

Remnant Life Church
June 15, 2025
Lessons From a Bad Father
Father's Day
Genesis 19:1-11

Billy Graham was quoted as having said, *A good father is one of the most unsung, unpraised, unnoticed and yet one of the most valuable assets in our society.*

In churches across the country this morning, virtually every sermon preached on Father's Day is of the same focus

- And most often the formula goes something like this...
- A father or father-figure is selected
- Most of the time it is someone from the OT (although Jesus' father Joseph is a popular focus and one that I have used on occasion)
- In the NT the parable of the prodigal son and his forgiving father has to be in the top 3 illustrations
- And we are shown the attributes of the man or the circumstances he dealt with that present the positive qualities of a father
- And then, most often that is tied into the truth of God as our heavenly Father

This morning, however, my title is *Lessons from a Bad Father*

- I am going to approach this from the other side; dare I say the dark side?
 - I'm thinking Father's Day is not Luke Skywalker's favorite day of the year anyway
- You see, we can learn life-lessons in many different ways
- Certainly, one of the most effective is through the positive examples of another person
- But you can also learn a great deal by recognizing what you DO NOT want to do based on what you see someone else doing and the negative impact those actions have
- IOW, there is also value in observing the people who do things poorly or unsuccessfully
- Such is the case this morning
- I want to know, what can we learn from perhaps one of the worst fathers in the Bible

But the thing is, this man, is not immediately thought of in this way

- As a matter of fact, he is written glowingly by Peter in the latter part of the NT and, Peter writes, was credited as being righteous
- Yet, his fathering skills are not only suspect but downright horrifying

Now, much is made of the differences between mothers and fathers on these two respective days that we honor our parents

- The Bible is clear about how we should treat them
 - **Gen 20:12** - *Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.*
 - It is the only commandment that comes with a blessing for obedience
- Our children of course recognize that their moms and dads are very different

And so, this morning, all over the country, pastors are telling the stories of the wonderful examples of being a good and godly father that are found in the Bible

- But you and I know there is a sad fact that cannot be ignored
- Not all fathers are good
 - Not all are loving, attentive, and nurturing
 - Some are downright destructive and have a lasting negative effect on their children that can often leave a lifetime of emotional, relational, and even physical scars
 - All of which can be healed by the love of God
 - And so we all can and should learn things from our fathers – even the bad ones

READ: Genesis 19:1-11

- Okay, you can now go ahead and say it, “That has got to be the worst Father’s Day sermon scripture I’ve ever heard!”
- This is certainly not the father of the prodigal son parable, or the image of David acting as a father to the nation of Israel, or of Joseph, the father of Jesus loving and treating Him as if He was physically his very own
- What can we possibly learn from this obviously very bad father?

We must first look at the man – who is Lot?

The 11th chapter of **Genesis** records for us the genealogical account of Abraham

- Abraham is the 10th generation removed from Noah
 - He is a descendant from the line of Noah’s oldest son, Shem
 - This is the family line chosen by God that David, the kings of Israel and eventually, Jesus would all come through
- In **Gen 11:27** we are told...
 - Abraham is Lot’s uncle
 - Abraham became the legal authority, or guardian if you will, in Lot’s life when his father, Haran (Abraham’s brother) and his grandfather both died (vv **28, 32**)
 - This is why Lot is with Abraham at the time God comes to establish His covenant with him

This morning, we read something that, as a father, is very hard to reconcile and comprehend

- In his effort to defend the 2 angels who were in his home from the perverted group of men who had come to take them – he offered up his two daughters to the mob instead
 - Wait...what?!?!?
- How could any man even think this, let alone offer to do it?
 - Several thoughts come to mind as we would try and account for such a horrific offer
- First, the sin of the city had certainly infiltrated and was influencing the mind of Lot
 - Consider how Lot had drawn in

- **Gen 13:12** – Lot settles in the land by pitching his tent near Sodom in the Jordan Valley
- **14:12** – he is captured in a war because he is now a residence of Sodom’s population
- **19:1** – seated at the gate he is now in a place of prominence within the city
- The allure of sin is a powerful one that preys on the mind and the heart that is not fully devoted to God
 - This is why you cannot play around or dabble in things you KNOW you should not be involved in
 - Sin will take you further than you want to go; take you places you do not want to be; and keep you longer than you want to stay
- This is the statement that best describes what Lot is doing when he offers his daughters to be taken and abused by the crowd
 - It would seem that the offer was made in the heat of the moment
 - It was a rash use of words in a desperate and chaotic situation
 - He probably thought, I know that they won’t go for this, but it may help me to save face among my neighbors and buy me some time
- NONE of these things excuses Lot but it does offer some semblance of understanding as to how and why he would even consider this!

