-in-law said? But his sons-in-law thought he was joking. Thought he was joking. You know why he was joking? Because the man had no power.

He had no authority. When he spoke, the people didn't believe him because he was a man of compromise. He was just as worldly as the rest.

The infamous atheist Voltaire, after he examined Christianity, made this statement. He says, when it comes to money, all men have the same God. And do you know why he said that? Because he saw no difference between the way the world chases after the pleasure of this life and the way the church chases after it.

He saw no difference. He says, when it comes to money, they all got the same God. You see, the world sees that.

They know it. We go to them and we say, well, Jesus is the answer. Why are you seeking after the pleasures of this world so much? They see hypocrisy within the church.

For us to get a voice back, we have to walk in a place of intimacy, desperation, a place of desire, of yearning for God, and slaying the love of this world. James goes so far in the book of James to say that if we are a friend of this world, and this is tough, man, this is real tough. He says, if we're a friend of this world, he says that we hate God.

That's what God thinks of compromise. That's what he thinks of worldliness. But if we're a friend of this world, we actually, in essence, become a God-hater, though we have a sentimentality towards God.

A sentimentality. He had no authority with his sons-in-law. But you know, he had no authority with his daughters.

His daughters didn't care what he had to say anymore. I want you to think about this. In that day and age, you know, who planned the weddings? It was Daddy.

Daddy planned the weddings. Daddy says, you'll marry that man, and that's all there is to it. Well, do you know who Daddy picked? He picked two men of Sodom.

He picked two worldly men. Do you know probably what the criteria was? They were successful. I bet you they were successful.

That was the criteria. Daddy was going to damn his own children, his grandchildren, to the wickedness of ungodly men. Do you understand what would go on here? We're going to look in just a minute at how the sin of Lot went on for hundreds of generations.

You've got to see that your compromise in your life is not going to just affect your life. It's going to affect your children, and it can affect your grandchildren, your great-grandchildren, on down through generations. People don't understand the reality of compromise and the damage, the reality of the damage that it does to generations following you.

We make it so selfish, so now, I want now. This is what I want now. And we don't understand what it will really do to the generations that follow.

He ended up sleeping with his own daughters, getting them both pregnant. It says that the daughters got him drunk so that he didn't know what he was doing. Both of them got pregnant.

The oldest daughter had a son, and he became the father of the Moabites. The younger daughter had a son, and he became the father of the Ammonites. Both of these people were a plague to the children of Israel.

Both of them were a nightmare to the children of Israel. Listen to what Zephaniah says in chapter 2, verse 9. He says, Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, surely Moab shall be his Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nestles and salt pits, and a perpetual desolation. Lot went and started a generation that was cursed from his own compromise.

Went to generation to generation to a whole people, and then was a plague to Israel as a result of the compromise. We have to understand the ramifications of it. You see, there's no such thing as secret sin.

There's no such thing as private sin. In Scripture, all sin is public. All sin.

Because what I do in my life affects every single individual. It affects my children. It affects their friends.

It affects the people at church. It affects things all the way down. I have to understand there's no such thing as secret sin.

And it can be a curse to generations. Now let's change directions. Now I want to look at a man of God.

There's tons of them in the Word of God that we could look at. For the sake of time, we won't turn through a bunch of Scriptures. We're going to look at one man in Acts 6 and 7, and we're going to look at Stephen.

Tozer made the statement, he said, the true follower of Christ will not ask, if I embrace this truth, what will it cost me? Rather, he will say, this is truth. God help me to walk in it. Let come what may.

When we become true men and women of God, we don't care what the outcome is. God, you told me to do it. No problem.

Oswald Chambers referred to it in a very interesting way. He referred to it as reckless abandonment. That we come to the point, when God speaks, we recklessly abandon ourselves to Him.

Because He is true, He is right, and everything that He does when He speaks, we should obey in the drop of the hat, rather than sit down and say, what will this cost me? What will this do? How will this affect me? I have seen it with my own friends. When I passed it out in Wisconsin, I had this one family. I could have saw them.

They had potential in their life in ministry. I could have seen them moved into a place of ministry. But their supposed objection was, well, how will it affect my children? What will it do to my children? You know the best thing they could do to their children? Get their children to miss the move of God.

Get their children right in the heat of it. Let them see what the glory of God is. Let them see what ministry is all about.

But we try to call them and protect them. And so often what we do is we harm our children by trying to protect them incorrectly. We don't want our children to hurt.

We don't want them to feel pain. But that's part of life. We have to protect them correctly, but not from God, not from his move, not from his ministry.

So as a result, this couple is not in ministry today because they're too afraid. Well, what might it do to my children? But it becomes disobedience. Stephen was a man of God.

Do you know what his testimony was? This is a testimony I would love more than anything. Boy, if I could have something put on my tombstone, this is what I would love to have. It says, a man full of faith, full of the Holy Ghost.

That was the testimony. You'll find that statement throughout those two chapters, either full of faith or full of the Holy Ghost. Again and again it speaks to the man.

His testimony permeated his life, everything he did. He was defined as a man full of faith, full of the Holy Ghost. Let's think of this.

