

Remember Lot's Wife

by Anton Bosch

We must remember Lot's wife and avoid looking back at the world, instead fixing our eyes on the hope set before us and pressing towards the mark for the high call of God in Christ Jesus.

Scripture: Genesis 19:26, Numbers 11:4, Luke 9:62, Luke 17:32, Hebrews 10:38

Topics: "Spiritual Warning", "Worldly Desires"

Description

Anton Bosch preaches about the cautionary tale of Lot's wife, emphasizing the danger of looking back to our past lives and desires after being saved by the Lord. He explores the significance of Lot's wife's actions in relation to the warnings about the sudden return of the Lord and the parallels drawn between the time of Lot and the present. The sermon delves into the consequences of being entangled in worldly desires after knowing the way of righteousness, using Lot's wife as a negative example of ungratefulness and longing for past pleasures. Bosch urges believers to fix their eyes on the hope set before them, following the steadfast determination of Jesus and Paul in fulfilling their callings.

Transcript

This is one of the shortest verses in the Bible: Luke 17:32 "Remember Lot's wife".

It is also a very strange verse in that we would normally be encouraged to remember people who achieved greatness or did great exploits for God. But Lot's wife never did anything great. In fact, we know nothing about her and do not read anything about her until she turned around to look at Sodom burning. We don't even know her name - she is just "Lot's wife".

Luke tells us to remember her in the context of the warnings about the soon and sudden return of the Lord. Luke also draws a number of parallels between the time of Lot and the time when the Lord will return. He speaks about the fact that people will be going about their daily living and will be oblivious to the fact that sudden destruction is about to come upon them. He then warns about the danger of turning back like Lot's wife did.

So, I came to wonder about this woman. Who was she and what was so bad about her that the Lord would use her as such a negative example for all eternity?

We read in Genesis 13 that Lot moved ever closer towards Sodom until he lived inside that evil city. Genesis 19:1 records that he was sitting in the gate of the city. This seems to infer that he was serving on

the city council of that terrible place. Yet, Peter says: "...righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)" (2Peter 2:7). There appears to be a contradiction in that Lot chose to move towards the city, eventually living in it, while he is vexed by their wickedness. So why did he not just move out? And why did he move there in the first place? Maybe the answer lies with his wife. Maybe it was she who craved the city lights and maybe it was because of her and in spite of his personal misgivings, that Lot lived in Sodom.

That would certainly explain the powerful hold the city had over her to the extent that she could not let go of it, even though the angels had physically removed her from the place. The angels specifically commanded them "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you..." (Genesis 19:17). "But his wife looked back behind him" (Genesis 19:26). She could not let go of the pleasures, comfort and excitement of the evil city and even though her body had been dragged out of Sodom, her heart remained there and she looked back with longing and desire.

Many years later the children of Israel would do the same thing: They would constantly look back at Egypt and desire the things that they had left behind (Numbers 11:5, 14:3,4). They had clearly forgotten the lesson of Lot's wife and like her, had become ungrateful for the Lord's salvation and rather wanted the carnal pleasures of their former home.

So, in the New Testament, we are urged to remember Lot's wife and not to look back towards that from which we have been saved. But it remains an unfortunate human trait to want to return to the things we have been saved from. This is because our minds tend to forget the bad things and to only remember the good of our former lives. The Israelites could not remember the whips of the slave drivers and only remembered the fish, leeks, garlic and onions that they ate in Egypt. Likewise, we often forget the guilt, shame, bondage and frustrations of our lives before Christ and we only remember the passing pleasures of sin.

Lot's wife did not actually turn back, she just looked back but that was so serious in God's eyes that He killed her instantly and turned her into a pillar of salt. Sometimes we feel that looking back (with longing) is not so serious, as long as we don't actually turn back. However to the Lord, looking back is very very bad. The reason is because even though we continue to walk in the right direction, our hearts are still back in the world and in so-doing we contaminate everyone else around us with our lack of commitment. It was a small minority amongst the people of Israel who were ungrateful for the Lord's provision and deliverance and they infected the rest of the people until all Israel were grumbling against the Lord (Numbers 11:4-5). In the same way a small group who are not committed can discourage a whole church or group of believers.

Jesus said: "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). That's a very strong statement but confirms God's judgment of Lot's wife. There is simply no room amongst the Lord's people for those who are constantly complaining and longing for the former days. In South Africa, immigrants from a particular country are called "whenwe"s because one of the phrases they use most frequently is "when we... were back in the old country". Spiritual whenwe's may not often speak about their former life, but they certainly think about it often enough. God says "if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul" Hebrews 10:38.

Jesus stands in stark contrast to Lot's wife. Having left His glory and having been born as a man, He certainly had much to look back to. Yet, He set His face steadfastly, and unflinchingly towards Jerusalem and the cross (Isaiah 50:7; Luke 9:51). Paul showed the same determination to complete his work and to fulfill every aspect of his call, no matter how high the cost. So, let's stop thinking about how good it was in the world and how hard it is to serve the Lord. Let's fix our eyes on the hope set before us, forget that which is behind and let's press towards the mark for the high call of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:13-14).

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"For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known [it], to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire" (2Peter 2:20-22).

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