Yet, we can learn on this Father’s Day 2025 from a father even as questionable as Lot

Here are 3 lessons that Lot, not a very good father in this moment, can teach us

- **It begins with that fact that Lot did not understand humility**
 - In the culture of that day the hierarchy within the family was unbreakable and unchallenged
 - It was one of the main reasons Joseph’s brothers hated him so much (**Gen 37**)
 - Not only was he favored by their father, but his dreams had him as the head of the family over his brothers and even his father
 - The head of the family had absolute authority and rule over all other members
 - In **Gen 13:8-13** Lot is given the choice of land by Abraham for them to divide
 - Now, because he was his elder and his superior, Lot should have immediately deferred back to Abraham to choose
 - But he took the first choice and in doing so revealed a deep flaw within himself
 - It did not matter that Abraham gave Lot the first choice, it was not his to take regardless
 - But his pride in that moment would not permit him to understand or see that
 - Pride will often put you in places that you do not belong
 - Because Lot did not understand the value and importance of humility
 - **Prov 16:18** - *Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.*
- **Our First Lesson** – You must walk humbly before God in every area of your life

- It is an attribute that time and time again God identified in those He blessed and elevated
 - Joseph, Moses, and especially in the life of Jesus
- A father who walks in humility will demonstrate and emulate that trait to his children
 - I think that there is no one harder to be around than a cocky kid who thinks he knows everything
 - Left unchecked, that type of attitude will breed disrespect in his life as a young and then mature adult
 - But when I see a child who behaves that way I don't blame them
 - I blame the parents who have always given and never required anything
 - There is such an unhealthy parenting philosophy present today that says, in essence, never tell your child no
 - And that line between yes and no begins with the father
- **The second problem with Lot was he was not grateful**
 - Much of what he possessed he owed to Abraham
 - The Hittites called Abraham a mighty prince in **Gen 23**
 - Lot was in line as a possible heir of Abraham and would have benefitted greatly by his position
 - But we never see evidence in any of the account of Lot that he ever gave thanks to God
 - Even though much of his life was spent in the opulence of his uncle's wealth

The story is told that after one of the terrible battles of the Civil War, a dying Confederate soldier asked to see the chaplain. When the chaplain arrived, he was expecting the young man to have him pray and ask God for his recovery; but it was very different. First the soldier asked him to cut off a lock of his hair for his mother, and then he asked the chaplain to kneel down and thank God. "What for?" asked the surprised chaplain. "For giving me such a mother. To thank God that I am a Christian. Thank Him for giving me grace to die with, and thank God for the home He has promised me over there." And so, the chaplain knelt down by the dying man, and in his prayer he spoke not a single request, but only praise and gratitude.

- **Our Second Lesson** – we must be grateful regardless of the circumstances of our lives
 - Every single day, for every blessing of our lives, we must give God thanks
 - **James 1:17** - *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*
 - The model of a grateful father will begin to establish that same heart in his children
 - Too many of our children today live in expectancy
 - They have, to their great detriment, been handed too much too soon and have developed a sense of entitlement
 - It is one reason why the workforce is currently struggling so much

- People are still, five years later, trying to blame the shutdown in 2020
 - But it is more about young people, with no or very little experience or developed skills, thinking they should start in management making \$40 an hour and work no more than 30 hours a week
 - Dad – you are the one who will establish that work ethic and it begins with being grateful for every opportunity even the ones that start at the bottom
- **Finally, Lot put his faith and trust in wealth rather than God**
 - As I have said many, many times to you, the Bible does not condemn wealth
 - Both Abraham and Lot would be considered very wealthy by today's standards
 - But it does condemn putting your trust in possessions and loving them more than God
 - **I Tim 6:17** - *Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment*
 - **Our third lesson** - Wealth, money is NEVER the answer to your struggles or life's challenges
 - Do we need money to live and survive? Yes
 - Does God care about the condition of our lives? Of course
 - But it is not our pursuit and attainment of wealth that is going to bring solutions to the difficult things we deal with
 - The reason for that is anything that you place above your trust in God will fail!
 - The care of the finances is not only for the father to deal with in the home, but it is the father who should establish how that money is viewed

Lot put his trust in many things that had very little to do with God

- Yet, at some point he must have gotten it right because listen to what Peter writes regarding the power of God to rescue the righteous
- **2 Peter 2:4-9** - *For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment; if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; 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 depraved conduct of the lawless (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)— if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment.*
- Being a godly father does not require perfection
 - It does require humility
 - It does require a heart of gratitude
 - And it requires the priorities of your life to begin with God and God alone

Father's Day 2025 is a day that we should honor our fathers

- I honor my Dad today
- He will be 93 years old in October
- He was not perfect, and today he deals with deep regret at his failures as a father in the name of ministry
- But I learned a great deal from him, both positive and negative, that all helped to shape the man, the husband, the father, and the pastor I am today
- And my prayer for each of us this morning men, knowing that we will be an example of both the good and the bad, is that we continue, regardless of how old they are, to always point our children to Jesus
- It is the single most important, life-changing, eternity impacting thing you will ever do for them – and it is the first and best example of what it means to be a Godly, humble, and good father.