If you could have the opportunity to pick whatever you want to put on your tombstone, or let's not say pick. Let's say if people were honest. Let's say when you died, they were really honest and you went to the honest tombstone makers and they say, we only put the truth.

What was your daddy? What was your mama? What was he really like? Let's put it in a few sentences. And here with Lot it says, here is a compromiser who destroyed his family. With Stephen it says, here's a man full of faith, full of the Holy Ghost.

What would your tombstone be? If the honesty was there, what would it read? But he had another testimony. And this testimony I think is just as important. Just as important.

You see it was the fifth verse of the sixth chapter says he was a man full of faith, full of the Holy Ghost. But the ninth verse says these two little words that are very interesting. And I think this is just great of a testimony because this testimony is the result of being a man full of faith, full of the Holy Ghost.

It says opposition arose. I think that's a wonderful testimony. Do you know what that means? This man full of faith, full of the Holy Ghost was not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

He spoke it the way it was, the reality of it. He spoke it and it pierced hearts. Some repented, some hated him for it.

He was not a coward. He was not afraid to preach the truth. He preached it because it was truth and come what may, opposition arose.

You see we have this wonderful promise, but I'll guarantee not one of us in this room have it on our refrigerator. It wouldn't stick to my refrigerator anyway. Mine's not metal, you see.

This one wonderful scripture that says all those godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. And when was the last time you got on your face and you said, God, I'm claiming that one? Please, Jesus. But you know, that's as much of a promise as any other promise in the Word of God.

But let me ask you a question. When was the last time you ever saw that promise fulfilled? Have you ever found that promise fulfilled? If you've not ever found it fulfilled, maybe there's something wrong. Maybe it's that you've not had the guts and the courage to walk the walk.

Maybe you've done a compromise. Because if that's the Word of God and that one verse is as much the Word of God as any other part of it, then why is not opposition arising? Stephen was a man full of faith for the Holy Ghost and opposition arose. It doesn't mean we go out there and we become obnoxious.

It doesn't mean we go and we become a bull in a china shop. But it does mean when I'm a man full of faith, full of the Holy Ghost, things are going to happen. Charles Finney is asked to go to a cotton mill.

And Charles Finney walks in the cotton mill. When he walks in the cotton mill, some women on some looms recognize him and they start talking amongst themselves about it and laughing. Finney sees it and he starts walking over towards them.

As he starts walking over to them, one woman on a loom starts to shake. And in a few seconds she's on the ground weeping and wailing. Then another one and another one and another one and another one.

Soon the whole factory is in chaos because a man full of faith, full of the Holy Ghost walked into the room and conviction fell upon him. I give you other counsel with a Smith Wigglesworth. It's not a rare thing.

God is able to do it. But it takes a man full of faith and full of the Holy Ghost. When we walk in that place and the power of God is there, our lips will be speaking of God.

It will bring conviction upon hearts. We don't have to be obnoxious. We just have to be bold enough to begin to speak it and to let it be known.

We'd have seen so many more saved if we were not cowards and afraid of the Gospel, if we were ablaze with the love of God and the desire of God to see it. Because if it is true, how can we keep the truth from those who earn lies? You think my preaching stuff, let me give you a sampling of his. This comes out of Acts 7 in the 51st verse.

It says, hold on to your seatbelts. You stiff-necked and uncircumcised heart and ears, you don't always resist the Holy Ghost. As your father did, so do ye.

Man, sit there and go, whoa. Can you imagine the people who heard that preaching? And then it goes on, it gives a testimony of it. And this was a testimony.

He wasn't just being hard. We would say, well, I don't think that was love. Yes, it was.

Love warns. Love warns. If you are not warned, you are not loved.

That's the reality. If your house is on fire, you need a warning. That's what it comes down to be.

It says, when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart and they gnashed on him with their teeth. Doesn't mean they started biting him. What it means is the anger in them was so great that they started grinding their teeth, gritting their teeth in anger.

Because what he said so pierced their hearts. That Stephen was a man full of faith, full of the Holy Ghost, apart from relationship. It does not speak of his prayer life.

Doesn't say how many hours he spent in prayer or how much he went and studied the Word of God, what was available to him or anything else. It doesn't say nothing about that. But it does speak of a situation of his relationship in the seventh chapter.

It says, but he being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he says, behold, I see the heavens open and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Robert Murray McSheehan made this little statement.

He says, what you are in prayer is all that you are, nothing more. If we don't have a relationship with God in private, we will have no power in public. If we don't have intimacy with the living God by ourselves, we will have nothing to give anybody else.

If I'm poverty-struck spiritually, I will have nothing to give my children. I will have nothing to give family or friends. I'll have nothing to give the church or a perishing world.

I will have nothing. I cannot give what I don't possess. If I'm poverty-struck spiritually because I have no relationship with the living God, I will have nothing to give, nothing to offer.

And then I will wonder why, as time goes on, why my children are going astray, why my children don't know the Lord. He's called us to a place of intimacy, first for ourselves, first for the joy of our life, to know the living God, to know Him in a way that is awe-inspiring, in a way that is wonderful, but then to know Him for the benefit of others that I can give. Whenever you see a man of God and he operated in the power of God within Scripture, you know that the man was a man of God in intimacy.

