

5 N - P.M June 17, 84

"THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE HOME"

Gen. 19:12

Our text has to do with the welfare of the home and those who are bound together by the ties of flesh, blood, and marriage. It is found in the first book of the Bible. In the 19th chapter, and the men said unto Lot, hath thou here any besides. Son-in-laws, and thy sons, and thy daughters - and whatsoever thou hast in the city bring them out of this place.

The city referred to here is the one that you will recognize - the old city of Sodom. That whole city was plunging toward the doom and the destruction. The cause of such doom was the collapse of morality and righteousness in the city.

We are prone to talk about the collapse of economics or nations - but what about the moral and the spiritual collapse of a people.

Note here, the people of Sodom had sown to the flesh. It was the center of wickedness, despite all the warnings - they went from bad to worse. The destruction of the city meant as men sow - so must they reap. The law of God was taking its toll. The people of Sodom had sinned against all righteousness. And all warnings.

God's patience was exhausted. We see that wonderful old man Abraham, as he is praying for Lot, his nephew. And his family. Asking God's mercy upon them.

In response to that man's prayer - God sent two messages to warn Lot. And his

family of the doom, coming to the city. And to urge them to flee for their lives - if they would escape. The men said unto Lot, hath thou here any besides - son-in-law, and thy sons and thy daughters - and whoever thou hast, in the city - bring them out of this place.)

It is no wonder that Jesus wept over the ancient city of Jerusalem. As he looked upon the lives of some of those who lived in that city. If the secrets of all hearts in a great city were revealed - what a tragic story would be revealed. Of the danger and the distress, the sin, the shame, the heartache and heartbreak.

If we could stand at the door of every household in this city, and pour out our hearts for those dwelling under each roof, whether it be just a small cottage - or a large palace. The city is the nerve center and the storm of all civilization. As goes the city - so will go the church and the state, and everything else in our social order.

Our city saved means salvation. Our cities lost - means corruption and destruction of all that is about us.

The home is the chief institution in the city. To be sure the church stands in a class by itself.

The home is fashioned by our divine loving Master. The first institution that God gave to human society was the home. And as goes the home - so goes the city.

We might pause to say that the home is in peril. It is endangered now by modern times. Worldliness claims well-to-do people. There are multitudes of the poor and underprivileged people in our larger cities. There are those who are living in housing that is not up to par. There are those where it is probably impossible for them to maintain the sacredness of the home.

Our system is a highly competitive system. In our rush and in our speed that marks life on every side, and endangers us as never before. If the home is lost - all will go down. With the failing of the home, we are defeated.

Important as is the economic problems, the labor problems, the problems of public education, the most important that this nation will face is the conservation of the home life, of this nation.

In our memories, home is important to us. One never knows a person until he knows what he remembers about his home. Home means more than the house where we lived with our families. It is recalled as a special place.

There are millions of homes today that are up-rooted. Did you know that in America, 20 million families were moved this year. Families from small towns and farms, will lose themselves in large cities. Others will be up-rooted by large corporations before they take root. Their business will move them to another place.

There are many families that live on wheels -- it is evident by the growing number of trailer camps, trailer homes. This includes military, defense workers, migrant workers.

There are up-rooted young people who leave home to live in college dorms. There are other people who leave home to live in apartments. To seek jobs out in the world.

The spiritual life, may wither away from home. And we know that people have a tendency to drift into the ways of life that are destructive as they try to live without God and without the church. Christ demands that we have loyalty first of all to the home. Christ has made great promises to those who will be faithful to the family. And put love in action.

We need to give ourselves to devotion and fidelity - and make this a primary matter especially as a Christian. If people trifle with the home, they are undermining the very foundation of our civilization. We must fortify the home.

When the messengers were sent of God to warn Lot and his family to get out of the city which was plunging rapidly to destruction - hast thou here any besides. Get thee out of this place, the city of doom, the people will not listen to God. They have trifled with his holy law. They have mocked the great law of sowing and reaping. They will trifle with the high things of God. They have now become insensible to any call. They are desensitized, to all appeals. Get thee out of this place without delay. That is a real note of drama.

You can go back and read that in the 19th chapter of Genesis.

We can see how much is involved in the home life of our people. Let this question be one for us to meditate upon today. And it is surely one that we need to give heed too.

