



Wednesday Prayer

7th Sunday after Pentecost – Misinterpretations & Complicated Justice

Then the LORD said, “How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin! I must go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know.”

Genesis 18:20-21

In Genesis 18 we read that God has been hearing an outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and seeks to discover the truth about the inhabitants of these cities. He has an encounter with Abraham, where Abraham asks God not to destroy all of the inhabitants of the city if there are at least a few righteous people in the mix.

In Genesis 19, we read that every single man from the city of Sodom, both young and old, descends upon the house of Lot so that they can rape two angels whom Lot has invited in. Lot begs them not to act so wickedly, and offers instead, his own daughters for them to do with as they please! Later in chapter 19, Lot is sexually assaulted by those daughters. These chapters in Genesis have been used incorrectly in the church as an indictment against homosexuality. But that is not what they are about. They are about an attempted gang rape by a group of wicked and corrupt men. They are about a man willing to sacrifice his own daughters, and about those daughters turning around and abusing their father. God destroys the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah due to egregious acts of idolatry, corruption, exploitation and more.

These chapters are uncomfortable and full of ugliness, but they also remind us of God’s disdain for sexual violence. Our call to prevent the sexual exploitation of children is aligned with the values of scripture, and there can be no compromising on the demand for a safe world for God’s children!

This ministry is vitally important; so, we ask God to give us the wisdom, fortitude, energy, and strength to continue working towards our vision of raising healthy generations free from sexual exploitation. We can start by creating and following through on child safety policies in every congregation. We can pray by name for every child in our midst, affirming their worth as beloved children of God. We can equip youth with the knowledge and skills they need to build safe and healthy relationships. And we can continue to share the message that sexual abuse and exploitation in any form is an abomination that goes against the very heart of God.

God of love and justice, we cry out to you as we grieve for your children who have been hurt and abused by others. We ask for your love and your Spirit to fill us with all goodness and strength, so that we can work with you to create a world that is free of sexual violence. Help us see each other through your eyes, and care for one another with a Christ-like love. Amen.

Written by Deacon Erica Larson, Director of Faith Formation at Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota.