

THE VINE OF SODOM
March 27, 2016 morning service
Deuteronomy 32:32-33

Take your Bible and go to Deuteronomy chapter 32 and the 32nd verse. This is my 44th Easter to preach the gospel. I preached it when I was 17 years old for the first time and I preached on Easter with a tag on my new suit on my right arm. Since that day til this I have never even worn new socks on Easter Sunday morning nor have I ever taken a text like I am taking today to preach on this Easter 2016. Moses wrote a song. Boy, we've had some great songs this morning, haven't we? Wow, what music. Thank you, Brother Jon. Moses wrote a song and in that song he wrote these words in Deuteronomy 32, verse 32.

*“For their vine is from the vine of Sodom,
And from the fields of Gomorrah;
Their grapes are grapes of poison,
Their clusters, bitter.
Their wine is the venom of serpents,
And the deadly poison of cobras.”¹*

Speaking about wickedness he said that their vine is from the vine of Sodom. Sodom is the epitome of unbelief, vain glory, and perversion. When you hear the word Sodom you think of the opposite of God. You think of a city that God rained down fire and brimstone and burned it to the ground. The Bible says about Sodom that her sin was exceedingly great in Genesis 18:20. The Bible says about Sodom that her sexual perversion was rampant in Genesis 19. The Bible says about Sodom that there was no remnant of righteousness within her in Genesis 18:32. Abraham begged God, “If we find 50, if we find 45, if we find 40, if we find 30, if we find 20, if we find 10, will you spare the city?” And God said, “Yes.” They could not find ten righteous as a remnant in Sodom.

Ezekiel 16:49-50 says about Sodom from the mouth and the pen of that old prophet Ezekiel, Sodom was a place of arrogance, of selfishness where they would not feed the poor. It was a haughty city and it was filled with abomination. In our text today, Moses said that Sodom was like a vine and I share with you today that Sodom is like a vine in American culture. It is growing like kudzu. You cannot keep it quiet. You cannot stop it. It is on the crawl. It is on the go. It is on the loose and Sodom is among us and America is sliding toward Sodom itself. You see, Sodom had no churches but we've got thousands. Sodom had no preachers but we've got thousands. Sodom had no Bible but you've got scores of them in your own house. This text says that the spirit of Sodom poisons the mind, makes bitter the soul, and it kills like the venom of a serpent our spirit. It poisons our mind, it bitters our soul, and it kills our spirit.

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Beloved, America, America, our beloved America slides towards Sodom today. You see, we write "In God We Trust" on our money but we pass laws that say to little children and to grown adults you can no longer pray in places where you used to. Our families are so shattered and broken that 40% of children in our culture today live in homes where there is no daddy. School teachers have become more like social workers because they have to care for kids coming from a broken home. Our culture is raising hopeless teenagers where 6,500 kids last year took their own life and 400,000 tried to do it. We live in a culture where crime and drugs are rampant and states like Colorado have set the agenda where we'd rather legalize as criminalize the drug culture.

Tomorrow, tomorrow, on Monday in America, 3,500 little babies will be torn from the womb and on Tuesday 3,500 more little kids will be murdered in their mother's womb. What ought to be the safest place in all the world becomes a death chamber. I'm telling you, our culture is sliding to Sodom. The only thing that keeps America from the smoke of the fire and wrath of God is the mercy of our great sovereign and the remnant of His church.

I've got good news today. There's a remnant alive in our culture. There's a remnant alive. I call it the resurrection remnant. It's those that believe that Jesus is God, that He did die, and that He did rise, and He is coming back again. I'm telling you, there is a resurrection remnant church. Now here's what I want to tell you about that remnant church. It is a conscience minority, not a majority. It is a conscience minority surrounded by an arrogant, militant paganism. That's America. The church is a conscience minority. Forget about caring today. Forget about having the majority of anything. The remnant resurrection church was in Acts and it is in America today a conscience minority surrounded by a growing, arrogant, militant paganism all around us.

