

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

traditional land of the Three Fires Confederacy: the Odawa, Potawatami and Ojibwe.

Box 93, Dresden, Ontario NOP 1M0

519-683-2442 standrewspcdresden@gmail.com Rev. Andy Cornell

Worship This Week Oct. 15, 2023

Piano – Dorothy O'Neill

Sound/powerpoint/livestream – Jodi Rich

WELCOME & Prayer –

Two SONGS – Let there be praise, Praise the Lord with the sound of trumpet

YOUNG & YOUNG AT HEART – Andy (Rita doing Sunday School this week)

Kid's PRAYER –

SONG – Can a little child like me

RECEIVE OFFERING –

ANNOUNCEMENTS –

GOOD NEWS MOMENTS –

PRAYER REQUESTS/PRAYER – Israel and the residents of Gaza

SCRIPTURE – Genesis 19:12-29

Last week, we saw how Abraham was able to have a conversation with God. This was the exchange in which Abraham realized that the Lord was there with two angels on a mission to see the corruption of the city of Sodom first hand and then to bring judgment and wipe them out. The conversation was a reminder to us that we can talk to God, not to change His mind but to get a glimpse into how God is thinking, and perhaps to see God's plan. God wants to work with us as junior partners. It's why believers are given spiritual gifts and specific missions.

The conversation with the Lord revealed that Sodom would be destroyed and that the city had no more than 10 righteous people who would be saved. The mission of the two angels who accompanied the Lord was to bring Abraham's nephew Lot and his immediate family out before it happened. Here's where we pick it up, in Genesis 19:12.

Meanwhile, the angels questioned Lot. "Do you have any other relatives here in the city?" they asked. "Get them out of this place—your sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone else. 13 For we are about to destroy this city completely. The outcry against this place is so great it has reached the Lord, and he has sent us to destroy it." 14 So Lot rushed out to tell his daughters' fiancés, "Quick, get out of the city! The Lord is about to destroy it." But the young men thought he was only joking. 15 At dawn the next morning the angels became insistent. "Hurry," they said to Lot. "Take your wife and your two

daughters who are here. Get out right now, or you will be swept away in the destruction of the city!" 16 When Lot still hesitated, the angels seized his hand and the hands of his wife and two daughters and rushed them to safety outside the city, for the Lord was merciful. 17 When they were safely out of the city, one of the angels ordered, "Run for your lives! And don't look back or stop anywhere in the valley! Escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away!" 18 "Oh no, my lord!" Lot begged. 19 "You have been so gracious to me and saved my life, and you have shown such great kindness. But I cannot go to the mountains. Disaster would catch up to me there, and I would soon die. 20 See, there is a small village nearby. Please let me go there instead; don't you see how small it is? Then my life will be saved." 21 "All right," the angel said, "I will grant your request. I will not destroy the little village. 22 But hurry! Escape to it, for I can do nothing until you arrive there." (This explains why that village was known as Zoar, which means "little place.") 23 Lot reached the village just as the sun was rising over the horizon. 24 Then the Lord rained down fire and burning sulfur from the sky on Sodom and Gomorrah. 25 He utterly destroyed them, along with the other cities and villages of the plain, wiping out all the people and every bit of vegetation. 26 But Lot's wife looked back as she was following behind him, and she turned into a pillar of salt. 27 Abraham got up early that morning and hurried out to the place where he had stood in the Lord's presence. 28 He looked out across the plain toward Sodom and Gomorrah and watched as columns of smoke rose from the cities like smoke from a furnace. 29 But God had listened to Abraham's request and kept Lot safe, removing him from the disaster that engulfed the cities on the plain.

MESSAGE –

We've all seen them. Billboards which warn that the end is near. Repent! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved from sin. There's one on eastbound Queens Line (old Highway 2) between Tilbury and Chatham which asks in bold letters, "What time is it? It's time to believe." Nothing new in these things. Believers have spent a great deal of money on these warnings for hundreds, even thousands of years. We don't see billboards as much as before. A new generation is using social media. A favourite approach is to record a warning while driving down the road and posting it on Tik Tok. They and their messages aren't taken seriously for the simple fact that the end didn't happen. People are born, they live and die and the billboards remain. Every generation puts up new signs and the cycle continues. The temptation is to dismiss all of these people as fools who get caught up in their emotions. The fact that they often don't get

their facts straight and misquote scripture doesn't help. But what gets me is that every generation produces a fresh new crop of prophets who go into the world, using whatever technology they have, and deliver warnings such as these.

