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Joining the CIA

707-A

Series: God's Living Legends (Part 1)

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When you look at one Bible character, you must rub shoulders with those whose lives touched his. It is in the contrast of those relationships that reality often emerges. So a look at Lot has given us the contrast like between looking at a negative and a print. There is a stark contrast between Lot and Uncle Abraham. Our look at Lot has surfaced the real character of his wife, his sons-in-law, and his daughters just to name a few. The contrast is not unintentional. And the contrast between his life and his uncle's is not accidental either. Abraham in Scripture reflects and unfolds in layers the beauty of a life that is yielded to the Lordship of God. Lot, on the other hand, portrays the compromised Christian life. He represents the man or the woman who, either by design or neglect, chooses to try for the best of both worlds and ends up with nothing.

The crux of the Christian life is commitment, commitment that is reflected by the day-to-day choices a man or a woman makes in life. These choices at the time may seem trivial, but they determine the course of your life and to whom your heart belongs. That is why it is so important to "Remember Lot's Life". It is a caution light on the freeway of Christian experience that says, "Slow Down. You may have missed the main highway."

That's what we have been asking you to so in these last few lessons, to remember Lot's life. First we asked you to remember Lot's wife, then to remember Lot's opportunity as Uncle Abraham took him under his wing; to remember Lot's presumptuous spirit as he was given a choice and he took the best there was and left the rest to his uncle. Next we had a look at Lot's double-mindedness as, having taken what was really not his, he pitched his tent toward Sodom and began to move toward the world. We remembered Lot's unteachable spirit as he was carried away captive by foreign kings, leaving Uncle Abraham, led by the Spirit, to rescue him and his family. Lot looked around and said, "Gee that was nice. Now I can go back to Sodom." We remembered Lot's deliverance and were grieved at his response.

In the last lesson we looked at "The Men Who Came To Dinner". We looked at how to have a heart-to-heart talk with God. We looked in disbelief as Lot introduced the two angels to

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his community, and it was an embarrassing introduction. He said, "Welcome to my world." All of this pointed to the high cost of living in Sodom. As the two angels questioned Lot, we had to answer in conclusion, "Wow, what a ministry. What respect, what obedience." As we were concluding the last lesson, we began to look at how little discernment was left in Lot's life. In this lesson we remember Lot's sad ending. We will look at Lot's running and Lot's reaping. Then we will try to Remember Lot's Life in three areas: "The Subtlety of Conformity," "The Militant Minority," and "The River of No Return."

As we concluded the last lesson, the angels had given Lot and his family their final instructions. We were in Genesis 19:

And it came to pass when they brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou on all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so my lord:

Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me and I die:

(Genesis 19:17-19)

Lot says, "Lord, you have been so merciful to save my life, now let me tell you what you can and cannot do with it." Have you ever done that? God has just sent two angels to a city scheduled for destruction, supernaturally rescued one man and his family, and Lot's faith is so non-existent that on the very day of his deliverance, he panics. Do you remember Elijah when he came down from Mt. Carmel? He cried as though the God who had just plucked him out of the fire of death could not sustain him on the mountainside of life.

Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.

(Genesis 19:20)

How many tiny little cities have you asked God for? The gall, the presumption of a Christian out of fellowship. He has defied God's absolutes and then expects God to be his busboy, as though he had earned some favor through disobedience. The thought of not living in a city petrified poor Lot. He still couldn't see what friendship with Sodom had cost him. "Lord, just give

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me a little worldliness,” he said, “I’ve grown so accustomed to it. I will die in the mountain, Lord. I would have to trust You.” As God often does, He gave Lot his request, but sent leanness to his soul. It was his last chance to walk by faith and he refused it. Instead, he begs God for something visible, tangible to hold on to. “Okay, Lot, here is your little city, Zoar, meaning little, like your faith.” Be careful, my friend, when you pray for circumstances or things. Be careful. Especially when you pray for circumstances or things that in the past God has shown you are not part of His will for your life. The angel answers:

And he said unto him, See I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for which thou hast spoken.

Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar [meaning little].
(Genesis 19:21,22)

Lot, you can have your little city, but please get out of Sodom because the God of eternity will not touch this city until you are outside of its gates. This is not because you are so faithful, Lot, but because you are His. God was frozen by His own love.

The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.

Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven;

And He overthrew these cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.
(Genesis 19:23-25)

Here we have in three verses, the end of a civilization. It was a civilization that denied the existent of God and defied the moral standard God had etched into the very framework of His creation. There are at least three reasons why God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

1- He destroyed the cities because of their iniquity. In chapter 18, verse 20, (paraphrased) God was speaking and said,

Because their sin is so grievous, I will go down now and see if it is possible that they are really as bad as I have heard. If they are, I am going to have to wipe out the entire cities.

There was no moral standard in Sodom and Gomorrah. God has established moral limits beyond which even unbelievers cannot go and still allow God to tolerate their behavior. The

essence of their sin was moral rebellion against the laws of nature. The expression of their sin was sodomy, physical relationships between man and man and between women and women. This was something so ingrained in the fiber of nature that even the animal kingdom has more sense than that. The Scripture records that the stench of their sin had reached the nostrils of God and made Him sick. My friends, God is a God of great mercy, but even His mercy has limits for a nation, for a people, for individuals. There is a point beyond which God will not tread with mercy, and Sodom had stepped over that boundary.

2- God destroyed Sodom because God always keeps His Word. In chapter 18, you remember, God spoke to Abraham. He confided in him and said in confidence that if the sin in Sodom was as wicked as it appeared, He would have to destroy it. Then you will recall the session of negotiation between Abraham and God. The negotiation ended with the agreement that if God could find ten believers in Sodom, He would not destroy the city. If there were less than ten, God HAD to destroy the city. The sin of the city was greater than Abraham ever dreamed. Were there ten believers? Not on your life. So God had no choice; He had to be faithful to His Word.

3- God destroyed Sodom because He intended it as an object lesson to all the ages yet unborn. There is no revelation of the wrath of God any time, any place that has been used more graphically to illustrate the way God works than Sodom and Gomorrah. No less than 18 times in Scripture what happened on this morning is used by God to illustrate or demonstrate either His judgment, His wrath, or His mercy. Each time it is a picture so vividly magnified on the screen of life to draw attention. Example: Deuteronomy 29:21-28 is a reminder to the world of God's judgment on disobedience. He says to remember what He did to Sodom and Gomorrah. Isaiah 13:19 mentions it as He foretold of the destruction of Babylon. He said it would be as it was in Sodom and Gomorrah. The same thing is true foretelling the judgment of Edom in Jeremiah 49. In Deuteronomy 32 God tells Israel that they are blind spiritually and it will be unto them as it was to Sodom and Gomorrah. In Isaiah 3:9, God tells Israel that its sin is as brash as the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah. In Ezekiel 12:56 God tells Israel that they haven't learned from Sodom, for their sister Sodom is not even mentioned by them in their pride. They have forgotten. Amos says:

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I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. (Amos 4:11)

In Zephaniah 2:9 he says:

...Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah,

In Matthew 10 Jesus sent the apostles out two by two. He told them that as they went into the city and the city received them, to bless it. However, if that city rejected the gospel, He told them to shake the dust from their feet and it would be unto that city as it was unto Sodom and Gomorrah. In Matthew 11 Jesus said that the cities that reject the gospel and the Son of God that it would be unto them as it was in Sodom and Gomorrah. In Luke 17 Jesus says that a picture of the end times, when the world would be destroyed by fire, is a picture of what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah. In Romans 9 Paul describes a picture of a believer's deliverance in the midst of tribulation as a picture of Lot in Sodom and Gomorrah. II Peter 2:6 is a picture of an unbeliever and God's impending judgment as you look at Sodom and Gomorrah. Jude verse 7 is a picture of God's judgment on perversion as in Sodom and Gomorrah. These are the reasons God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. He destroyed them because of their iniquity because He had to keep His Word to use it for further illustrations. These are some of the reasons.

Now let's look at some of the results.

1- Look at the immediacy of the destruction. The very second Lot left Sodom, it was destroyed. The Scripture says that "the Lord is not slack concerning His promises as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us because He is not willing that any should perish." God waits patiently until the last one who *will* come has come. But my friend, when that last one *has* come, He will not tarry. His judgment will come and it must come immediately.

