

"Remember Lot's Wife"

Luke 17: 32.

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The 32nd verse of Luke 17 "Remember Lot's wife," is the Lord's solemn comment on Genesis 19; and there is something weirdly strange about this word of the Lord.

"Remember Lot's wife." What about Lot's wife? She stands the everlasting witness of the folly of not obeying the word of the Lord, the folly of a sort of middle path, when God's word has declared what is coming on the scene. Lot's wife is the picture of many souls: they would like to be saved, but they have not reached the point of safety, have not reached the spot where there is safety. The Lord says to such, "*Remember Lot's wife.*" Did she not want to be saved? Yes. Did she not wish to escape destruction? Yes. Did she not make a show of escaping it? Yes. *Did she escape it? No! "Remember Lot's wife."* She *might* have been saved, but she was not saved, and yet she was not overtaken by the judgment of the cities; not one drop of that liquid fire fell on Lot's wife: no, she was cut off, but not by the judgment which fell on the cities.

There are two points, I believe, come out about Lot's wife: she was *unbelieving* and she was *disobedient*; and, dear unsaved reader, is not this what you are? Have you believed God? Have you obeyed the Gospel? You know you have not! "Remember Lot's wife."

Because of her indifference, because of her coldheartedness, she was turned into a pillar of salt. She was a *hypocrite*, she appeared to leave the city, she appeared to be going to the mountain, but her heart was in the city; she did not really believe in the judgment coming; she said in her heart, "I see no sign of judgment coming; I will look back and see if what those men said is true:" she looks back, and is turned into a pillar of salt.

Did the judgment come? Yes! Lot's sons and the cities of the plain were all destroyed. God is not mocked! And the Lord says that "As it was in the days of Lot, so shall it be when the Son of Man is revealed." This is not the Lord's coming into the air for His people, but His coming with them to the earth for the premillennial judgments.

The last act of the world towards Christ was to nail Him on a cross between two malefactors. The last the world saw of Christ was *dead* between two thieves! Did they not see Him when He rose from the dead? No! Did they not see Him in resurrection? No! Have they seen Him in glory? No,! Faith has; but the world saw Him *last* on the cross, to which, with wicked hands, they had nailed Him; it will see Him *next*, in the day of which Luke 17 speaks, when He comes again in judgment, when He puts His hand to His strange work of judgment.

Do you know, my friend, there is judgment coming? The world is like a murderer between the passing of his sentence and the execution of it; and what is that? A condemned felon, only waiting the moment when, on the scaffold, that red-handed murderer shall expiate his crime. The world is like that. Its condition is fixed. But what comes in between the sentence and its

execution? A way of escape! You who have not taken that way of escape, "Remember Lot's wife." She was one who knew there was a way of escape and did not take it! The angels dragged her even out of Sodom, but that did not save her from the judgment of God. She was dragged out of Sodom, but she never reached *the mountain*. Half-way will not do; there is no safety halfway, either for Lot's wife or for you.

We bring the message of judgment, judgment coming, but before it falls there is a way of escape for you, if you will take it; for judgment is coming, surely coming.

You may say, "I do not think I shall live to see the world judged." Very likely not, because the Lord may do with you as He did with Lot's wife, cut you down, before the judgment comes. The Lord does not say, "Remember Sodom," but "Remember Lot's wife," the woman who might have been saved but for her own awful folly, and was very nearly being saved, but — *she was not saved!* Cut down by God's hand in judgment, because she did not believe the message. How solemn is the word, "Remember Lot's wife."

Did she not *hope* to be saved? Yes! Did she not expect to reach a happy place with her husband and daughters? Yes! Did she reach it? No! She was cut down, because there was no faith, either in the judgment coming, or in the way of escape.

We read in Genesis 19: 12, "And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? Son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place." Are you the only one of your family? Have you any still unsaved? "Bring them out," says God; "get them out of the world, break the fatal spell that binds them to the world of the dead, loose the chain that holds them, bring them out to Jesus." He wants your faith to pierce the clouds, wing its way to the very throne of God, and there leave your loved ones at the feet of Jesus.

The evangelist's desire is to drag you out of the world to Christ.

"Out of the world?" you say. Yes, right out, for if your heart is out of the world you are morally outside the scene.

A Christian brought to know Christ, having the joy of the Lord's love in the heart, is entirely outside the present scene, or if occupied with it, is only so in order to get souls out of it.

