

The title of this morning's sermon is, "*Why We Should Remember Lot's Wife*"¹

I am not speaking on Lot's wife for Mother's Day 😊.

On Sunday mornings we are working our way through Luke's Gospel verse-by-verse and we find ourselves at Luke 17:31.

I read through a handful of articles about why we should not look back in life. Here are the top five reasons I found:

1. You can't change the past
2. You're not the same person
3. Life is too short
4. You will repeat old patterns
5. Your future is waiting

But nobody gave the number one reason. Any guesses?

You could be turned into a pillar of salt as we will see in this morning's verses.

Let's back up to **verse 24** for context...

Luke 17:24 For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day.

Jesus compared His Second Coming with lightning. As we talked about last week, like lightning, Jesus's Second Coming will be visible, quick, and unexpected.

Luke 17:25 But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

Jesus's Second Coming is when He will be glorified, but He didn't want His disciples to get the order wrong: it is suffering and then glory. So, He reminds them that He must be crucified before he can be glorified.

Now Jesus moves back to talking about His Second Coming by using two of the most familiar accounts of judgment in Scripture to prepare people: the flood and Sodom and Gomorrah.

Look with me at **verse 26**...

Luke 17:26 Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. 27 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. 28 Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, 29 but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all— 30 so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

Even though the days of Noah and the days of Lot were times of excessive wickedness, Jesus didn't mention the people's wickedness. He mentioned the people:

- eating and drinking
- marrying and being given in marriage
- buying and selling
- planting and building

He wanted to emphasize, not how wicked the people were, but how unexpectedly the judgment came...just like Jesus will return unexpectedly.

And that brings us to our new verse for this morning. Look with me at **verse 31** ...

Luke 17:31 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.

This sounds strange, because we don't spend time on roofs, but in Jesus's day roofs were flat and people would spend time on them. There were stairways on the outside of the house leading up to the roofs. Think of the paralytic and how the four men carried him up to the roof. They would have done so using external stairs.

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The context is the Second Coming of Christ. Jesus is destroying His enemies and establishing His Kingdom on the earth. This isn't the time to **turn back** because the danger will be so great.

People shouldn't be looking back longingly at their possessions:

- Doing so would show a focus on the earthly versus the heavenly.
- It would show that this life is more important than the next life.

So, this is a warning to:

- People who are obsessed with the physical instead of the spiritual
- People who cling to their earthly lives despite all that heaven offers
- People who are tempted to confuse the enjoyments of the world with the eternal life that could await them.

When Jesus returns, true believers will not be concerned about what is in the house. They will be concerned with what is in heaven.

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The end of the verse says **not [to] turn back**, and now Jesus provides the premier example of looking back and suffering as a result...

Luke 17:32 Remember Lot's wife.

If you ever have to memorize a verse in a short period of time, this is a good one. With only three words, it is only beat out by **John 11:35** which says **Jesus wept**.

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There are only two people in Scripture we are told to remember...

One is Jesus Himself...

Luke 22:19 He took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

The other person is, surprisingly, Lot's wife.

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If you told me there was a person in Scripture to remember, besides Jesus, I would guess someone like Abraham, David, or Daniel for two reasons:

1. First, their godliness. I could imagine Jesus telling us to remember one of these men, because of how godly they were and how much there is to learn from them.
2. Second, their content. I could imagine Jesus telling us to remember one of these men, because of how much is written about them in Scripture.

Lot's wife wouldn't even make the list for the opposite of these two reasons:

1. First, her ungodliness.

2. Second, the lack of content about her.

Aside from this verse, there is only one other verse in Scripture about her, and it's a famous one...

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

Jesus tells us to remember Lot's wife, but we know almost nothing about her:

- We don't know when she was born
- We don't know where she was born
- We don't know who she was born to; we don't know her parents
- We don't even know her name

Something making this even more interesting is the verse about her is in Genesis, which is the book of origins. There are more genealogies in Genesis than any other book in Scripture. To give you an idea, Genesis has six genealogies, while Numbers is in second place with only two.

Yet in the book that is all about people's backgrounds, there is nothing about Lot's wife.

So why did Jesus tell us to remember a woman whom we know almost nothing about?

We are going to spend the rest of the sermon answering that question!

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And this brings us to Lesson One...

Lot's Wife (Lesson One) Shows the Lord knows how to rescue the godly and punish the unrighteous.

Please turn to **2 Peter 2**. We will not turn back to Luke. Hebrews, James, Peter.

2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; 5 if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6 if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly;

Notice God said Sodom and Gomorrah are supposed to serve as **an example**. God sent an unmistakable message to all future generations, including us, that wickedness results in judgment.

Do you think people have learned from this **example**? I don't think so.

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Before I read the next two verses about Lot, I want you to notice how many times he's called righteous...

