Life Lessons from Famous Failures (Pt. 3)
"LOT, the MUGWUMP" (2 Peter 2:7-9)

INTRO: Lot's story is one of the saddest in all the Bible. He was a classic *mugwump,* someone who sits on a fence with his *mug* on one side and his *wump* on the other (a fence-sitter). Mugwumps try to live in two worlds, wanting some of what each offer. Too many Christians are like Lot. They want to know they'll go to heaven when they die, but want what world offers too. Up & down, back & forth, in & out of church and world. For every committed Abraham you find many more Lots. Lot, the mugwump, wasted his Christian life. Let's look at his story and learn from his failures.

I. THE *STORY* OF LOT (Gen. 11:26-32)

Lot started well as Abraham's nephew. He had privilege of journeying with Abraham to Canaan. He enjoyed a godly atmosphere, but problems developed.

II. THE *SINS* OF LOT (Gen. 13:1-4)

A. (Gen. 13:5-13) SELFISH, GREEDY CHOICE

1. Conflict (13:5-7) – wealth caused problems (often does). Solomon, wealthiest man in Bible (Eccl. 5:10, 13) The saddest thing about this conflict is it was carried on before pagans. A lost world loves to examine the dirty linen of God's people.
2. Choices (13:8-13) – based upon: sight (10) and worldliness (10). He had developed a taste for Egypt. Abraham took Lot out of Egypt, he never got Egypt out of Lot. "Lot chose for himself" (11) and pitched his tents near Sodom (12).

B. (Gen. 19:1-8) ERODING MORAL STANDARDS (compromise)

1. Worldliness is a slow, degenerating process (13:10 looked up and saw; 13:12 moved near; 14:12 living in Sodom – 19:1). He became Mr. Big in Sodom.
2. Result was eroding moral standard (19:1-8). Willing to sacrifice his own daughter's chastity.

III. THE *STATE* OF LOT (2 Pet. 2:7-9) – Saved or Lost?

It would be easy to conclude Lot was not a saved man (Ch. 19). He offers his virgin daughters to his vile friends (8). His future sons-in-law think he's a fool and laugh at his witness (14). He hesitates when he is forced to leave Sodom (16). He even requests where he'll go for refuge (18). He has no moral standards, he is weak, he is foolish and stubborn. Yet, Peter says he is a "righteous" man (3 times). He was a saved man, but as by fire. Lot's ending was sad (19:30-38). His final days full of darkness and sin as he commits incest in a cave. The children from this, the Moabites & Ammonites, have ever been Jewish enemies.

IV. LIFE LESSONS FROM LOT'S FAILURES

A. *Starting well is no guarantee you'll finish well*. Lot had a great start. He made good decisions early, but he faded. All Christian start at same place. Must also run well to finish well (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

B. *Wrong choices can be costly*. Choices make or break you. He chose the wrong: mate (got in Egypt?), place, friends (19:6). Choices cost him everything: wife, wealth, witness, kids, opportunity to count for God, etc. Each day is full of choices that have consequences. Every choice is an opportunity. Lot Christians make too many bad choices. Josh. 24:15 tells us…

C. *Lot* Christians *place material gain over spiritual growth*. Surely, Lot knew of God's promise to Abraham. Yet, he chose the material over spiritual. He lived by sight because he was selfish and greedy. Lot Christians set no value on God's promises. Only care for self. He separated from godly influence and fellowship. Lot Christians don't give these much value. Lot had everything Abram had, except for an altar. Lot Christians place little value on worship. He gained what Sodom had to offer, but he paid for it spiritually. Be careful where you pitch your tent!

ILLUS: A wealthy rancher… Jesus tells us in Matt. 6:33 to…

D. *Lot* Christians *tend to know far more than they practice*. He knew: Sodom's condition. God sent angels to warn him. God was going to judge the city. There was danger and Lot went to warn his sons-in-law. Heard angels telling him to get out, yet he hesitated. Lot Christians have too much hesitation and too little practice. Always slow to obey when entangled with the world.

E. *The path leading to carnality, compromise, and worldliness should be avoided.* Lot looked, moved near, then moved into Sodom. The path to worldliness is: friendship (Jam.4:4), then love for (1 Jn. 2:15-17), next is conformity (Rom. 12:2), and finally is judgment (1 Cor. 11:32). You can't be the world's friend and God's person. A genuine believer is never at home in the world (2 Pet. 2:7-8 "distressed" and "tormented"). Lot Christians are torn Christians. No one more miserable than a mugwump who is where he shouldn't be, with who he shouldn't be, doing what he shouldn't do.

F. *Lot* Christians *underestimate the intoxicating power of sin*. The sucking effect of sin is powerful. Sin will always take you farther than you planned to go, hold you longer than you wanted to stay, cost you more than you planned to pay.

G. *God still rescues Lot Christians* (2 Pet. 2:9). God's rescue of Lot in ch. 14 was a warning he failed to heed. In Ch 19 God rescues him because of Abraham (19:16,29). No telling how many carnal Christians have been rescued because of the influence of an Abraham. God rescued Lot but never hear of him again. Lot's 20 yrs. in Sodom were fruitless for God.

CONC: Sad, but true, Lot Christians represents too many believers today. Lot failed, but unlike Adam, Eve, & Abraham, he never recovered. Question for you: "*Are you a mugwump*?" Sooner or later, you'll have to decide which side of the fence you prefer. God has a way of shaking the fence to force a decision. Will it be the things of God or the things of this world?

ILLUS: Lot chose to live to near the edge. Eskimos kill a wolf…