

PM Genesis 19:12-26 & Luke 17:26-36

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[0 : 00] This evening, so we're going to read the first one just now in the service and it's in the book of Genesis. Then the men said to Lot, and these men are the angels of God.

Then the men said to Lot, Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in this city?

Bring them out of the place. For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it.

So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, Up! Get out of this place! For the Lord is about to destroy this city.

But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting. As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city.

[1 : 37] But he lingered. So the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the Lord being merciful to him.

And they brought him out and set him outside the city. And as they brought them out, one said, Escape for your life.

Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away. And Lot said to them, O no, my lords, behold, your servant has found favour in your sight, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life.

But I cannot escape to the hills, lest the disaster overtake me and I die. Behold, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one.

Let me escape there. Is it not a little one? And my life will be saved. He said to him, Behold, I grant you this favour also, that I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken.

[2 : 56] Escape there quickly, for I can do nothing till you arrive there. Therefore the name of the city was called, Zuar.

The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zuar. Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulphur and fire from the Lord out of heaven.

And he overthrew those cities and all the valley and all the inhabitants of the cities and what grew in the ground. But Lot's wife behind him looked back and she became a pillar of salt.

Ending our reading there in verse 26 of this passage. Reading is taken from the gospel according to Luke and chapter 17.

So let's turn to this portion. Luke chapter 17. And the reading is verse 26 to 36.

[4 : 06] on page 1056 of the church bible.

Luke 17 verse 26. Just as it was in the days of Noah so will it be in the days of the Son of Man.

They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage until the day when Noah entered the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all.

likewise just as it was in the days of Lot they were eating and drinking buying and selling planting and building but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all.

So will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. On that day let the one who is on the housetop with his goods in the house not come down to take them away and likewise let the one who is in the field not turn back remember Lot's wife.

[5 : 40] Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it but whoever loses his life will keep it. I tell you in that night there will be two in one bed one will be taken and the other left.

There will be two women grinding together one will be taken and the other left. Amen.

May God bless these readings of his word to us. Let us read. My text for this evening is made up of just three words.

Words spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ words which I hope will stick to your minds and memories for many many years to come and they're found in the gospel of Luke chapter 17 verse 36 and they are simply these remember Lot's wife remember Lot's wife Lot's wife is a woman to be remembered Lot's wife is a woman never to be forgotten and the Lord Jesus Christ has chosen to lift this woman off the pages of Old Testament scripture and to hold her up before our eyes and the eyes of those who heard him as a lesson as a warning about a danger that faces every single one of us remember

Lot's wife that danger that Lot's wife teaches us to beware of is the danger of worldliness or the love of the world Lot's wife to all intents and purposes looked to be outwardly a true believer a true Christian if we can use that term she was the wife of a righteous man according to the scriptures Lot was a righteous man and through her husband she was also connected to Abraham the father of all believers the one to whom the God of glory appeared to use the words of Stephen in that great sermon before the Jews on the day he was stoned to death the God of glory appeared to our father Abraham he said

[8 : 24] Lot's wife was connected to a righteous man and to Abraham the father of the faithful Lot's wife fled with him from Sodom on the day when he escaped for his life at the command of God's angels but Lot's wife was not really like her husband she wasn't a righteous woman for though she fled with him she had left her heart behind in the city of Sodom and she deliberately and willfully disobeyed the clear command of the angels because we're told that she looked back behind her towards Sodom and she was instantly struck down and perished in her sins and so our master our

Lord says to us I want you to remember Lot's wife wife here's a divinely given warning to all who think and say I'm a Christian I'm a follower of Christ I'm one of God's people remember Lot's wife on the day when the Lord Jesus Christ returns on the day when he comes again in judgment there may be many in fact there will likely be many who will be found in the same state and condition as Lot's wife on the day the angels brought judgment down upon Sodom these people go to great lengths in performing their religious obligations they adopt the outward ways of the Christian faith and at one level there's little to tell the difference between them and their Christian relatives and friends they speak like Christians they know their Bibles well they rarely miss a church service they have been baptized they sit at the Lord's table but nevertheless their souls are not right in the sight of God and the reason for that is this the world is in their hearts and their hearts are in the world and one day in due course the day of sifting and separation will come and their true state will become plain and open and evident to them and to all now for Lot's wife the day of sifting the day of separation the day of trial was the day when the angels of

