

PURGED

GENESIS 19:1-26

(Prepared by Gene Thompson using LifeWay's ETB materials.)

1. What does "purged" mean? (To get rid of an unwanted quality, condition, or feeling. To remove sediment or other undesired elements. I purged the coolant system in my vehicle so it would operate better.)
2. How can we use "purged" in a spiritual sense? (We allow the Holy Spirit to purge sin from our lives.) God's holiness demands His followers live holy lives or face the consequences.
3. Why do people often fail to consider the consequences of their actions? (Sometimes they think God is merciful and I can get by with it this time.)
4. How many times would things have gone better if we had first considered the consequences of our actions?

Experiencing the consequences of a poor choice can be a painful, but effective, way to learn a lesson. The Bible teaches that there are always consequences for our decisions. This truth is highlighted in our study today. A people came to a ruinous end because of their sinful lifestyles and decisions to ignore God's warnings.

In Genesis 18 Abraham is visited by the LORD and two angels. Abraham had a meal prepared for them then the LORD told him that Sarah would have a child about this time next year. She was listening and laughed and was chided by the LORD. Then He told Abraham what was about to happen to Sodom.

Abraham pleaded with God and finally God told him that He would not destroy Sodom if there were as few as 10 righteous people found there. Then the LORD and the angels left for Sodom.

This is a great demonstration of God's mercy.

Read Genesis 19:1-11

1. How wicked was this city?
2. Are we any better off today than Sodom was?

Our tendency is to focus on the people's sinfulness but greater than that is God's patience, mercy and grace!

URGENCY! Read Genesis 19:12-17

1. What do these verses tell us about God? ("The Old Testament shows God is patient in dealing with sin, especially when it involves entire cities and nations. God often waits years to give the people time to repent. When it becomes clear they won't—and evil does nothing but grow—God steps in. His action isn't always this drastic, but if we don't deal with blatant, destructive sin, God will!"—Stephen Miller.)
2. How did Lot respond to the angels' warning? (He went out to urge his sons-in-law to come with them.)
3. What did Lot's sons-in-law's response reveal about Lot's influence on them? (They didn't believe him.)
4. Who do we have in this world that we would like to take with us? Do we have a positive influence on them?

5. How do you raise godly kids in a depraved, ungodly world? (We must start them from birth and bathe them in prayer every day. Set an example before them every day! Make them your number one priority.)
6. Lot chose to live in Sodom. Do you think he liked it there? (Lot was regarded in the New Testament as a righteous man—2 Peter 2:8—but he could live comfortably in Sodom because his perception of reality had gradually become distorted over time. He made sense of his senseless choices with small excuses and minor rationalizations.)
7. What was Lot's response when the angels told them to "get out"? ("But he hesitated.")
8. Would we be any different?
The angels literally drug them out of the city!
9. Why did the angels drag them out of the city? ("Because of the LORD's compassion for him...")
10. Why do people ignore or hesitate in the face of God's promised judgment? (We rationalize God is merciful and compassionate; we can get by with it one more time.)

Abraham was a pilgrim and stranger, only passing through this world, but Lot had gradually abandoned his tent and settled down in Sodom, instead of keeping his eyes on heavenly things.

BARGAINING! Read Genesis 19:18-22

1. How would you describe Lot's response to the angel's commands? (He always has a response as to why his way would be a better way. He seems to want to be in control.)
"No" is an odd response to God's angels, especially when they are trying to save your life. Since they were God's messengers, saying "no" to the angels was equivalent to saying "no" to God.
Lot tried to negotiate with God. Earlier, Abraham had negotiated with God about Sodom. Just as God honored Abraham's request, He demonstrated kindness and grace to Lot.
2. What can we learn from Lot's example? (If you're compromising, if you're focusing only on the love of God while ignoring His justice, if you're lingering after He has urged you to get away from those contaminating influences, you're in grave danger!)
Corrie ten Boom used to say that we ought to hold our possessions loosely because it hurts too much when God pries them out of your hands!
3. Do your responses to God more typically resemble Lot's or Abraham's?
Lot was able to lead his family to safety before God brought His judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah. But it was more because of God's grace than anything Lot or his family chose to do.

JUDGMENT! Read Genesis 19:23-26

1. Why do you think Lot's wife looked back? (A morbid desire to see the destruction. Longing for one more look at what she cherished.)
God's judgment came only after Lot and his family safely reached Zoar. The men of Sodom had committed their sin under the cover of the darkness of night, but God's judgment would be executed during the brightest part of the day with fire and "burning sulfur" from heaven!
2. What captures the attention of believers today and draws them away from God? (What are you allowing in your life that is dangerously close to sin? Where are you compromising?)
3. What steps can you take this week to be on guard against the temptation to sin?
4. What are some benefits of obeying God? (Peace and fellowship with God. A crown to lay at Jesus' feet!)
5. What step of obedience to God can you take this week? (Stay in the Word, fellowship with other Christians. Recognize my weaknesses and stay away from those things.)

CHALLENGE!

1. What are some reasons people choose not to heed God's warnings?
2. What is our role in communicating God's warnings?

3. How can you do so with both urgency and compassion?
4. What does the Bible have to say about homosexuality? (That's easy! The same thing it says about greedy people, people who drink too much, and wrongdoers.)

"The real issue was the same issue Christians have wrestled with since the beginning. Who is the church for? Who gets to participate? How good do you have to be? Which sins, if any, disqualify a person? Can the church welcome sinners? What about unrepentant sinners? How much baggage does a person have to leave at the door before being admitted?

Ironically, the answers to those questions were contained in the pages of my Broadman Hymnal. More specifically, in the lyrics of the song we sang at the close of just about every worship service: "Just As I Am."

"Just as I am, though tossed about with many a conflict, many a doubt, fighting's, and fears within, without, O Lamb of God, I come, I come. Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind; sight riches, healing of the mind, yea, all I need in thee to find, O Lamb of God, I come, I come."

Sounds more like come worship with us than sneak out the back, doesn't it?"—Andy Stanley.
Are we that welcoming to "sinners" in our church?