2 Peter 2:7 and if he rescued RIGHTEOUS Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked 8 (for as that RIGHTEOUS man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his RIGHTEOUS soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard);

Three times in two verses, Lot is called righteous. Keep this in mind.

Because of Lot's behavior, we would probably think he is not righteous, but this is not about his behavior. This is about his spiritual standing. We are justified, or declared righteous by grace through faith, and Lot had faith.

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Now the point Peter is trying to make with these verses...

2 Peter 2:9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment,

God can rescue the godly from trials:

- That would be Noah and his family
- That would be Lot and his family

And God can keep the unrighteous under punishment:

- That would be those drowned by the flood
- That would be the inhabitants of Sodom destroyed by the fire and sulfur

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You know that I like to ask questions and I frequently tell you whether it's a trick question or not. So, here's a trick question...

Did Lot's wife make it out of Sodom?

No, she didn't. Even if she made it out of Sodom, she died with the people of Sodom because that's where her heart was. She was as much a citizen of Sodom as every person who died in the destruction.

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My point is, it looked like Lot's wife, an unrighteous person was escaping God's judgment. But God was able to keep even her under judgment as the verse says.

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Let me give you our second lesson...

Lot's Wife (Lesson Two) disregarded God's grace.

Turn to **Genesis 12**. It will take me a little while to build up to this lesson.

Remember Lot was Abraham's nephew, but because Abraham took Lot with him, Lot was more like Abraham's adopted son.

Look at **Genesis 12:5**...

Genesis 12:5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan,

There's no mention of Lot having a wife. Lot was unmarried when he left with Abraham.

Look one chapter to the right at **Genesis 13:1**...

Genesis 13:1 So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb.

Again, no mention of Lot having a wife.

Look at **verse 5**...

Genesis 13:5 And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, 6 so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together,

Notice two things:

1. First, there's mention of Lot and everything he had, but again no mention of a wife.
2. Second, Lot was very wealthy. That's why he had to separate from Abraham: they had so many animals that they couldn't share the same land. Keep this in mind.

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You might remember that Abraham and Lot parted ways and this is when Lot headed to Sodom. Look at **verse 12...**

Genesis 13:12 Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom.

Now Lot reaches Sodom, but again no mention of a wife.

We know Lot didn't have a wife before moving to Sodom, and we know he had a wife after moving into Sodom, so it's likely Lot's wife was from Sodom.

Additionally, God does not slight godly women in Scripture, and in Genesis the wives' names are frequently given. Think of Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah. The fact that Lot's wife isn't named, or even mentioned except to describe her destruction, says something about her character. God thought nothing of describing her, her background, or how Lot married her, which are things God did with other women.

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You might remember Sodom was defeated in battle. The people were captured, including Lot, and Abraham saved him. Look at **Genesis 14:16...**

Genesis 14:16 Then [Abraham] brought back all the possessions, and also brought back his kinsman Lot with his possessions, and THE WOMEN AND THE PEOPLE.

More than likely Lot's wife, and perhaps daughters, were part of this group of women.

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Now let's think about the grace Lot's wife was a recipient of...

When Abraham rescued Lot, she was one of the recipients of that deliverance. A grace of God

When Lot entertained angels, she was the hostess. This should have been a powerful witness to her. Another grace of God.

When the perverted men of the city were trying to knock down Lot's door, she witnessed the miraculous deliverance when the angels blinded the men and saved Lot and his family, including her. Another grace of God.

When the angels dramatically delivered Lot and his family from Sodom, she was delivered as well. Another grace of God.

Finally, Lot was a flawed man, but three times he was called righteous. She was married to a righteous man, which made her the beneficiary of Lot's righteousness and faith...

1 Corinthians 7:14 The unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband.

This doesn't mean Lot's wife was saved by being married to Lot, but **holy** means set apart. She was set apart for a special spiritual work because she was married to a believer.

More than likely:

- She heard Lot pray.

- She heard stories about Lot’s uncle, Abraham, and the God of Abraham, and the way Abraham was called out of his country and brought Lot with him.

If Lot was **greatly distressed and tormented** by Sodom’s wickedness, he probably shared that with her. It was another grace to be shown how evil these people were and how much they needed to repent.

She was able to become a member of Abraham’s family, which means:

- She was part of the family of the father of faith.
- She was part of the family of one of the greatest men in the Old Testament.

Another grace.

But she despised all these graces.

As we remember Lot’s wife, we should think about God’s graces in our lives and consider whether we despise any of them by our actions.

Next lesson...

Lot’s Wife (Lesson Three) Disobeyed divine commands.

Turn to **Genesis 19**. Look at **verse 12**...

Genesis 19:12 Then the men said to Lot, “Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place. **13** 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.”

These men were angels. They were God’s representatives. They spoke for God, and they said God was going to destroy the city.

Look at **verse 15**...

Genesis 19:15 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.”