I'm here to tell you, we've got something on our side the world doesn't have on theirs. His name is Jesus and He's alive from the dead, and ain't nobody ever seen anything like Him before. They'll never see anything like Him until they get to judgment again. He is Christ. He is King. He is President. He's Potentate. He's President of the board. I'm telling you, He's the boss in charge and you better get on His side, not just coming to church every now and again. You better be a conscience, radicalized, resurrection remnant church.

I hear a whole lot about these Muslims that are radicalized. That doesn't bother me. What I want to see is if we can get some resurrection Christians radicalized on the resurrection. If we'd ever get radical about the resurrection, we'll change this world. We'll turn it upside down. It's been done once before. It can be done again but it's going to take a radicalized resurrection remnant. It doesn't care what the world thinks about it. She's going to have to say, "I don't care if they tax me or burn me down, we'll stand til Jesus comes."

What kind of church is it we ought to be? Well let me just describe it to you in just a few short phrases this morning. I'm going to give a testimony and have an

invitation and somebody's here that's never been saved is going to get up out of your seat and walk down here and get saved today. Somebody's here on Easter morning, never joined Olive, and ought to come move your membership right here into our church. There are people here today that have been out in the far country and ought to come fall in this altar in repentance and say, "Pastor, I'm a part of the church but I'm not part of a radicalized remnant resurrection crowd. I'm ready to put it all on the altar."

What will describe us when the church becomes the church? You see, friend, I want to tell you what's happened to us. The church in Acts turned the world upside down because they didn't have anything but Jesus to trust. We've become fat and breathless with our own prosperity and we've so over-organized ourselves that we think we can organize ourselves out of any mess we get into but it's not organization that gets us there. It's agony that gets us there. It's calling out to God. What describes us when we become those people? Well let me just name a few things for you. You can jot these down if you want to. You don't have to. Whatever God needs in you, He'll probably just burn it in your heart this morning.

Number one. This radicalized resurrection remnant church believes that Jesus rose from the dead. Now let me tell you, if you really believe that, it changes everything. The Muslims don't believe it. The Mohammedans don't believe it. The Buddhists don't believe it. The Jews don't believe it. Nobody else has got a faith like this. I'm telling you, what we believe is that a man like you died. They put Him in a cave and the stone couldn't hold Him and three days later He came forth out of the ground. The best quote I've seen about resurrection is this. Eat, drink, and be merry because yesterday we were dead. You'll get that in a minute. We used to be dead but now thank God we're alive. If you ever sink your soul into a resurrected Christ, it changes everything, the whole landscape.

Number two. This kind of resurrection remnant church believes nothing is impossible for God. They believe any prodigal can come home. They believe God can reach into the weeds of sin and draw a man out. They believe that God can do anything. They believe that God can draw a straight line with a crooked stick. They believe that God can set a nation on edge of where it needs to be. They believe that God can judge America if that's what it takes in order to get us back on the straight and narrow. A resurrection remnant church believes nothing's impossible with God.

Number three. A resurrection remnant church believes the gospel message can save anyone. Amen. I don't care who they are. Hey, I was walking yesterday before it started coming a little shower. It rained, I'm telling you what, it rained. I got up – I rarely do it. I watched the weather channel and the guy on the weather channel said yesterday – I've never heard this phrase before. He said, "In the panhandle of Florida, it's raining cats and dogs and hand grenades." That was his word. Then there was just lightning all over the deal. Buddy, it was but we got a little break and I took a walk. I was praying while I was walking. I was cheating. I said, "Lord, let me meet that guy again. I'd never met him before. I met him last week but I don't believe he knows You."

Because I introduced myself to him and told him who I was, that I pastored Olive Baptist Church and he said, "Well I don't go to a church." I just went on down.

I said, "Lord, help me to see him again." I'm telling you, I didn't get to the first curb and here he came. I pulled out my stuff and put it in my pocket. I said, "Hey, I want to tell you, I forgot when we met yesterday," and I called his name. I said, "I forgot to tell you that the church over here where I pastor and you said you know where it is, you're invited to come. I wanted you to know. You're just welcome to be here." He said, "Well that would probably be a little awkward." He said, "You see, I'm a dedicated and committed atheist." I said, "That's alright. You're welcome to come. I'd love for you to come. Just know I love you and I'll see you around the circle." I found me a prospect. I know his name, got his address. You say, "Well God can't save him." Let me tell you, friend, I believe the gospel can save anybody and a resurrection remnant church doesn't give up on anyone. They don't believe anybody's so far gone that the hand of God cannot reach and save. Hallelujah to the uttermost that they believe a gospel message can save anybody.