God came to destroy the city the day they received the divine summons to get up and to get out and to escape with their lives and not to look back behind them on your day of sifting will your profession of faith in Jesus Christ prove to be real and sincere and genuine or will your Christianity prove to be rotten to the core because the world is in your heart I want us to think for a few moments about Lot's wife this evening indeed to remember her and never to forget her to see her pointed to by no one less than the Lord Jesus Christ himself and to keep in mind the lesson that he wants to teach us about this never to be forgotten woman above all

I want you to see her example to encourage you to be real and sincere in your Christian profession of faith because formal religion and we're all tempted by this aren't we to keep up the appearance but formal religion is a terrible terrible thing to have the form of godliness but to deny the power thereof to use the apostle Paul's words is a terrible condition to be in to be a professing Christian merely to please our parents or to please a husband or a wife or a friend that simply will not cut the mustard it will simply not do a mere formal religion will never ever be able to save the soul we need to follow Christ for his own sake we need the grace of

[13 : 37] God in our souls for only the reality of this grace of God in our hearts will prevent them from hankering after the world and the things of the world only the grace of God in Christ will root out from our hearts the desire to look back longingly for the things of this world so let us then do this as we listen to the Lord speak to us in Luke chapter 17 verse 36 it's his words it's his voice that's speaking and he's saying this to us I want you to remember Lot's wife and in what ways in particular should we remember Lot's wife well to keep it as simple and as memorable I trust as possible I'm going to borrow the three points that J.C.

Ryle used in his once famous and well read tract a woman to be remembered he encourages us to remember her privileges to remember her sin to remember her punishment very simple and straightforward points that I hope will be memorable for us her privileges lot lot wife was a woman who enjoyed many religious privileges for a start she had a knowledge of the only true and living God think of it in an age when there were no bibles no ministers no churches no missionaries no evangelists no Christian books she belonged to the only family in the world to whom the God of glory had spoken and made himself known when all other families in the world were living in superstition and in fear and in religious darkness the light of the gospel was shining brightly on the family of

Abraham to whom she belonged by her marriage to Abraham's nephew Lot so compared to everyone else Lot's wife was a favored and highly privileged woman in what ways was she honored well she had a godly man for her husband she had Abraham for her uncle by marriage the faith and knowledge and the prayers of these two righteous men she heard offered up to God in morning and evening worship each day can you imagine the privilege of being there in those tents in which Abraham lived and Abraham holding family worship morning and evening and being there and hearing him speak about his own personal knowledge of the God of glory who had appeared to him and called him out from Ur of the Chaldees to a land that God would show him their religion the religion of

Abraham and Lot was no formal empty religion for Abraham and Lot it was the ruling principle in their lives it was the motivating factor in everything that they did all this Lot's wife was familiar with what a great privilege she had and think of it when Abraham first received the promises it's likely that Lot's wife was there at that time when Abraham built his altar by his tent between Ai and Bethel it's likely that she was there seeing the sacrifices offered on that altar when her husband was taken captive by Keder Leomer and delivered by God's help given to Abraham she witnessed it all when Melchizedek the king of Salem came out to meet Abraham after that triumph with bread and wine she was there as an eyewitness when the angels came to

Sodom and warned her husband to flee she saw them indeed when they took them by the hand this is an amazing thing it wasn't just Lot's hand it was the hand of Lot the two daughters and the hand of his wife Lot's wife that they took hold of to bring them safely out of the city of Sodom she was there she felt the hand of an angel upon her own hand what a privilege what a privilege and yet here's the disturbing thing not one not one of these many precious privileges had any effect for good upon Lot's wife for none of them led to her salvation not withstanding all her opportunities and means of grace not withstanding all her special warnings and messages direct from heaven through angels had any effect upon her because she lived and she died without grace without

[19 : 11] God without repenting without believing and therefore without hope she had knowledge but she had no understanding and there's a massive world of difference between having knowledge and having the understanding of that knowledge her conscience was not awakened it wasn't made alive her will was not brought into a state of subjection and obedience to God Almighty her heart what she loved her affections were never really set on things above but instead remained on the things beneath the things of this world if she had a form of religion it appears to have been kept up for the sake of her husband and her uncle not out of any sense of personal heartfelt conviction she was happy to conform to the religion of her husband and uncle she made no opposition to it but she allowed herself to be passively swept along like a dead fish being swept with the current downstream she went with the flow she went with the flow as we say and yet all the time her heart was not right with