I wonder if something similar was going through the minds of Lot, his wife, their daughters and their fiances when the two angel rescuers showed up. They had to be practically dragged from the city. Lot believed them at first. He ran to warn his sons-in-law. "Quick, get out of the city! The Lord is about to destroy it." But the young men thought he was only joking. The young mens' skepticism might have made Lot pause and ask himself what he's doing. Lot appeared to have a change of heart.

The two angels' insistence should have been an eye opener. Lot and his immediate family were righteous in God's eyes and they would have not have taken part in the sinful behaviours of Sodom. That's why the Lord sent those two angels directly to Lot in order to rescue them. Did he get cold feet? Did he doubt the angels? Was a part of him caught up in the local culture? And even though they knew it was going to be wiped out, they still found it hard to go.

And then there's the curious fate of Lot's wife, who turned and looked back at the city. She turned into a pillar of salt. Not immediately. What likely happened is that she wandered away from the safety of the village and was hit by flying lava.

It's not easy to leave places behind, even if they are not good for us. We get attached to our homes and surroundings. Moving is not fun.

We can't criticize Lot and his family too much, otherwise we'd be pointing the fingers right back at ourselves. All of this speaks to our great difficulty as humans to live pure lives. We can declare that we want to. We can stand before the entire assembly and vow to pursue a life that is devoted to the pursuit of God's will, to sin no more. We may even believe in our hearts that we can do that. But we will always fall short. Deep in our hearts, there's an admission that the dark forces which control the world and influence every living soul will eventually overtake us.

We are like Lot and his daughters and their fiances. We are like Lot's wife. We are also similar to Abraham and Sarah, who received a great promise but still didn't trust God. Their faith was built gradually, after trial and error, sin and forgiveness.

We are wise not to be Lot's future sons-in-law. They did not make it out. They didn't believe Lot when he came to want them the night before. And in the morning, "the angels seized his (Lot's) hand and the hands of his wife and two daughters and rushed them to safety outside the city, for the Lord was merciful." (v. 17) No mention of their fiances; they were left behind.

We are wise to live in obedience to God, adhering to faith in Him alone, committing our lives to Him on an hourly basis, constantly checking to see if we are on the right path.

Jesus pointed to the destruction of Sodom as a warning how we are to live.

26 "When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah's day. 27 In those days, the people enjoyed banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 "And the world will be as it was in the days of Lot. People went about their daily business—eating and drinking, buying and selling, farming and building— 29 until the morning Lot left Sodom. Then fire and burning sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 Yes, it will be 'business as usual' right up to the day when the Son of Man is revealed. 31 On that day a person out on the deck of a roof must not go down into the house to pack. A person out in the field must not return home. 32 Remember what happened to Lot's wife! 33 If you cling to your life, you will lose it, and if you let your life go, you will save it. (Luke 17:26-33)

Jesus said these words 2,000 years ago. Some in his day thought his return would be imminent or at least in their lifetimes. Throughout history, believers have looked at current events and wondered if the time was arriving. Today is no different.

The Apostle Paul told Timothy what would happen. "You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. 2 For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. 3 They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. 4 They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. 5 They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly.

That sounds a lot like today's world. But I have no doubt someone reading this 50 years ago might have said the same thing. Or 100 years ago, or 500.

In the end, we can be certain of only two things. First, the return of Christ won't be obvious. Second, we're getting closer every day – all the more reason to be on the watch. Again, we are Lot and his family. We are Lot's wife. We are Abraham and Sarah. The Lord forgives us and rescues us. We are reminded that the Lord warns many, but not everyone pays attention. Look what happened to the fiances.

I'm not saying that the end is near. Only that it's closer. Whether it's tomorrow or 10 years or 100 years or 1,000 years doesn't matter. We are invited to live as if Jesus is on His way. And not just for all of humankind but for us alone. AS the song goes, "live like you're dying."

We are invited to examine our own lives in consultation with the Holy Spirit and ask in what ways we are looking back with nostalgia at what we left behind or are resisting God's voice, which is telling us to leave our sins behind. Each of us holds onto something we need to leave behind.

Let this be our prayer: Father, if we don't know what we need to put in the past, show us. If we do know and are refusing to do it, then deal with us accordingly. If we know and are trying but without success, awaken in us a greater desire to be more disciplined. In all things, help us repent and live lives that are worthy of those who are privileged to call you our Father and Jesus our brother. Help us emerge from our lives of sin and live in freedom from the mess, the pain, the aftermath and byproducts of sin. Help us be joyful and live in partnership with you. Amen.

HYMN – 802 For the fruits of all creation

BENEDICTION –

NEW PRAYER

1. For local believers planning to travel to Israel in the next few weeks. If trip is canceled – that will be rescheduled.
2. For the staff and residents of Park Street Place and Soaring Eagle Retirement Living.

CONTINUE TO PRAY

Health and healing –

1. Becky Desjardine, Margaret Follows, Ron Mason, Bette Northcott, Karen Northcott, Tom O'Neill, Cherie Pegg, Sandra Pegg, Julie Shaw, Sandra Whitson
2. Anyone seeking or undergoing treatment for addictions
3. Anyone wrestling with anxiety and depression
4. For all those recovering from surgical procedures.

There are many whose names are not listed here – God knows who they are and what they need.

Seniors and shut ins – Betty Bradley at Albany Retirement Home Petrolia, Dianne Richards at Park Street Place, Jim Lusk at Oaks Wallaceburg, Lane Douglas and Ross Fuchs at Fairfield Park in Wallaceburg, Aubrey Butler at home.

Board of managers – Wendy Weston (chair), Will Brewer, Linda Malott, Jenn Mason, Von Parking, Mark Richards, Jodie Rich, Dan Shaw, Bob Vriesema and Mike Wicks.

WHAT'S UP:

Weekly email – Send info to our administrative assistant Lily Carroll
standrewspcdresden@gmail.com

Midweek discussion – Wednesdays at 7 p.m. St. Andrew's. We're reading "Prayer: does it make any difference?" by Philip Yancy. DVD teaching and a reader's guide. Co-lead by Pastor Andy and Pastor Rob Elka from Evangel.

Elders on session – Mark Labadie 519-359-4842, Cindy Brewer 519-683-4113, Sheila Eves 519-683-4148, Andrew Neely 519-359-8903, Mark Richards 519-809-9175 and Julie Shaw 226-627-1953.

Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes – now available. Return by Nov. 12.

Legacy Grandparenting Summit – New Life Assembly in Petrolia is the closest host congregation where this can be viewed on Sat. Oct. 21 from 9-4:30 p.m. Early bird deadline to register is Sept. 18.

<https://brushfire.com/legacycoalition/simulcast/553755>. This website provides all the details:

<https://legacycoalition.com/summit/>

GOOD NEWS MOMENTS

DATES

Oct. 29 – Anniversary service with message from Rev. Mike Maroney and music by Marc & Kim Reid

Oct. 30 – Session meets

WAYS OF GIVING:

E-transfer st.andrewspcdresdenon@gmail.com. If required by your bank, our treasurer's name is Linda Moore. Her number is 226-627-2727. If you are asked for a security question, please contact your local bank branch.

Bring envelope on Sunday or if you have a key, leave it in the treasurer's mailbox.

Mail it to the church, PO Box 93 Dresden. NOP 1M0.

Gift Cards – You pay face value for the gift cards and the church buys them at a discount through Chatham Christian Schools. Next deadline Oct. 29. Cards will be delivered to the church.

We're making it easier to place gift card orders.

1. Rather than attach order forms with the weekly email, they'll be permanently found on the website. <https://standrewsdresden.ca/> under the "giving" tab

2. Send e-transfer AND order forms to st.andrewspcdresdenon@gmail.com. Deadline is typically the last Monday of the month.

Click **Gift Card Order Form**.