

When a wild animal is infected with full-blown rabies, not only the best option, but the only option is to destroy the rabid creature. Otherwise, it will infect others, both animals and people, who become its unwitting victims.

Such was the case with Sodom and Gomorrah. These cities were infected with full-blown rabies. Their wickedness was out of control. Unless they were destroyed, their rabid wickedness would not stop devouring victim after victim.

The men of the city of Sodom even lusted after the two angels who appeared as men to Abraham, hell-bent on forcing themselves upon them. Evil had certainly found a home in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Just before our text, God tells Abraham what He is about to do to these wicked cities. We might assume that Abraham would reply, “Well, it’s about time!” This is, after all, how we respond to the gross wickedness we see all around us. It’s out of control. “Isn’t it about time, God, to do something? Even something drastic?”

Abraham does reply to God, yet in a way different from what we might expect. He prays. He prays for the righteous people who live in these cities. There must be righteous ones there. His nephew, Lot, for example. Lot lives in Sodom with his family. And so, we see Abraham praying for his nephew, but also for the others within these cities who are not infected with rabid wickedness. “*Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?*” he says to God, “*Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked!*”

Now this is a prayer we can understand. God rescued Noah and his family, the only righteous ones on the entire globe. He did not destroy them in the Flood along with the wicked ones.

But Abraham is not praying for God to rescue Lot and the others who are righteous in Sodom and Gomorrah. He prays that God would spare the entire place because of them. Abraham bottoms out at ten, but his final plea is that God would not destroy even the wicked ones, the ones infected with rabies, for the sake of the ten righteous ones, if indeed there are ten.

Maybe Abraham has not been kept up to date about the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah. Perhaps if he really knew how far evil had gotten out of control in these cities, he would not pray so fervently. But no, Abraham is fully aware, and still he prays. He prays that God would show mercy to the righteous ones, but also that His mercy would extend to the wicked.

Abraham surely remembered what God had once told him, “*In you (Abraham), all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*” Not some of the families; all of the families. Not just families who have it together. Every family. Even families that are torn apart. Families who bite and devour each other. Families who are far from righteous, who need desperately, God’s righteousness in Christ Jesus.

Sodom and Gomorrah were cities that were made up of families. Wickedness abounded like rabies in these families. But still, they were families. And God had told Abraham that in him all the families of the earth shall be blessed. And so we see Abraham acting as a blessing for the

families of Sodom and Gomorrah. He prays for the righteous families, yes, but also for those families that are unrighteous.

Jesus is called the “Son of Abraham.” He is the Seed of Abraham in which all the families of the earth are blessed. Jesus, on the cross, prays as Abraham had done long before. He prays, not however for the righteous, but for the wicked. Because all are wicked. Scripture clearly says that *“all have sinned and have become corrupt...there is no one righteous, no not one...there is none who does good and sins not.”*

Abraham reduced the number of the righteous down to ten. Jesus reduces it to one. “For the sake of one who is righteous, dear Father, forgive them all.” Jesus is that one. No one is righteous, for all have sinned. And so, Jesus came to be the Righteous One, so that for His sake, the wicked ones are declared righteous.

For you, dear sinner, for you Jesus became the One who was bitten and devoured by the rabid Satanic beast, and by your own sins. Jesus put Himself into those deadly jaws on the cross to keep them from devouring you.

I do not think that your past is as rabidly wicked as were the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. But even if it is, for the sake of the Righteous One Jesus Christ, God forgives you. He forgives all the wickedness in your heart and life.

His promise to you is in your baptism into Christ Jesus. God will not sweep you away with all the wicked on the Day of Judgment. As He rescued Noah and his family, as He rescued Lot and his family, so will He rescue you, and through you, rescue also your family.

As Abraham was a blessing to all the families of the earth, so now you are a blessing to your family. As Abraham prayed even for the families of Sodom and Gomorrah, you are able to pray daily for your family. And for your family, be the example of faithfulness as you trust in Jesus and in His righteousness for you.

Cover your family with Jesus by your prayers, by your example, by your witness. Pray especially that they return to their baptism into Christ daily. Because in baptism you, and they, are covered with Jesus’ blood; covered with His innocence, and righteousness, and are blessed now and forever. Amen.