God that's because the world was in her heart and her heart was in the world that was the state she lived in and that tragically was the state that she died in so here then is the great lesson that our Lord wants us to learn from Lot's wife the mere possession of religious privileges will not save your soul you may have great and many spiritual privileges and advantages which millions of other people today in this world do not have or enjoy you may live in the light of the best opportunities to be given to a person you may have every encouragement supplied to you by God along with the means of grace to enjoy you may hear the best and most faithful preaching of the gospel week by week in this church you may be surrounded by Christian people who love you and who regularly pray for you and all this may be so and yet you may still be like Lot's wife unconverted and even tragically be lost forever you see it takes something more than privileges to be saved it takes the grace of the

Holy Spirit you must be born again you must be quickened made alive in Christ so Lot's wife had many privileges but wasn't saved because she had no grace in her heart and that brings us to the second point her privileges and then remember her sin the Holy Spirit has recorded her sin in a few plain and simple words Genesis chapter 19 and verse 26 but Lot's wife behind him she was already straggling she was dropping behind it was almost like Sodom was a magnet impeding her progress on the road to escape but Lot's wife behind him looked back and she became a pillar of salt that's all we're told just these few solemn words but Lot's wife looked back looked back perhaps someone is thinking why such a terrible punishment for what appears to be such a small sin it was just a look back she didn't really do anything she just looked back and she is turned into a pillar of salt but let me say that

Lot's wife's look back was only an indicator of a deep seated problem in her heart which I've already referred to there's far more to be seen in that look than what strikes us at first sight it implied far more than it expressed you see her look revealed the true character of her heart and soul though just a look yet it was a clear evidence of disobedience in Lot's wife what was the command that the angels gave her Genesis 19 verse 17 escape for your life do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley it's as clear as crystal isn't it it couldn't be plainer couldn't be more straightforward do not look back but yet this is the clear and obvious command that Lot's wife refused to obey to refuse to obey the commands and the voice of

God is a most serious matter and if you want to know how serious a matter it is turn with me to 1st Samuel chapter 15 and verses 22 and 23 words that were spoken by God's prophet to Israel's first king king Saul and Samuel says to the king in the name of the Lord has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord behold to obey is better than sacrifice and to listen than the fat of rams for rebellion is as the sin of divination or as the old version has it of witchcraft and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry do you catch that serious note to obey is better than sacrifice for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft when

[27 : 00] God speaks either directly or through his messengers our duty man's duty your duty is crystal clear you must obey the little look spoke or revealed two further things about Lot's wife's heart it reveals her proud unbelief and it also reveals her secret heart love for the world think of her proud unbelief that that look reveals I mention that because it seems to be pretty obvious that Lot's wife doubted in her heart that what God had said would happen that he would destroy

Sodom would actually happen and take place she doubted that she doubted that it appears that she did not think that there was any need for such dramatic and speedy exit from Sodom on the part of her husband herself and her daughters God wasn't going to do what he said but the Bible teaches us in Hebrews chapter 11 verse 6 that without faith it is impossible to please God and here is a woman who displeased God because she doubted the veracity of God's word she doubted the truthfulness of what God had said her look back was an evidence of a proud unbelieving heart the second a person starts to think that he knows better than

God that he presumes that he knows better than God that God doesn't mean what he threatens when he speaks of judgment in his word well that person's soul is in grave danger when God speaks we are to listen we are to believe we are to obey like the old hymn says trust and obey for there's no other way trust and obey hear God's word believe God's word obey God's word remember Lot's wife she didn't trust God's word she didn't believe God's word she didn't obey God's word and the other thing her look reveals is that she entertained she kept up in her heart a secret love and hankering after the world her heart was in

Sodom even though at this stage her body was outside the city she had left her heart behind her when she fled from her home her eye turned to the place where her treasure was her treasure her heart was in Sodom and this was perhaps the most egregious aspect of her sin she loved the world rather than the things of God I wonder if James had her partly in mind when he wrote in James chapter 4 verse 4 friendship with the world is enmity with God you can't be a friend of the world and the friend of God if you're the friend of the world you're the enemy of God friendship with the world is enmity with God and you remember how the apostle John tells us!