Lord God, where are these girls that got baptized this morning? I was sitting up here. Where are ya'll? Stand up, you girls that got baptized. Stand up over here. Alright, here they are. Amen. They came up out of the water high fiving and hallelujahing. Let me tell you, friend, when your sins have been washed away and you understand that you're a rank pagan without God and He's reached and saved you, it'll make you shout. You see, some of you have forgotten how to shout. You forgot where you came from. Let me tell you, friend, you came from the tar pit of hell. That's where God saved you from, all of us. I believe a resurrection remnant church, the gospel can save anybody. Hallelujah. Can I get a witness here? Ya'll are killing me this morning. Yeah.

Number four. A resurrection remnant church is willing to pay any price for the Lord. Pay any price. This is a radical obedience. If some of you are going to be obedient to God, it'll cost you your job. It'll cost you some work. There are some people, it'll cost you your family. There are some people that are going to be baptized in this church today that come out of a different culture than ours. Let me tell you, their family may very well ostracize them when they say yes to Christ but that's what a radical remnant church does. It pays any price for the Lord. Radical. Radical obedience. Whatever God says do, they do it.

Number five. A resurrection remnant church believes Jesus is coming again. Friend, this ought to encourage you. Every time I turn on the television they're telling me I'm not going to have enough money to live as long as I'm planning to live. All the commercials tell me. You've got to have more money. You've got to do this. I've been working on it now for all these years and I think, Lord, am I going to be able to make it? My mother-in-law's over here in a retirement center and I take care of her money and about every six months she'll ask me. She'll say, "Now how much longer can I pay to be in here?" I told her, I said, "Mary, when you turn 100 we're out of money and when you turn 100 and I don't have any more money I'm coming in here to live with you,

alright? And somebody else is going to pay. That's your daughter and your son and my children and my grandbabies. They're going to have to pay."

They just get me all worried. Any of ya'll worry you're going to have enough money to retire? They just put that on you all the time. Hey, I've got good news. He's coming again. He's coming for the rich and He's coming for the bankrupt. Hallelujah. He's coming to the big house and He's coming to the retirement village to get you out of there. He's coming again. Dear friend, as cloudy as it is today, He could come today. The Bible says there are going to be clouds. Well this would be a great day for Jesus to come. Amen. I wish He'd come between these two services. Some of ya'll could preach the 11:00 then. I'll be gone. Let me tell you, if He comes, you wouldn't go home for early dinner if you're not ready. I guarantee you, you'd be crying out to God.

A resurrection remnant church really believes that Jesus is coming. I remember that story, those little kids in that home that Dr. Vines used to tell us about that we need to go preach in the children's home. He said he noticed that the windows would be smudged up and he asked them, "Why are the windows not clean?" They said, "Well we had a guy in chapel last week telling all these kids that the Lord's going to come from the eastern sky and for the next two days you can't keep their little hands and their noses from being against the window on the eastern side of the building. They're watching and looking saying, 'Will it be today?'" Oh that God would give us childlike faith to live in such a way.

I'm not telling you don't prepare. I'm not telling you don't get your annuity ready. I'm working on mine every day. I send my stuff every month but I'm telling you, I've got my hands more than ever pressed against the eastern window, my nose smudging up the glass to say, "Even now, come, Lord Jesus." I'm telling you, a resurrection remnant church believes He's coming again.

Number six. This resurrection remnant church believes Jesus is the only Savior, that there's no other way. There's not a religion that will get you there. There's not a baptism that will get you there. They believe that Jesus, when He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life and no man goes to the Father but that He comes through Me," that is what a resurrection – let me tell you, friend, when you begin to speak out the exclusivity of Christ, this world will cut your throat. They don't mind you saying Jesus is one of the great ways but when you begin to say that He's the only way and you're right and they're wrong, they will come against you. That's alright. Remember, we are a conscience minority surrounded by arrogant, militant paganism and they hate the church. Our job as a resurrection remnant church is to lift Him up, lift Him up. Friend, it's not our job to save people. If you lift Him up the Bible says He'll draw men, women, boys, and girls to Himself. Lift Him up. He'll draw. Lift Him up. He'll draw. It's not just my job to lift Him up. It's your job to lift Him up. Wherever you are, lift Him up, lift Him up, lift Him up. He'll draw you unto Himself.