Moses was a man of intimacy. He knew his God, and so God did exploits through him. Stephen was a man of God, and God did exploits through Stephen.

But it comes down to be that relationship. Too long the church has relied upon the past, not upon the relationship that is now. It doesn't matter what you did five years ago, ten years ago, two years ago, whatever.

It doesn't matter. What are you doing now? Is your relationship in intimacy now? Is it vibrant? Is it powerful? Do you have a prayer light, or is it just a random thing that happens occasionally? Does your heart burn for the presence of God? Is it raging inside of you because you have tasted His wonder, of His goodness, and that's what aches inside of you? Because you draw near to God, I guarantee you worldliness will fall off. You won't have to chase it out the house.

It'll fall off because you'll draw so close to Him that it won't be able to stay around because you fall in love with Jesus. God is desiring for you to draw near to Him. What was the life that He had? He had a life of power.

It says in Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. You see, He had the goods to give. He had the goods to give to others because He had the relationship.

The fruits of His life we can look at when you see the conviction that happened. I want you to think of the fruits of His life. More than likely, giving Jewish lifestyle and everything else when they got married, more than likely, He was a married man.

More than likely, He had children. He was probably going to the marketplace to preach that day, and you know, maybe He took His little boys with Him. Maybe He took His little boys with Him.

And when He started standing up to preach, His little boys was right by Him and heard Him preach. Let me ask you a question. Parents, when was the last time your children ever heard you talk to somebody about Jesus that didn't know Jesus? Have your children ever heard you witness to anybody? Ever? Have they ever saw Daddy or Mommy pass out a track and say, here's something for you about Jesus? He loves you.

Have they ever seen it? Have they seen any life, vibrancy, passion in your life in any way, shape, or form? Have your children ever accidentally walked into the room and they saw your face full of tears because you were on your face before God and weeping over their own souls? Have your children ever seen that? What have they seen in the home? What have they seen in your own lives? I believe that these children could have been with Stephen when he was out there preaching. Saw Daddy preaching. Saw the response of the men as he was ministering through the power and the love of God.

Conviction falling upon him. They watched with mouths gaping open as they took him away, and they went and stoned him. Agony that they would see.

But you want to know what? Stephen left the legacy. These young boys would cry and say, dear God, let me be like my dad. I want to be a man of God.

I don't want to be afraid of the gospel. I don't want to be afraid of you. I don't want to be ashamed, dear God.

Let me be like Daddy. Stephen left a legacy that was worth leaving. Even though he went because he was a martyr for Christ, he had something to give.

And I guarantee you, his children were transformed by seeing a man of God within the home, by seeing a man of God. One other point. As you know, there was somebody else hanging around, and we don't always understand what our life can do and how much our life can affect people.

Here Stephen is preaching, and Saul of Tarsus is watching. Here Stephen is being stoned, and Saul of Tarsus is giving the authority to the people doing it, granting them the right to do it, holding their cloaks in authority. It gives that one little statement to try and leave the impact of saying, this man Stephen, his testimony haunted Paul.

Stephen's face glowed when he saw the glory of God. They all saw it. Stephen was ablaze with the fire of God, and Paul saw him.

I can only imagine what went on, and it doesn't tell us. It's implied with this, but it's the idea of how much did that haunt this man before he actually turned to Christ? How much did it haunt him before he finally repented? When he saw the man of God in action, when he saw the glory of God upon him, when he saw a man and met a man full of faith and full of the Holy Ghost. I can imagine part of the heart would be in Paul after his conversion, saying, dear God, let me be as Stephen was, a man full of faith.

Dear God, if I've got to die, let me die like Stephen. If I've got to go up, let me go up in such a way to be such a man of God like that. If I've got to have something put on my tombstone, dear God, let me have the same thing Stephen had.

Because you see, Paul saw it. He saw the real thing, and so he was willing to follow it. It was the 1859 Ulster Revival in Ireland.

Near the end of the preaching, one old man stood up to address the multitude. He was a remarkable looking man, a dealer in rags, would not have given him more than six pence for all the clothes he had on his person. He bore the marks and tokens of a hard liver, a confirmed drunkard.

The gentleman, he said, trembling, I appear before you this day as a vile sinner. Many of you know me. You have but to look at me and recognize me as a reprobate of Beauchesne.

You know I was an old man hardened in sin. You know I was a servant of the devil, and he led me by that instrument of his, the spirit of barley. I brought my wife and family to beggary more than fifty years ago.

In short, I defy the townland of Beauchesne to produce my equal in any form of sin whatsoever. But ah, gentlemen, I have seen Jesus. I was born again on the last night week.

I am therefore a week old today or about. My heavy and enormous sin is all gone. The Lord Jesus took it away, and I stand before you this day, not only a pattern of sin and wickedness, but a monument of the perfect grace of God.

I stand here to tell you that God's work on Calvary is perfect. Yes, I have proved it. His work is perfect.

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