

Remember Lot's Wife

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Key Scripture

Luke 17:32 (ESV) Remember Lot's wife.

Sermon in One Sentence

The seemingly simple command to "Remember Lot's wife" serves as a profound and urgent warning against the dangers of divided devotion, backward glances at the world, and the eternal consequences of an unconverted heart.

Introduction

Imagine a moment of ultimate escape, a divine rescue from impending doom, where every fibra of your being should be focused on the salvation offered. Yet, in that critical instant, a single, backward glance—a moment of hesitation, regret, or longing—turned a soul destined for freedom into a permanent monument of disobedience. This is the tragic story of Lot's wife, a moment so pivotal and filled with cautionary tales that Jesus Himself singled it out with a terse, yet powerful, three-word command: "Remember Lot's wife." Her story isn't just an ancient biblical narrative; it's a stark, contemporary warning for every person who stands at the crossroads of allegiance, contemplating what to leave behind and what to embrace in their journey toward Christ.

We live in a world that constantly vies for our attention, promising fleeting pleasures and temporary comforts, often at the expense of eternal truth. Like Lot's wife, many are called to leave behind a destructive past, to follow God's clear directive, and to press forward into a new life. But the allure of the familiar, the comfort of the commonplace, or the regret for what is being forfeited can be a powerful tether, holding us back from the fullness of God's salvation. Tonight, as we unpack Jesus' concise admonition, we will discover not only the historical tragedy of Lot's wife but also the profound spiritual lessons it holds for our own discipleship, our battle against worldliness, and the ultimate destination of our souls.

Historical & Biblical Context

The command "Remember Lot's wife" is found within Luke's Gospel, specifically in a discourse where Jesus is teaching His disciples about the coming of the Son of Man and the urgency of readiness for His return. He draws a vivid parallel between His second coming and the days of Noah and Lot, characterized by a sudden, cataclysmic divine judgment amidst mundane daily activities. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, recounted in Genesis 19, serves as the backdrop. God, in His mercy, sends angels to rescue Lot and his family from the impending fiery destruction. They are commanded, "Escape for your life! Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away" (Genesis 19:17). Lot's wife, despite the clear instruction and the imminent danger she was fleeing, looked back and was turned into

a pillar of salt. Jesus uses this brief, poignant example as a stark warning to His followers: when the hour of divine judgment or the season of urgent decision arrives, there is no time or room for divided loyalties or backward glances at the world from which salvation calls us. It's a warning about the ultimate cost of prioritizing present comforts or past attachments over God's divine will and the eternal salvation He offers.

Main Point I — The Danger of Divided Devotion

Scripture: Luke 17:32 (ESV) Remember Lot's wife.

The story of Lot's wife, condensed into Jesus' simple command, serves as an eternal emblem of divided devotion. Despite the direct, life-saving instruction from the angels to not look back, her heart remained tethered to the city God was about to destroy. Her glance, though momentary, was a revelation of her true allegiance – a heart still longing for the wickedness, the possessions, or the relationships she was commanded to abandon. This isn't just about a literal backward look; it's about a spiritual orientation, a condition of the heart that, even in the midst of divine rescue, prioritizes the world over the divine deliverer.

Our own spiritual journey is often fraught with similar temptations. We are called out of the "Sodoms" of our lives – sin, worldliness, self-reliance – and invited into a life of full devotion to Christ. Yet, how often do our hearts linger on what we've supposedly left behind? We may physically be in the church, but our minds may be in the marketplace, our desires still fixed on material gain, worldly approval, or forbidden pleasures. Jesus powerfully states in Matthew 6:24, "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." Lot's wife stands as a monument for all who try to serve two masters, who profess faith in God but whose hearts yearn for the world. Her fate is a severe reminder that divided devotion ultimately leads to spiritual sterility and eternal loss.

Main Point II — The Peril of a Lingering Look

Scripture: Genesis 19:26 (ESV) But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

The act of "looking back" by Lot's wife was not merely an innocent curiosity; it was a profound act of disobedience with devastating consequences. The angels' command was unequivocal: "Do not look back." This wasn't merely a prohibition against a physical turn of the head, but a warning against a spiritual yearning for the very life from which God was mercifully delivering them. Her lingering look symbolized a heart that refused to fully surrender to God's rescue plan, a mind that regretted the loss of Sodom more than it appreciated the salvation offered. It was a rejection of future grace for past attachments.