How do I get my heart out of the world? I get a glimpse of Christ, I see Him, before the day of the execution of the coming judgment, doing a work for *me*, whereby I can escape from the coming judgment, and then going back to the glory; my heart gets attracted to Him there, where He is, and drawn completely away from the world. Home, *then*, is the place where He is who has won my heart, and this scene becomes a wilderness to me, because He is not in it.

Before God judges He always warns; and have not *you*, my friend, had many a warning note falling on your ear? Look at the grace of God in this chapter. The angels find their way to Sodom, they are, if I may so speak, evangelists to the house of Lot, and while declaring what is coming on the scene, they point out a place of safety.

And what has God done! Before the day of judgment falls on the world, His own Son has stepped in, and done a work on the cross, where, by the sinner may escape.

There is a way of escape, and God works, and the Holy Ghost works, and His servants work, to try to get you on the road that leads to a place of safety.

The very fact of God's sending a Saviour is the irrefragable proof that man needed salvation, and how shall we escape if we make light of Christ, if we "neglect so great salvation?"

Have you not heard the message often, and yet you are unconverted? I would fain, like the angels, lay "hold upon your hand," and bring you forth, for you are, like Lot, a lingerer still. You do not deny that judgment is coming, and yet you linger. What has seized you, to be any longer careless about your soul? Put the Bible in the fire, and I could understand your conduct; but tell me you read the word of God, tell me you believe Scripture — believe the tale of the blood-shedding and death of the Son of God — tell me you believe the tale of the day of judgment coming, and I cannot understand you. Oh, wake up, wake up, be no longer careless! If you merely say you believe Scripture, you are in the world and of the world, depend upon it the world knows very well who belongs to it, and God knows. God knew that Lot did not belong to that defiled scene — Sodom, and "delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked."

The angels said to Lot, "Up, get you out;" and to you, unsaved soul, I say, "Up, get you out." Men talk of the progress of the world. Where is the progress? "Oh," you say, "look at science." Yes, I grant it. "And look at the inventions, the improvements." I grant it, but are children more dutiful? Are servants more faithful? Are masters and mistresses more considerate and careful? Are husbands more tender? Are wives more prudent? No! no! The world is making great progress, but to what? I will tell you. To judgment! To judgment! Did not Sodom progress? Yes! and all of a sudden it was judged; and "As it was in the days of Lot, thus shall it be in the day that the Son of Man is revealed." Then, in fancied security, they reared their heads proudly aloft, and defied God, and so they do now. But the judgment came *then*, and it will surely come on this scene in which you are.

But that judgment is not what I press so now. Lot's wife never saw the judgment; she was cut off, but not by Sodom's judgment; and you, halting, unbelieving sinner, "*Remember Lot's wife.*"

Lot's sons-in-law did not believe the word about coming judgment; they seemed to say, "If you are going to leave the city — give up the world — we are not;" and they remained, and tasted the judgment they courted.

"Up, get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city," says Lot. But what thought the sons-in-law? They thought he was a fool, and was playing the fool for their amusement: he seemed to them as one that mocked. It was not they who mocked him, but "he seemed as one that *mocked* unto his sons-in-law." The very idea of *their* city being overthrown was ridiculous, for Sodom had never been more busy, never more prosperous; the sun was shining, and there was no sign of coming judgment. They refused the message that told them of

the way of escape, and perished in its overthrow. It was sheer unbelief, and many a time has not the preacher seemed to you as one that mocked? But search the Scriptures, and see if these things are true or no.

I am not mocking you, I am warning you, delivering my own soul too, and if you sink into the lake of fire — you will, if you do not come to Christ — you can never say in its depths that you were not warned. Oh, flee to Jesus, flee to the mountain, "escape for thy life!"

Perhaps you say, "I would rather stay where I am." Very well, but you can never say you were not warned. Do you say, "Christians are not consistent"? I own it; but are God's words true? It will be no consolation to you by and by, that you did not believe because Christians were not consistent.

Arise! flee for thy life, flee to the Lord now, lest thou mayest never have another opportunity.

"Oh, but," you say, "you do not expect the Lord so soon, do you?" I do expect Him every moment, and I will tell you what, if He comes *tonight*, tomorrow you will believe. "Believe what?" Believe the devil's gospel, for the devil has a gospel. Oh, yes, you may yet be a believer, but you will believe a *lie*. "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (2 Thess. 2).

