

## **Homily For Tuesday of the 13th Week of Ordinary Time- Year 1**

**St Peter's 8:30 AM Mass - July 2, 2019**

**Genesis 19:15-29 "**."

**Psalm 26 "**."

**Matthew 8:23-27 "**."

### **I'll Show You The Power of God**

#### **Introduction**

The question might be asked why the man named Lot seems to play such a surprisingly significant role in salvation history, which is the story of God's plan being worked out to redeem his people. Today, Lot entertains angels, avoids the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, but also loses his wife. It's a 'lot' to digest - pun intended.

Ultimately though, it is always about Jesus. The sheer power of life and death that the angels possess from God, Jesus possesses because he IS God. The mercy God shows to Lot, and later to the disciples in the middle of a life threatening storm, IS Jesus himself. He is the merciful one come down from heaven.

#### **Genesis**

The big picture is that, so early in the biblical record, God is ready to destroy an evil society for the second time. First it was by water in the flood, then Sodom and Gomorrah by sulphur and fire. We could look around and guess that we are approaching that kind of evil and see today's scriptures as a warning of the end times.

The Jews have been studying these scriptures longer than we have. There are two basic different traditions in the way the rabbis treat Lot. One is negative. For example, he was reluctant to leave his great wealth in an evil city in which he himself had chosen to live. That might explain his whining to the angels sent to save him from the coming destruction, then complaining again about having to go so far away and bargaining with God's messengers. In this view, Lot was only

shown mercy because of his relationship with Abraham, through whom God's promises would be fulfilled.

Another tradition treats him more gently. After all, he welcomed strangers into his home in a city which was so evil that it was forbidden to do so. We read that he kept the men of the town from attacking them. He also was negotiating to save as many of daughters and their families as possible. In that more kind view, Lot might pray words something like what we here from today's psalm: "Do not sweep me away with sinners, nor my life with the bloodthirsty, those in whose hands are evil devices."

What we do know comes to us from the angels. They are doing God's will, and not their own. And that will is to show mercy to Lot, whether he fully recognizes it or not, and even if he does not seem to embrace it. When he hesitates, they grab he and his wife and two daughters by the hand. Apparently, when angels grab your hand, resistance is futile.

And yet, there are consequences. Lot loses his wife because she looks back. Was this her own disobedience or was it because Lot had not properly modelled obedience to God and taught his family the same? Evidence suggests that Lot has to bear responsibility for this.

## **Matthew**

In the Gospel, we see again both the awesome power of God but also his great mercy to those who can't quite grasp it. The Greek term for 'storm' literally means earthquake. The sea is in violent turmoil. There is good reason for the disciples to be afraid. But Jesus speaks to the forces of nature which he created. He rebukes the wind and sea. Apparently, the word used is the same as the one he uses to command evil spirits.

Jesus effectively says to those whose faith in him is still weak, I will show you God's power over nature. Not only does he calm the storm down to a reasonable and useful level, but he effectively makes the weather disappear.

## **Explanation**

Jesus possesses the power of the creator, who alone can tame the sea. You can imagine the disciples trying to figure this out. Being amazed doesn't quite describe their astonishment. They are witnesses to what only God can do, but it is Jesus who is clearly the one in control.

According to Church Father, John Chrysostom, the wave tossed boat signifies the struggles of the Christian life. Endangered by the wind and fierce waves, God's people are awakened by spiritual assaults and become aware of their helplessness. We call upon the Lord for salvation and inner peace. The near presence of Christ assures us of our deliverance.

The power of God is for great power over the created world, his created world. But his power is also for great mercy. Remember that mercy is not mercy if it is deserved. That would simply be payment for service. Lot is a reminder of how mercy comes to us when we do not deserve it.

As with Lot, the Apostles are not worthy of being saved. Neither are we. They are us. We are them. Let us not think for a moment that we don't have exactly the same tendency to whine when we are uncomfortable, complain to God when we feel unfairly treated, or when we are afraid of natural phenomena.

### **Call To Action**

The calming of the sea again reminds that it is not because of their great faith that they were saved from the storm. It is neither because of our great faith that we are saved from our sins. Still, we must receive that grace. We are offered the hand of the angel of mercy. Let us not be left behind or lost in the storm. Let us turn again and again to the one who offers himself when we could not bring calm to our own lives.