In our Christian walk, this "lingering look" manifests in many insidious ways. It can be nostalgia for the "good old days" of sin, secretly entertaining thoughts of returning to destructive habits or relationships. It can be a resentment toward the sacrifices required for discipleship, feeling that God's ways are too restrictive, and the world's allurements are more appealing. Paul warns in Philippians 3:13-14, "But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." The Christian life is a forward march, not a backward glance. Every lingering look at the old life, every wistful thought for the "flesh pots of Egypt" (Numbers 11:5), diverts our energy, compromises our resolve, and threatens our spiritual progress. The

chilling transformation of Lot's wife serves as an eternal warning against the peril of such spiritual hesitation.

Main Point III — The Consequences of an Unconverted Heart

Scripture: Luke 9:62 (ESV) Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

Ultimately, the tragedy of Lot's wife reveals more than just a moment of disobedience; it points to the deeper issue of an unconverted heart. Her physical punishment – becoming a pillar of salt – was a divine manifestation of her spiritual condition. She had been granted a reprieve, an opportunity for salvation, but her heart had never truly turned from Sodom. She was *out* of Sodom physically, but Sodom was still *in* her heart. Jesus' parallel in Luke 9:62 about putting one's hand to the plow and looking back, while distinct, echoes a similar sentiment: those whose hearts are not fully committed to the kingdom are "unfit" for it. True salvation involves a complete turning: repentance from sin and faith in Christ, resulting in a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Many today walk through life experiencing outward forms of religion, participating in church activities, and even making outward confessions of faith, yet their deepest affections and truest loyalties remain bound to the world. They desire the benefits of Christianity – peace, security, eternal life – without genuinely renouncing the world and its enticements. The story of Lot's wife is not just about a woman who made a bad decision; it's about a woman whose soul was never truly transformed. It's a sobering reminder that mere proximity to salvation or outward conformity to religious practices does not guarantee an inward, salvific change. Her fate stands as a stark, permanent testament to the eternal consequences of an unconverted heart, a heart that prizes the transient things of this world over the eternal glory of God.

Illustration

In the early 20th century, the luxury liner RMS Titanic, deemed "unsinkable," embarked on its fateful maiden voyage. When it struck an iceberg, panic and chaos ensued, but for a time, many passengers remained in their cabins or went to the saloon, refusing to believe the ship was in mortal danger. Some were so attached to their comfortable surroundings and the illusion of safety that they ignored the urgent calls to evacuate. There were numerous instances of people going back to retrieve valuables or simply not heeding the warnings. As the ship tilted further, the reality sank in, but for many, it was too late. Their reluctance to let go of their immediate comforts, their lingering hope in a sinking structure, cost them their lives. Lot's wife, too, held onto what was perishing, despite the loud, clear divine warning. She chose the illusion of what she knew over the promise of what God offered, and like those who lingered on the Titanic, her choice ended in irreversible disaster.

Practical Application

1. Examine your ultimate allegiance: Take time this week to prayerfully assess where your heart's true treasures lie. Are you genuinely committed to Christ alone, or are there "Sodoms" in your life (worldly desires, sinful habits, material possessions) that still hold your affection and compete with God?

2. Sever ties with past sins: Consciously identify any areas where you are "looking back" with longing or regret. This might involve confessing a sin you've been clinging to, unsubscribing from content that tempts you, or setting boundaries with relationships that pull you away from God.

3. Embrace a forward-looking faith: Cultivate a mindset of pressing forward in your spiritual walk. Focus on growing in Christ through consistent Bible reading, prayer, and fellowship. Make intentional steps towards what God is calling you to, rather than dwelling on what you've left behind.

4. Respond to God's warnings with urgency: Reflect on any present divine warnings or nudges from the Holy Spirit in your life. Don't procrastinate or minimize the seriousness of spiritual matters. Act decisively and obediently, knowing that God's commands are always for your ultimate good and salvation.

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to "look back" in a spiritual sense, and how might this manifest in a believer's life today?

2. How does the story of Lot's wife challenge our understanding of what it means to truly follow Christ?

3. What are some "Sodom's" in our contemporary culture that might tempt believers to have divided devotion?

4. In what ways can we cultivate a heart that is fully devoted to God and resistant to the allurements of the world?

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You, humbled by the stark warning of Lot's wife. We confess our own tendencies to look back, to cling to the world, and to entertain divided loyalties. Forgive us for our wavering hearts and our spiritual hesitations. Grant us the grace to fix our eyes solely on Christ, to run the race with endurance, and to fully embrace the salvation You have so freely offered. May our hearts be wholly Yours, now and forever. Amen.

Benediction

Now may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.