The men appealed to Lot about his home about his sons-in-law, and about his sons and his daughters. And all were bound up together in the relation of family life. Here is a question that concerns natural affection. When you appeal to people for the welfare of their homes, the most sacred things are involved. You immediately have their attention.

There is another thing to note here - and that is the matter of parenthood. God has given this the highest dignity that he could give in humanity. The most glorious sight that one ever sees beneath the stars - is the sight of motherhood. There is obligation. What has become of our duty if parents are not concerned beyond all words as to the welfare of their little children. God gives us the children.

Many are the times that I have seen tears on the cheeks of even fathers. Who have said with reverence - (a little baby boy, or a darling little baby girl) came to our house last night. And I've thought more of these men in their honest tears and gratitude and reverence on their faces as they talked about the advent of a baby. The most interesting subject in all of the world that God ever sent to a family - really is a little baby.

Did you know, (training and taking care) of your children are rewarding. Not only now but it is for years to come. You watch them grow up. Who can ever forget how they looked - proud as that child marched away that day to school. The first day of school. Then, the years passed - and they watched him in the little programs at school or at church. And then, the years passed and they go off to college or to the university. And then they return with a diploma. And then they stand at the marriage altar - and on and on - the unfolding scene, in the lives of their children.

Now I want to say something very pointed -- how foolish it is for some parents to put their emphasis and interests on the temporal things of their children - and leave off the care for their spiritual welfare. It is disastrous, for parents today to spend the biggest part of their energies on temporal things. School activities, or little league activities - and to forget that these children ought to be heirs of immortality and that they are rendered to give an account to God...and they must live somewhere personally beyond the sunset and the night of this world to come.

It is for parent's to fail their children at this point.

A certain woman brought an exercise plan and paid for it - when the time for the use of the plan had expired, she went to the company complaining that she had not been helped at all. In fact, she said, she weighed more than she did before purchasing the plan. When the company checked its records on her attendance at the exercise classes, it discovered that she had attended only two of them.

For many families - their church is as ineffective as this. For the same reason, Christ can do much for our homes - if we will allow him to work through us and his church. However, the church can only be as effective as the family will let it be.

Many of you - let your family lifestyle exclude the church from your activities. Now you cannot expect Christ to have much of an impact upon your home. If you insulate your life and your family against the church, and all of the interests or most of the interest which many of the families have run contrary to the interests of the church in what they cultivate.

A church family was visited to determine why the parents and the children did not attend church. It was well known that most of the families time and money was spent in bars. The reason they gave - the visitor from the church, the reason for not attending was that the children do not seem to be interested in the church.

The thing that the family is interested in determines the interest.

What a family places in its schedule decides what is important. The failure of the church to provide the spirit of Christ, in the home - is usually the failure of its members to give it either strength or opportunity.

Families develop attitudes set toward the church.

Listen to the children of a family for awhile, and you will discover what the attitude set of a family is toward the church.

Many families see the church as an enemy. And they treat it with suspicion.

Some of the negative attitudes come from family attitudes toward the church. Because the family is more committed to money and material things than anything else. The church is charged with being interested only in money. Sometimes other bad motives are charged, against the church. And the family develops resistance to it's influence. To justify its criticism of the church. Lack of appreciation to those who teach the children in Sunday School.

I read about an experiment once in which the speaker was introduced to two different audiences.

The first he was introduced as a (criminal). The audience showed a very negative response to his speech.

The second group he spoke too, he was introduced as a (scientist) and he was applauded for the same speech. How the man was introduced determined the kind of reception that he received.

What I am saying is - how Christ is introduced in the home, and how his church is viewed in those homes, determines the kind of reception that he can be expected to receive in them. If he is introduced negatively, then the family is going to be the loser.

On the other hand, those who encourage attitudes toward the church, find that the family will be redeemed. And they will find valuable lessons that will be taught -- for man shall not live by bread alone.

The church can help and provide an atmosphere in your family - if you will let the church and Christ have first place.

You remember Christ spoke to Zacchaeus - touched his heart, and he responded with his home and with his life. story

A man came to a preacher and asked him to be his son's parole advisor. Since the preacher was not acquainted with the family - he inquired as to the family's background. He learned that the teen-aged boy had held up a service station. He asked what church the family had attended. Very abruptly, I have had 240 acres of land to pay for. And I haven't had much time for the church.!