plainly in 1st John 2 verse 15 if anyone loves the world the love of the father is not in him and this is what Lot's wife's look back to Sodom indicates she loved the world and the love of the father was not in her heart she was a friend of the world she was at enmity with God what a tragedy dear friends is the story of Lot's wife and it's this aspect of the story that the Lord wants us to see so clearly and to apply most closely to our own souls this is the reason why he tells his disciples to pay

attention and to remember Lot's wife Lot's wife was lost because she looked back to the world her profession seemed at one time to be fair and credible but she never really gave up the world she seemed at one time to be on the road to safety in fact she was literally on the road to safety but deep down within her heart she was thinking about the world and how she could manage to keep hold of that world and that's a dangerous dangerous thing worldliness is such a danger for a professing believer its attraction is a fatal attraction and the immense danger of worldliness is the great thing which our

[33 : 00] Lord Jesus Christ is warning us of by saying in these three words remember Lot's wife this is the sin of Lot's wife love not the world do not love the world or the things of the world her privileges her sin and then finally thirdly her punishment chapter 19 of Genesis verse 26 she became a pillar of salt again a few simple words that describe a catastrophic sudden and irreversible punishment a miracle of God a miracle wrought by the hand of God was performed in order to demonstrate in unmistakable terms that this was no accident this was no coincidence this was a divine judgment

J.C. Ryle says the same almighty hand which first gave her life took that life away in the twinkling of an eye from living flesh and blood she was turned into a pillar of salt what a terrible fearful end for a soul to come to to die at any time is a solemn thing but to die so suddenly in a moment in the twinkling of an eye in a split second in the very act of sin to die in full health and strength to die by the direct intervention of God on your life this is a truly horrifying thing indeed there's something truly hopeless about the death of

Lot's wife not the fact that she was turned into a pillar of salt but the way that she was so suddenly struck down that's the real tragedy the real tragedy it was the fact that she was suddenly cut off in the very act of sin she looked back and she became a pillar of salt there's hardly a breath between those two statements she looked back and she became a pillar of salt her death a result of sudden divine judgment left no room for Lot or for us for that matter to entertain any hope of her salvation when a soul is suddenly summonsed into the presence of the divine judge in the very act of wickedness without even a moment's time for prayer and repentance all is lost and hope is gone and such was the end of

Lot's wife it was a hopeless end and she went to hell what does every sin deserve my friends the answer is the wrath and judgment of God and make no mistake our sins will be punished sin all sin will be punished it will be punished in one of two places it will be punished either in hell or at Calvary on the cross either in your own person forever in hell or in the person of the great substitute the saviour of the world the Lord Jesus Christ now if we live like

Lot's wife with a heart that loves the world that doubts the word of God and that disobeys and refuses to follow the good news about the way of salvation then we shall bear the punishment of our sins in our own person in hell forever but if like Lot and his two daughters we hear and heed the angel's word and we flee for our lives to the designated place of safety then we shall be saved that place of safety our zoar if you like is the Lord Jesus Christ the one whom God set forth to be the propitiation through faith in his blood and the word propitiation teaches us that in

[38 : 33] Jesus Christ sin was punished the wrath of God fell and as a result of that sin being punished and the wrath of God being satisfied those sins are removed from the people who committed them whose punishment Jesus Christ bore God set him forth just as God said to Lot and his daughters and his wife flee to Zoar you'll be safe there so he says to us flee to Jesus Christ the divinely appointed propitiation you'll be safe there in him sheltered in him from my wrath and anger and judgment upon sin so remember

Lot's wife teaches us not only to remember her privileges how privileges need to be improved upon if we are to benefit from them not only teaches us to remember her sin how she doubted the word of God and refused to obey it how she hankered after the world for she kept a secret love for the world in her heart she set her minds on things on earth instead of setting her mind on things above and to remember her punishment which teaches us that sin will be punished and the only way to escape the punishment of sin is to put ourselves under the arms under the shadow under the wings of the Lord Jesus Christ who bore our sins in his own body on the tree that we might be forgiven that we might be pardoned that we might escape forever the wrath of God that our sins deserve sin will always be punished either in hell or at the cross either in our own person forever or in the person of the substitute flee to Christ and be safe forever remember Lot's wife let us pray our God and heavenly father we thank you that your word contains not only wonderful promises but memorable

warnings we thank you we thank you for the examples that we have of those who heeded your word and experienced your grace and received the blessings of your promises but we also thank you that in your word you have placed these warnings these beacons these examples for us to avoid and we pray that each one of us would avoid the sin and ultimately the punishment of Lot's wife help us to remember this woman as our

Lord Jesus Christ has brought her before our mind's eye this evening may we believe your word may we heed your voice and may we flee to the only place of refuge that you have provided for us even your son our saviour the Lord Jesus Christ in whose name we pray Amen