

**8/13/18**

**Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**

Every parent has a moment with their child when they've "had enough." It usually happens at the end of a day when the child wasn't listening, back talking and being unruly. Usually a long timeout or grounding happens as a result. In the fray of all this, a younger sibling might get caught up in this and face the same punishment just because of "guilt by association." The innocent might plead, "It's not fair!" Parents are expected to be fair but find themselves challenged to do so.

*Then the LORD said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know." The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The LORD said, "If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake." ... Then Abraham said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?" The LORD answered, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it." Genesis 18:20-26,32*

The LORD is patient, but finally his patience will run out against those who reject him as true God and live their lives to gratify their sinful nature. This was the case with the Old Testament cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Their wickedness was known. They were active in homosexuality and other deviant sexual behavior. They had turned against the LORD and had no desire to follow the LORD. The LORD had enough and was (and did) going to destroy the city with fire (See Genesis 19).

He visited Abraham, a faithful follower of the LORD, and announced his intentions to destroy the city because of its sin and wickedness.

The only problem was that Abraham's nephew Lot and his family lived there. Abraham pleaded, "Lord, you won't destroy the righteous with the wicked will you?" Abraham then negotiates from 50 to 10. If the Lord found 10 righteous, he would spare the city. Lot and his family were delivered, but the rest perished as the fire rained from heaven. The account of Sodom and Gomorrah is a stark reminder of how God's perfect justice will punish sin. Individually and collectively we must remember this. Actions are not relative—they are either God-pleasing or sinful. God will punish sin.

But he will also spare the righteous, as he did Lot. Lot certainly was not perfect and it was not his way of life that spared him. It was his heart of faith that still believed in the LORD as the true and only God, not the pagan gods of Sodom.

The same is true for you. Sodom and Gomorrah remind us of the ultimate judgment that will come at the end of time, or at the end of your life. God will destroy the wicked, all those who reject him and by their lives show it. But God will spare the righteous, those who believe in Jesus as their Savior and reflect this heart of faith in their lives.

God does not desire the death of the wicked, but that all would believe in him and be saved (Ezekiel 33:11). Find your "deliverance" in Jesus Christ!

***Prayer:*** LORD, thank you for sparing me from your wrath by punishing your Son, Jesus for me. Help me to always follow you and use my life to reflect my thanks to you for applying Jesus' righteousness to me. Amen.

*(WELS E-Devotion, adapted)*

...See you in worship.

Keep looking up because the Lord is always looking down – Psalm 121

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