More than likely Lot’s wife heard they were to leave the city.

Look at **verse 17**...

Genesis 19:17 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.”

Finally, the strongest command, specifically telling them **not [to] look back**.

But she had no regard for God’s commands.

As we remember Lot’s wife, are there any commands we disobey?

Lot’s Wife (Lesson Four) Loved the world.

Look at **Genesis 19:16**...

Genesis 19:16 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.

[Lot] **lingered**, so it might not look like being in Sodom was a horrible experience for him. But he lingered because he was reluctant to leave his family behind.

Lot's wife, on the other hand, had to be drug out of the city because they were so reluctant to leave.

Why did Lot's wife want to stay so badly, even when she knew it might cost her her life?

There are two reasons...

First, briefly look back at **Genesis 19:1**...

Genesis 19:1 The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom.

The gate of the city is where the leaders spent their time because this is where business was conducted.

Think of the description of the Virtuous Wife...

Proverbs 31:23 Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land.

Part of the reason she's such a great wife is she's able to help her husband reach such a place of prominence and respect.

Godly wives probably help their husbands get positions in decent cities, but when you marry a woman in Sodom, she helps you become a respected leader in Sodom.

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Also, remember Lot was wealthy. This probably helped contribute to Lot becoming one of the leaders of the city.

More than likely his wife enjoyed being married to a wealthy, respected leader of the city and didn't want to leave all that behind.

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But the main reason Lot's wife didn't want to leave is she was an evil woman who loved living in an evil place.

You know that I like types and shadows, and Sodom is a dramatic type or shadow of the world:

- The world is enticing like Sodom...it drew in Lot and kept his wife from fleeing
- The world is filled with evil people like Sodom
- The world is going to be judged...like Sodom...

2 Peter 3:10 The day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the [earth] will be burned up.

This is exactly what happened with Sodom, and it's exactly what will happen with the world.

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To say that Lot's wife loved Sodom is to say she loved the world.

Listen to these verses...

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

This is why Lot's wife was not saved: she loved the world, which meant the love of the Father was not in her.

Listen to what happens to the world and those who love it...

1 John 2:17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

The world is passing away. Even though it doesn't directly say everyone associated with the world is passing away too, it does say that indirectly, because it says **whoever who does the will of God will abide forever...** which implies those who don't will not abide forever and will pass away with the world.

This perfectly describes Lot's wife. She perished with Sodom, which is to say she perished with the world, because she loved the world.

As we remember Lot's wife, let's think about any ways we might love the world.

And this brings us to our last lesson...

Lot's Wife (Lesson Five) Was close to salvation.

Listen to these two verses and consider how they describe Lot's wife...

Hebrews 10:38 My righteous one shall live by faith, and if HE SHRINKS BACK, my soul has no pleasure in him."

She was one who [**shrunk**] **back**.

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

She looked back because she was not **fit for the kingdom of God**.

What are we supposed to remember about Lot's wife? Should we remember that she died?

That's no big deal. Everyone dies. The Old Testament is filled with people who died.

We are supposed to remember that she **WAS SO CLOSE TO SALVATION**.

We could almost say she was saved because:

- The inhabitants of Sodom did not make it out of the city, but she did
- She had the city and judgment and destruction behind her
- She had her husband and children at her side
- She had life with a righteous man in front of her

Who wouldn't consider her saved?

But she was destroyed on the very threshold of deliverance...just before reaching the place of safety.

And this might be the most important reason we are supposed to remember her: she was so close to salvation, but she perished with the world.

Similarly, people can be so close to salvation, but still perish with the world.

Charles Spurgeon said, *“Doom befell her at the gates of Zoar. Oh, if I must be damned, let it be with the mass of the ungodly, having always been one of them; but to get up to the very gates of heaven, and to perish there, will be a most awful thing!”*

Let me conclude with this:

- Lot’s wife shows we could be recipients of much of God’s grace, but not be saved.
- Lot’s wife shows we could be married to a righteous believer, but not be saved.
- Lot’s wife shows we could witness the supernatural like she did with the angels, but not be saved.
- Lot’s wife shows we could be close to salvation, even looking like we have been delivered from the wrath to come, but not be saved.

When Lot and his family were commanded to leave Sodom, the urgency of the departure was emphasized...

Genesis 19:17 [The angel] said, “Escape for your life. Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away.”

The same urgency applies to us, so let’s take advantage of this gracious opportunity God has given us to examine ourselves and be sure that we are not disregarding God’s grace and the divine command to repent and believe.

Let’s pray.

ⁱ Done:

- [Seven Characteristics of the Coming King, Part 1 \(gty.org\)](http://www.gty.org)
- <https://youtu.be/e9RKsaBoURk?t=1515>
- William Hendrickson
- JM
- Stein
- France
- Expository commentary go to sleep
- Wiersbe