I was walking around the circle yesterday and after I dealt with my first prospect I got halfway around and met another guy. I never had seen him before. He stopped. I

think I'm going to get me a dog. Everybody stops and talks to a dog. Have you noticed that? Especially if you've got it on a good chain. That boy had a dog. I stopped and scratched him. I said, "Is he going to bite me?" He said, "No, he won't." He got up on my leg and I scratched him. It gave us a great place to talk.

He said, "Preacher, are you looking for a big day on Sunday?" I said, "Well I am." He said, "I drive by y'all's place. It looks like ya'll have a big day every Sunday." I said, "Well it's busy. You and your family go to church anywhere?" "Well, no, we really don't have time to do that." Let me tell you, friend, there's a day coming when everybody's going to find time. Sodom never had time. Sodom didn't have a Bible, didn't have a church, they didn't have time. I'm telling you, when the fire starting falling, they found time. When judgment begins to ring, I'm telling you, this world finds time to cry out unto God.

There's one more thing I want to share with you. Not only does this resurrection remnant church believe Jesus rose from the dead and there's nothing impossible and the gospel message can save anybody, willing to pay any price, Jesus is coming again, He's the only way, but I'm telling you one last thing. What the resurrection remnant church does is that she guards the unity of the church. She knows her believers and brothers in Christ and she guards the church.

Now last Sunday night here we had a meeting with the Pace Assembly crowd and we're going to do it again. As a matter of fact, let me look right here. I need to tell ya'll this because I've got time. Ya'll are not in a hurry to get wet anyway, are you? It's 168 days, 7 hours, 35 minutes, and 5 seconds until we meet down at the Bay Center on 9/11. I got me one of those countdown clocks. 168 days. You may not believe this but there were some people that didn't like it that we had that meeting and I'm talking about church folk. Now the reason they didn't like it is because they said, "Well we don't believe the same thing." We weren't having an ordination service. We were having a prayer meeting and when the Nazi crowd starts coming to take the churches captive, let me tell you, the old Assembly of God brothers and your Methodist brothers, even some independent Baptists are going to reach out and say, "You know, those old Southern Baptists are not as liberal as I thought." Because if we don't hang together, we're going to hang separately.

I understand there are differences and I know that as well as anybody but I'm telling you, we must guard the unity of the church. We must guard it locally to be who we are but we must guard it corporately. I've never been more in prayer for my brothers and sisters in other churches than I've been in the last year. God, guard the unity.

You say, "Preacher, what do we need?" I'm telling you, what we need is repentance, not remorse. Remorse is not repentance. I know a lot of people that are remorseful. That means they just got caught. You see, remorse has tears but repentance has a turning. You see, when you're remorseful you'll cry out, "O God, I'm so sorry," but you don't turn and change. Let me tell you, when you repent you may or

may not cry but when you repent you will turn and you'll go a different direction. That's what the church of the living God needs to be.

You see, that old vine of Sodom's growing. I said earlier it was growing like kudzu. Do you know what kudzu is? You know what that is? Just trust this Alabama preacher. I'm telling you, you can cut it off and come back in the morning and it's already grown some more. It creeps and crawls and gathers up and I'm telling you, it'll stifle and kill. There is a vine of Sodom that's alive and well not only in our American culture but that vine of Sodom, when you read it prophetically, it hates Israel. It absolutely hates Israel. That's what was going on in Genesis 18:19. They were coming against the people of God.

Today in our culture it comes and grows and it winds. It looks pretty. It seems to have a good taste. Let me tell you, the vine of Sodom, it will poison your mind. It'll cause your spirit to get bitter and if you've got a bitter spirit today, you need to repent of your bitter spirit. You say, "Well the church did me wrong. My momma did me wrong. I've been done wrong." Hey, if you think there's nobody in this room been done wrong, get in line.