2- Look at the intensity of the destruction, (fire and brimstone). It is hard to describe. Every time I looked it up, it was described differently. There are no real words to describe it. If you were to take a furnace and heat it ten trillion times as hot as the sun, then turn it upside down and dump it on the earth, then you will have a little picture of what Sodom and Gomorrah was like. It destroyed every person, every animal, every possession, every

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blade of grass, every tree, and every shrub. There was nothing left alive, no plant, no animal, no person. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were like cap pistols compared to Sodom and Gomorrah. Mt. Saint Helen was like a flicker compared to it. The destruction was a-thousandth of a-thousandth of the power of God.

3- Look at the permanence of it. For generation after generation there has been nothing but desolation there as a stark reminder of the everlasting reality of the judgment of God.

So God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah just as He said He would. In verse 26 the Scripture says:

But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. (Genesis 19:26)

Now our story has gone full cycle. We are back where we began. Jesus flashed this picture on the screen of Luke 17 and told us not to forget this. Here is a portrait of the uselessness of a believer who can't take his or her eyes off the world. Here is what Jesus meant when He said that believers are the salt of the earth, but when the salt has lost its flavor or savor, what good is it? It is useless. She didn't look back toward Lot to see if he was with her; she looked back behind him to see what she was leaving behind. She became a living monument. She didn't have to leave Sodom, did she? She stayed there forever.

Now we come to another parenthesis in the story. Isn't it good that God puts these here. I believe that God is the eternal journalist. I believe that the Holy Spirit gives journalists the perfect picture of how to write a story, how to write a play and how to write an essay. He knows we can take just so much of Lot, then we get sick inside, so He keeps flashing little drops of Abraham just to restore us and give us excitement. Meanwhile, back on the plains, we see Abraham. First we see what a difference there is.

And Abraham got up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD: (Genesis 19:27)

Literally, this says *where he always stood before the Lord.* Abraham always got up early to meet with the Lord. If you want an interesting study sometimes, take the concordance and look at all the men in Scripture who got up early and look at their lives to see what they were like. It is an interesting study. They are the men who changed the world.

Second, not only did he get up early, he had a special place

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to go. He went to the place where he always stood before the Lord. How many of you have a special place where you go in the morning to spend time with God? I know that you are a lot like I am. You may say, "Well, the Lord is in the car and He is in the bathroom when I am brushing my teeth." This is true; the Lord is everywhere, and the Lord was everywhere with Abraham, too. The point is that, although God is infinite, Abraham in his finiteness wanted to have a special place where, by its very purpose, he knew he was in the presence of God. Some special business could be taken care of there. So he had a special place and it was very precious to him.

Third, he stood before the Lord. You remember from the last lesson that not many men stand before the Lord. Every morning he rose early; *every* morning, he went to this place. Every morning, he stood before the Lord.

So Abraham rose early and stood before the Lord.

He looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the plain. He beheld and lo, the smoke of that country looked like a furnace on fire.

(Genesis 19:27,28 paraphrased)

Abraham was the fourth person, and the last, to look at Sodom. Lot looked at Sodom *lustfully*. The angels looked at Sodom *alarmingly*. Lot's wife looked at Sodom *longingly*. Abraham looked at Sodom. It must have been the look of one who had prayed, and believed, and hoped; but the choice of those for whom he prayed was still up to them. I do not believe for one second that Abraham ever questioned that God would not keep His word, but he must have fallen on his knees and wept over the sin of the city.

And it came to pass when God destroyed the cities of the plain that God remembered Abraham. He sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt.

(Genesis 19:29)

Again we see Abraham as a type of Christ because Christ, who is our mediator, who ever liveth to make intercession for us, will stand in the breach in the day of judgment as Abraham did for Lot. Because of *His* righteousness, we will be delivered. Have you ever wondered what it meant when God remembered Abraham? If you will remember a few lessons back, God remembered Noah. In Genesis 30 God remembered Rachel. I Samuel 1 God remembered Hannah. Is God forgetful?

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There are two ways to use the word *remember*. One is the recalling back to mind something that is forgotten. Some examples could be: I remember I was supposed to buy my friend his lunch last Thursday. Or, I remember I left my keys on the bumper of that car that is now on its way to St. Louis. Suddenly, the conscious mind recalls a thought. However, this cannot apply to God because he is an omniscient God who has never forgotten anything that has been done, is being done, or will be done, except by an act of His chosen will. He has done this with our sin as He puts it behind Him to remember against us no more.

