

Coach House Church BEACONS

DONT GET BURNT

2ND JULY 2021

I heard a story about an acquaintance the other day. He's a fireman and he was trying to help a man out of a burning building but he had a hard time being convinced that he needed to leave. He either didn't believe the house was on fire, didn't believe the fire was dangerous or didn't care.

There are always people like this with natural disasters. They would rather stay in their houses and see what happens.

The problem is that this is the way people often see it when we tell them about the gospel. Maybe they think that the danger isn't real or they'd rather die how they are than change.

There is a bible story that is similar to this.

A man named Lot (Abraham's nephew) lived in a place called Sodom and Gomorrah. The people in that place were really awful. Two angels came to the town and Lot let them stay at his house. The men from the town came to have sex with the two foreign men - or angels - and Lot protected them. Let's read what happens after that from Genesis 19: "The two men (angels) said to Lot, "Do you have anyone else here—sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here, because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the Lord against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it."

So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were pledged to marry his daughters. He said, "Hurry and get out of this place, because the Lord is about to destroy the city!" But his sons-in-law thought he was joking.

With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished."

When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the Lord was merciful to them."

The Lord then did destroy the city with burning Sulphur. Lot and his family were the only ones to survive and Lot's wife didn't even make it all the way as she looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt.

Lot's sons in law were warned about the disaster but chose to not believe it and so perished.

The bible is full of stories of rescue, where people were allowed to escape, but only by showing that they trusted in God. Noah's family had to get on a boat, Rahab had to put out her red cord, and we have to turn and repent from our sins.

This is a story of people running away from a place of sin, of people fleeing. They were told to not look back to the sin and that's good advice to us too. You might not literally be turned into a pillar of salt, but looking back at your sin can cause you lots of anguish that doesn't need to be had. God has moved on when we said sorry and so should we.

So we should run away from our sin, but how do we help others do the same?

There's no easy answer to this because at the end of the day that is a choice that others need to make. The sons-in-law in this story didn't make it out alive. They perished along with the rest of the town. This is sometimes the story of those people that are set on staying in their houses while they burn or the story of people who stay where they are in natural disasters.

But sometimes, like with our fireman friend, it is possible to coax someone out. Often you have to go in the burning house, you have to understand their position, whether it be that they're suffering or selfish or whatever it may be. I'm not saying you should join them in their sin. A fireman doesn't put himself in the fire. In fact, a fireman on fire is no help to anyone. We should avoid sinning at all costs. But we should be able to empathise. We should be someone that is there for people and gets involved with their lives. Then slowly it's possible to coax them out.

Just like for a fireman, none of it can be done without his protective gear, we cannot do this without the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one that tells us what we should say and how we should say it. The Holy Spirit is the one that brings us into the right place at the right time to be in the best position to help. If there is something more to be said He will tell us, if there is something more to be done, He will tell us. We just need to be faithful and follow His instructions.

This also means we need to be listening. We won't be able to follow anything if we aren't hearing what He has to say. So, my advice, as always, is to pray and read your bible. Pray that God will give these people opportunities to come to Him and will give you the right words to say in the moment and read your bible so you know the kinds of things God would want to say.

Let's be firemen, let's save people. But remember, it's not all up to you. You're not alone and these people have to choose to get out of the fire. So there's no pressure for you to be perfect but we should all try to do our best to help someone escape.



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