The preacher replied, then you taught your son to get what you want materially. And he took the short cut to get it. The man now wanted the church to undo for his son - what he had spent the last 20 years teaching him. He had kept Christ from touching his life. And his family until now - but they finally needed the church.

When Christ comes into our homes - he changes all.

The treasurer of a church was surprised one day to receive a check for \$2,500 and a note. The man who sent it was a new member of the church. And the new Christian explained in his note that the check was in gratitude for what the church had done to save his family. He said, he knew if he had not been introduced to Christ, he would have been lost -- both his family and his house. He said the check was only a token of gratitude for what Christ had meant in his life and to his family. Now here was one man who allowed the church to help his family by responding to Christ. And Christ redeemed him.

The Bible tells you - take this child and rear it for me, says God. This is a divine commission that every child that comes into every home, and if the parents forget that - and if they fail at that point, then they are going down the road of heartbreak.

I remember reading a true illustration how that years ago a man's horses became frightened as he drove the wagon on the country road. And the horse rushed on despite his efforts to restrain them. And he was thrown from the wagon, but he held onto those lines, as on and on the frightened horses ran. He held on to them until he was dragged over the rough road, and bushes and fields. And his neighbors cried to him - let go, release the reins. And yet he held on until at last his weight brought those horses to a stand still. When the neighbors came up, they found him bruised and wounded. So that in a little while he died. They protested why did not you let the horses go man, now you have been dragged to your death. Why did not you turn the horses loose. And he whispered - look in the wagon! And they looked in the wagon, and there was his little baby boy two years old. The father had given his life to save that boy from death. Worthy, we applaud him. We lift off our hats. We bow before him. Such a wonderful effort.

Now what we need to be saying is - when we put our best on the temporal things of our children, and leave off the highest concern. Our best efforts should be for the spiritual. What shall it profit a man, and what shall it profit a boy or girl, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his soul.

The old prophet's question is right - as he asked the woman that day. Is it well with thee. Is it well with thy husband. Is it well with thy child.

Here is a cry for all of our homes - is it well with the head of the house. Is the father behaving himself as he should. Is the mother behaving herself like Hanna who gave her best for the little Samuel - who became one of the chief prophets of God in all of the years of history. Is the wife worthy as a help-mate of her husband.

What about the home. Are the children in that home being given to understand that the things of life may be comfortable and pleasing. But, the spiritual outweighs the whole world.

Christians, are we giving heed to these great matters, these chief matters. We shall have to come back to the home life of America. If we would somehow come back to the home. Someone has said, concerning an individual my heart aches when I see his only boy put the intoxicating cup to his lips at the banquets and dinners, we have attended. I've seen him stagger and shutter to think of the downfall and shame that awaits him.

I wonder if that father has done his best for that boy and for his home. Perhaps some of it goes right back to the home.

It is always a touching sight when you see a father come with his son, and a mother come and stand with her daughter. And plant a kiss on the cheek when there has been a glorious victory and decision made for Jesus. I think the angels hurry up and down to tell the story in Heaven - that the kingdom has come down to earth in the church.

Think tonight of the whole family being safe within the fold of God - consecrated and faithful. How glorious that is.

Bobby Burns wrote a poet - The Cotter's Saturday Night. That plain man, when the days work was done, called the family around him and opened the word of God and read. And then they sang together. And the old man knelt down and prayed. It is a beautiful

picture, of the Christian home. Often, I have had people say to me - they are all in but one. I have an aching heart for the 'one who is outside the arch of safety. And of course, the one that is lost - whether asleep or awake - that mother and father is conscious and prays for that person.

How can parents be comfortable and satisfied when their children are not anchored in our Saviour and Lord. If one of them is left out, how can we go our way. Carefree and unconcerned. When one child is drifting away from Christ and the great salvation. Oh surely, the consciousness of our own peace, joy, and safety, is right here.

What about sickness when it comes into the home. People want to help. There is scarcely a day that goes by but what there is not some voice that will come and say, Pastor, so and so is sick. Or in need. Or in the hospital. Will you stop by and pray for them. And you can hear from these voices as a person might say, the thing that hurts so much is that he is not a Christian at all. That is the thing that hurts.

What if the child should die in his sin? The word of God does not leave us in the dark about the destiny of those dying, unbelieving. But if that son should die in his sins -- better for a man that he should never have been born. Than he should miss the meaning of the duty and the mission of God. In giving his life to Jesus Christ.