The second use of the word *remember* is a fond recalling to the forefront of one's attention. It is a conscious act of the will, a choice to recall a person, an event, or thing. For instance, I sat down and remembered the day of my conversion. Oh, how I remember my grandmother and her walk with God. That is what God did here. He recalled Abraham's faithfulness and intercession to deliver Lot.

So much for our interlude with Abraham. The older he got, the deeper his walk, the sweeter his spirit, the more profound his wisdom. Now we go back toward Zoar to see how Lot is doing.

First, we walk in the city and get the phone book. We look under L for Lot. He is not there. We look in the yellow pages under Fellowship, Christians Out Of. No listing there either. Now we read why:

And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain,
and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in
Zoar: and He dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.

(Genesis 19:30)

Where is Mr. Lot? Living in a cave on the side of a mountain because he was afraid to live in Zoar. The believer out of the will of God always hears footsteps behind him. Everybody is out to get him. The world is not his home, so he can't relax there. But he is an ambassador and he is in rebellion to his own authority, so he can't even find refuge in his own embassy. He is a man without a country. Not only is Lot running from fear, now he is on the mountain God sent him to in the first place. But he can't enjoy the freedom of living in the mountain. Guilt keeps him from the faith he needs to enjoy it. How many Christians enter the Promised Land only to spend their lives crouched in caves, fearing the enemy at every turn when they have in their hands all that it takes to destroy the enemy completely. So we see Lot

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running, and now we will see him reaping.

And the firstborn said to the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man on the earth to come unto us after the manner of all the earth:

Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the seed of our father.

And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

And it came to pass on the morrow, that the older said to the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine again this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve the seed of our father.

And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.

The firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same as the father of the Moabites until this day.

The younger also bore a son and called his name Benammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.
(Genesis 19:31-38)

So Lot's life ends in shame and disgrace. Had you approached Lot the day he pitched his tent toward Sodom and read him these last few verses, he would have stared at you in disbelief that such a seemingly harmless choice to toy with evil would end in such degradation. So spiritually insignificant and shameful was the end of Lot's life in Scriptures, that they don't even record his death. For all practical purposes, he died a long time ago. Now such a slave to alcohol he must have been, he must have once thought it so harmless, but now such a slave that he didn't even know what went on. He was in a drunken stupor, so enslaved in its bondage that his daughters never even doubted that he would get drunk at the slightest provocation. You wonder sometimes at the ingenuity of the guy, where he got the wine in a cave in the middle of a mountain. Oh, what moral wrecks his daughters were. They had been raised in the slime pits of hell on earth and never established God's standards for themselves. Perhaps this seemed a normal thing to do to their father, the father who offered them to a milling mob of perverts in the midst of the city.

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But such was the conclusion of Lot's life. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.

The reaping from Lot goes on. We read that of the two children who came from this experience, one became the father of the Ammonites and one the father of the Moabites. These are the two avowed enemies of God who teased, tortured, and tested God's children for generations. That is why we must Remember Lot's Life.

What is the conclusion? What is the *real* message of Lot's life? What is it that God is saying to us through this detailed account? I want to give you three aspects of this in closing. I want to look at the "Subtlety of Conformity," "What it takes to join the CIA," and "The River of No Return."

THE SUBTLETY OF CONFORMITY

The first thought concerns the subtlety of conformity. Lot never intended to become so conformed to this world that he had no power against it. But, as we shared earlier, his life, like ours, was just a result of a series of choices. Let's look at the progression of those choices very quickly.

1- He eyed the world and pitched his tent. He considered that there were some benefits worth giving his life to at the expense of spiritual things.

2- He tasted the world. He moved his tent. He made a conscious decision to involve himself with people and activities that either ignored the existence of God or the standards of God.

3- He rejected God's warnings and ignored the Word. God got his attention circumstantially, caused him to lose all he thought he had, reminded him of what he had left behind, and he still went back to Sodom.

4- He accepted wrong friendships as natural. He made alliances with and developed relationships with those whose god was the god of this world despite God's clear admonition not to. Compared to these friends, he wasn't so bad after all.

5- He accepted wrong behavior as natural. The moral fiber of Sodom was non-existent; but if you live in the midst of sin long enough, before long that is your new standard.

6- He lost his sense of purpose or direction. So enamored

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was he with things that when they were taken from him, he was lost. Rather than move to God's mountain and begin again, he pleaded for another piece of the world to cling to.