I went to a funeral yesterday and a Baptist told me to get up out of her seat. I looked at her and I said, "You evidently don't know who I am." No, I didn't. I got up and moved is what I did. Her husband came and shook my hand. He said, "I'm sorry, preacher." I said, "Oh, that's okay. You've got to go home." You see, some of you, you've been to church. Somebody said something to you that you didn't like. You say, "I got my feelings hurt." Well get over it. Repent. People tell me, "I can't believe somebody at Olive would say that." I'm not in charge of everybody in here. I can't keep up with everybody. I can't even keep up with the people on this front row. You need to keep up with you and make sure that you're a part of the righteous, remnant resurrection church and when you are, then you are forgiving rather than bitter. That old kudzu gets in you and poisons your mind. It makes your spirit bitter but it makes your soul bitter and then it kills your spirit. You see, what happens is you just curl up by yourself and you just die. Die.

Sodom was a dead city. It needs resurrection. Pensacola is a dead city. It needs resurrection. Everybody keeps telling me we're having a revitalization downtown. Thank God. I like what's going on downtown but, friend, I'm not so concerned about revitalization as I am resurrection, redemption. God's looking for one somebody you this morning on Easter to say, "Preacher, would He forgive me?" I'm telling you, He'll forgive you. He forgave these girls. He'll forgive you.

Hear me as Brother Jon begins to play. He's one of the greatest apologists in all the world. His name is Lee Strobel. He used to write for the *Chicago Sun Tribune* and on a given Sunday his wife was invited to an evangelical church and when she heard the gospel she got out of her seat and she walked down to the front, leaving her atheistic, non-believing husband at home. She came down to the front and gave her heart and life to Christ and went home and said, "Lee, I got saved today." Lee Strobel

said, "I didn't know what to make of all that. I thought, well, she'll get over it." But she didn't get over it because she really got it. God had put her in the resurrection remnant church. Lee said, "I saw something in her I'd never seen before and then she told me that it was all based on Jesus Christ's death and His resurrection." He said, "I laughed out loud and said no man got out of the grave."

He took the next two years of his life to do an investigative report on the life and claims of Jesus Christ. He writes and says, "It took more faith to say that Jesus did not rise than it took faith to say that He did rise." He said, "The proof was there. The reports were there. Eye witness accounts." He said, "I based my life on eye witness accounts and that's what Jesus was based on." He said, "Not just one, not just twelve, but over 500 to begin with and then people laid down their lives." He said, "It had to be true because they lost everything for this resurrection man."

Dear friend, I'm telling you, it is true. Jesus died for you. Jesus got up from the grave. He sits at the right hand of the Father today and He calls and pleads with us. He calls those that are lost to be saved but He's calling the church today to be a resurrection remnant church on fire, cutting back the vine of Sodom, being that church that God's called us to be.

When Jon starts singing this song, I'm going to be standing here in that balcony. If you need Christ, come today. Come. I'm telling you, get saved. If you're here today and ought to join this church and be baptized like these were baptized today, then come. If you're here to just say, "Pastor, I want Olive to be my church," then you come. Maybe you're here and you grew up in the church but you've been a long way off and you need to just come kneel in this altar and just have a prayer time on Easter morning. It's a great day to do it. Just come home. Come home unto the Father.

You watch us today on the Internet. Many people are not able to get out and you're looking in today, just drop on your knees right there at your computer, wherever you are, just slide out and say, "O God, O God, I'm coming home. I want to be a part of that church that the preacher's talking about today." Send us an email, let us know who you are, call us tomorrow and let us know who you are. We'd love to help you to be a part of the resurrection remnant church. You need to come just like you are, just an old fashioned altar call for two or three stanzas.

There's a big crowd. People don't like to walk forward in big crowds but let me tell you, there's going to be a great, big crowd one of these days. I'm telling you, there's going to be a lot of folks in heaven. You want to be one of those so don't miss it today. Come. Come. The resurrection remnant church. Are you a part? Come. Come. Come. Don't let the vine of Sodom choke you down.

Father, have Your way now, I pray, and I believe for harvest in Jesus' name.
Amen.