I've seen parents bend over the bed of suffering and dying young people, who have passed away - and some of them without hope or without God! We parents should come down to death - what will become of our children when we are gone. Are we doing our best for them now. I've seen a number of parents, even in this church, meet that last great hour. That grim thing we call death. And they have met it in triumph. I have also heard others talk about the children being left behind. Think about a Christian

mother. She was nearing the end of her earthly journey, and the one concern I have as I leave the world is - that some of my children are not saved. Do your best for my children. God forgive me for my unfaithfulness. You, who are left, do your best for my children.

I think before that last hour comes, every parent wants to do their best for their children. And that hour is going to come quickly to all of us. What about your children. Have you here, any besides your son-in-law, your sons, your daughters. Whoever you have in this place, bound to you - get them out of this city. Destruction is coming to this old city of Sodom. Get them out.

What about your home life, Now if I had time for you - one by one - to answer the question now. Are they all in the arch of safety. Are there some who have made professions. Are there some in your family who have drifted away from God. What a challenge to parents. The father must see the boy and ask the question about his deep drifting. The mother must see the daughter, who is drifting and help her come back.

Are they all in - is it well with your husband, is it well with you, is it well with your children. Are there some drifting in danger - you cannot let it go at that. You should not be willing for the sun to go down on another day. When you talk to those that are drifting - if they have never heard before, you are to be concerned about them. God knows that Christ was willing to die for them.

A woman who lived in a beautiful house one day had a visit. The man who visited the home said, you must be very happy in this beautiful home. With a fine husband at

the head of the house. And she said in a moment, yes. And her eyes filled with tears as she could not restrain them. And in a moment, she went out of the room, and she came back in and she followed the man to the door and she said - you say I must be very happy in this beautiful home with my fine husband. He is a fine husband. But he is not a Christian. He is going the other way - and the children are following in his steps. He is not a Christian - but he is a fine man. He is dearer to me than anybody in the world. And then she waited a moment as she sobbed, and she said, I had rather live on bread and water and live in a tent - and have my husband and my children on the Lord's side with me. Than to dwell in the grandest palace on earth, with them going the wrong road.

You husbands, are you going to let the journey go through. To the nightfall with the wife trying to walk the upward way. And you with your down pulling influence and example. Take the children with you. You parents, you are willing to talk about success, and achievements, and other things - but what is the meaning and the mission of your home. There is no place like home.

Now in these closing moments, I want you to think of the bad outcome of Lot, in the case of this text. Although he was warned early to leave Sodom. He had a message from God and the messengers came and were sent. He hurried - he hesitated. And when at last he got somewhat awake and tried to get his son-in-laws with his daughters to go with him - they laughed him to scorn.

Why there is nothing to it. Or we would have gone long before. And the married daughters and their husbands and families, refused to accompany their father as he made his way slowly from the doomed city.

Now just to refresh our memory, the awful doom came to Lot's wife because of disobedience. And you will recall - his two single daughters who went with him from the doomed city, became the mothers of two of the most wicked tribes told of in the entire Bible.

It is no wonder that Lot as an old man, sat alone in his tent door, and the sun went down. And the nightfall came on. For a father to fail. Or a mother to fail. Or a home to fail. This is a failure so terrible that the demons must laugh. It is just like putting crepe on the door.

Quite often, you are speechless as you hear a father tell about a boy and his drinking. And then, tell the sad story of the delinquency in his home. Or you hear about a mother, saying my daughter is drinking at special gatherings. These such stories break the heart of the pastor, and such behavior really paves the way for the destruction and doom of the home.

But what about your home - is Christ Master there. He, alone, is the one to enable you as a parent, and to give you victory over all sin. Let Christ rule in your heart and do your best to win each member of your family. To the side and the service of Christ who is the only Saviour, and the one rightful Lord and Master of all.

Is someone listening who has never given his life to Christ, Or united with the church in his town or community. Are you one who lives as a resident, close by. The church welcomes you. They want to help you. And need it. And Christ wants to help us all.

Every parent should say without hesitation and without delay. I have had the mercy of God in my life and I am going to come in honest surrender. Have thine own way, Lord, have thine own way. Thou art the potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me after thy will, while I am waiting, yielded and still.

Who would say I want to follow Christ - I want to link my whole life to the church. And I want to obey Christ.