7- He lost the respect of those closest to him. He thought if only he could give his family "things", they would have to love him. So, when he lost all he had to give them, he lost them as well. His wife was lost forever because her eyes were not on him, but on the things he had given her. His daughters used him spitefully because that is what they believed he had done to them.

The Subtlety of Conformity. Who is more miserable than a half-hearted Christian? You may wonder why that is so. I believe it is so because the believer is in the process of being shaped by two different worlds. On the one hand, he feels the pressures of the world to conform to the standards of the world, to eye it, to touch it, to taste it, to take its standards, to take its friendships. But on the other hand, all the while, he hears the precious pressures of the Lord saying, "Be not be conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." So he begins to vacillate, and the vacillating one becomes the vanquished one. Caught in a vice, he turns first one way and then the other. This turns him into a roller coaster version of Christianity. What is the problem? The problem is that God never called us to the playground of confusion. He called us to the battleground of conversion. Nowhere in the Bible are we ever admonished to give it our best. We are commanded to give Him our lives and oh, the difference. The religions of the world speak of man giving to God, doing for God, working for God. Christianity is the laying down of one in exchange for another, the receiving of the life of a person who has already given it all. It is the allowing of that person the freedom in your body to live His life.

WHAT IT TAKES TO JOIN THE CIA

The second aspect is that Satan has given Christians the idea that we as believers can join Christ's military service and have a choice of any one of three regiments. It is a lie. *These are the three regiments Satan tries to convince us of joining:*

1- He says you can join the B.T.E. Corps. B.T.E. stands for "Back to Egypt". It means that if this Christian experience is not as easy as at first we thought; if circumstantially life is too tough, we have the option of going back to life as it was before with no

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regrets. The problem is that when you get back to Egypt that it is different because you are different and you are miserable. It doesn't work.

2- He says you can join the BBW. The BBW stands for the Best of Both Worlds. This was Lot's organization. He was a lieutenant colonel. This is by far the biggest regiment in the corps. Multitudes find refuge in its easier life, fewer restrictions, less authority, less discipline, greater compromise. The problem comes when the war comes and you get swept away.

3- God's choice is the C.I.A. C.I.A. stands for Christ Is All. This is the best of the men in the Marine Corps in God's service. These are the few who man the front lines who control the battle, the disciplined ones. They are called "disciples". Some call them fanatics. Some call them fools. God calls them blessed. The problem is, and here is where Satan's lie comes in, that when we enlisted, we were ALL placed in the C.I.A. It isn't just the best unit for a chosen few, it is the normal Christian life. It is designed by God for me and for you and for all of us. The other units are man's creation, ways to remain in the service without seeing any action. The entrance requirements to the C.I.A. are very simple.

First of all, God says you can count the cost (Luke 14). It says

Which of you who were going to build a tower wouldn't first figure out if you had what it takes to build it?"

(Luke 14:28)

Or,

"For which of you if you were king, before you went to battle, wouldn't try to determine if you *really* had the troops?"

If you didn't you would wave a flag and surrender. You read the enlistment papers carefully.

(Luke 14:31,32 paraphrased)

Second, in the next verse not only do we count the cost, but here is the cost. You give up everything.

So likewise [Jesus said], whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

(Luke 14:33)

You don't enlist with all of your goodies wrapped around your neck and say, "Lord, here I am. I'm yours as long as I can have my job, my possessions, my friends, my pleasures, my marriage." God may give you back all of the above, but *you come through*

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the door with nothing. You leave it all outside. You choose once and for all to join up. Read Joshua 24:14-27 and remember that Joshua gives the people of Israel the choice. They thought they knew what was going on. Joshua tells them that they don't have the picture. Once and for all you must draw a line and choose this day whom you will serve, the God of your fathers, or your enemies. Now make up your mind. The children of Israel held up their hands and said that they would serve the Lord. Joshua stood back and told them that they didn't know what they were talking about. He delineated again and they responded, "We will serve the Lord." He said, "Okay, let's build an altar and remember it." You decide once and for all you will be a disciple. That is not the end of it, but the beginning of it. It is a deliberate choice and, like Joshua, you drive a stake in the ground and say, "This is it."

The third requirement is that you get up every morning and die.

And He said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

(Luke 9:23)

You must deny yourself every day and follow Christ. It is a morning-by-morning reporting for duty. You don't stay in the bunk and marvel at your commission, you stand before the commander-in-chief the way Abraham did and simply lay your life at His feet for Him to do with it as He chooses every day of your life.

THE RIVER OF NO RETURN

The third aspect is that you set sail on the river of no return. The key is that Christianity is a one-way trip; you don't ever look back. You are not supposed to crawl up on the bank and take refuge because it seems the currents are getting too swift. It works like this: the farther you go down the river, the swifter the current and the deeper the water until soon there is nothing left for you to hold onto. If you struggle and fight, you will wear yourself out, but if you let go and abandon yourself to the current, suddenly you will be swept along. You will begin to pass through the villages of love, joy, peace and patience. Your life will begin to blossom and become what you have always dreamed it would be. Your life will have meaning and you will see that the enemy is powerless when you are in the will of God. I have called it the C.I.A because Christ *is* all and no thing, no one can really

compete for your allegiance because He is all there is.

That is the message of Lot. It is a message of total commitment and total surrender. It is our message. It says simply that at some given time in your spiritual pilgrimage, you stop playing around with both worlds and report for duty. Once and for all you turn your life over to the king. You drive a stake in the ground and say, "Today I joined the C.I.A. I am diving into the waters of the river of no return. Wherever it takes me, I will go. Whatever it costs me, I am His." Some of us perhaps have done that once in our lives and then crawled up on the banks and decided it got too swift for us. Some of us need to dive back in today. This is not meant to be an emotional time when we are swept up in the tide of frenzied feelings and make some kind of choice based on the atmosphere of the hour, but it is however meant to be a time of deliberate choice for some of us.

It is a time for those who have never said "yes" to Jesus Christ to decide if you want to spend the rest of your life groping for answers or growing in grace. If you are reading this and you have never placed your faith in Jesus Christ, you are faced with a decision. To make no decision is to decide. He died for your sins. He paid the entire price. He is asking you to come to Him just as you are this morning and give Him your life in return for His. God may have brought you to this lesson at this time in your life to give you a chance to say yes. All you have to do is pray a prayer like this: =

"Lord, Jesus I have sinned and I am a sinner. I am separated from God by that sin. I acknowledge that You died for my sins, and paid the price in full. At this moment, I ask you to come into my life, become my Savior and my Lord. Thank you Lord that You are there now. Amen."

For some of the rest of us, decision time also approaches. It is time to decide if anything less than a life totally yielded to Jesus Christ is really a life at all. Some thirty-five years ago, I was in a small group and the speaker asked all those present who had never really driven a stake in the ground to pray, "Lord, from this point on, this is Your life, not mine. I am going to join up and turn loose." I can't remember a lot that happened that day, but I do remember that day I said, "Lord, You take it and whatever You want to do, it is all Yours." Now I have to confide in you and tell you honestly that I spent a lot of the thirty-five years since clinging to the bank of the river, climbing up

Joining the CIA

alongside, fearful of the next turn. But every time I have slipped back into the water and turned loose, there has been joy, peace and excitement. What I want to encourage you to do today is to consider in your own life if this is an appropriate time for you to turn loose. Consider if it is time to join the C.I.A.

Some of you may have been struggling for a long time trying to live the Christian life. I want to encourage you right now to quit trying and just to jump in and give it all to Jesus. It is a decision each one of us has to make individually. I ask you one last thing; as you consider it, “Remember Lot’s Life”.

Focus questions for additional study and application:

1- In retrospect, what do you think was the turning point in Lot’s life?

2- Can you find at least four basic biblical principles that Lot ignored?

3- What kind of “little cities” are you asking God for? Has he given them to you? Did He “give you your request and send leanness to your soul?”

4- What would have happened had God changed His mind about Sodom and Gomorrah? Can He change His mind about the coming judgment? Find Scripture to support your conclusion.

5- What does it mean to go “back to Egypt”? Why doesn’t it work?

6- Why can’t we have the “best of both worlds?” Find Scripture to substantiate your conclusion.

7- Why did call us to take the “river of no return”? Why do we try to turn back? What was the message of Lot’s wife? Of Lot’s life?

8- Write an essay, using a modern day setting for a businessman in business with his uncle, who raised him, and using the story of Lot and Abraham for the plot, make it apply to today’s world. Ask God to apply it to your own life.

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