I have no doubt part of the devil's gospel to you will be, "You are all right." Satan will say, "You are getting on all right now you have got rid of these troublers."

The troublers are taken up to meet Christ, and the world will go on just as before, but no more troubled by these preachers. Sons and daughters no more troubled by converted parents, brothers no more troubled by converted sisters. No! the troublers are gone, the fools, the madmen in your eyes, are all gone; and you are left to enjoy a Satanic, balmy calm, untroubled by anything about your soul - *till, till* one day the bubble of fancied security bursts, and swift destruction falls, and there is no escape.

Oh, arise! flee now! now while you may. Have you lingered long? Delay no longer. The Lord would lay His hand on you and bring you forth. Can you linger still? You that have hesitated — have not decided — have not been in earnest about your soul hitherto, oh hesitate not, linger not, lest you taste judgment, before the day of judgment. "Remember Lot's wife," lest the mercy of God be too long disregarded, and He show no longer mercy but judgment.

Thank God you are still in life, still here where the gospel is preached; if you had died yesterday you would have been in *hell*! You that are undecided, impressed about the truth, half-decided, but not quite, oh, "Remember Lot's wife." Will you refuse the Lord's hand, that would touch you, and drag you now to Jesus?

Look! the angels drag them outside the city, but outside the city is not safety, out of the world is not safety, to have broken with old habits is not safety, to make good resolutions is not safety; you must get to the *mountain*, — get to Christ.

The mountain, I take it, is the same place where Abraham had communion with God; the mountain, I believe, typifies Christ, — Christ the only place of safety, Christ God's salvation, Christ risen from the dead, Christ the sinner's friend. Hear God's exhortation to you, O soul — "Escape for thy life." Hear also God's warning word to the unsaved soul, "Remember Lot's wife." Who bids thee be warned by her — take warning by her solemn end? The Lord! They are His own words.

She started on the road, but she never reached the mountain. Nothing can save your soul but Christ; anxiety will not save you, desire to be saved will not save you. She got out of the city, but she never got salvation. She turned round to see if there was any truth in what she had heard, and if she might not yet get back to Sodom, and she stands the witness of the righteous judgment of God on a soul that was not real, was not true, did not with her heart believe the message; and tell me, shall it be with you, Christ and the mountain-top, and safety, or judgment on the plain, *eternal* judgment? Do, you say, "I will think about it, I will think over what you say"? Then to you I again say, "Remember Lot's wife," one that turned aside when God said, "Escape to the mountain."

Reach Christ you must; it is not how near have you got, but have you got to *Him*? I do, not know how near she was to Zoar; she might have been just outside the gates, and her husband going in, but she never went in; never, never.

And I do not know where you are: you may be but two inches from Christ, but let me tell you, if you are but one hair's-breadth from Christ, that hair's-breadth will ensure your eternal damnation; you and Lot's wife will be in the same case, eternal monuments of the righteous judgment of God on your own outrageous folly — you *might* have tasted salvation; but you *did not*.

God lingers over you, calls you, would drag you forth, points you to the mountain top, points you to Christ; "Stay not," He says, "do not halt or hesitate, there is no place of safety, peace, or security, till you have got to that spot, the risen Christ in glory."

You say, "Did not Lot get to Zoar?" Yes, and he got safety there, but he did not get *tranquillity*; he had *security*, but he had not *peace*, he had doubts and fears in Zoar, so, soon, he went to the mountain.

Going into Zoar is like people who desire to be saved, but who want a little bit of the world too. "Is it not a little one?" says Lot, *i.e.*, he is half-hearted. Must I make a clean cut? he says.

It is a sorrowful thing to be in Zoar. Zoar is a kind of ditch, into which the devil likes people to fall, who really are converted. He likes them to take a bit of the world with them. "It does not do," he tells them, "to be too true, too out-and-out for Christ."

O, my friend, escape for thy life and flee to the mountain; never rest till you reach Christ. *Look* not behind, "Remember Lot's wife." Smoking corpses, a burning city, and ashes throughout all the plain, were the only things that remained to speak of the utter folly of disbelieving the warning of God. I said the *only* things, but there was yet another. Had a traveller drawn near to

Sodom that day, a strange sight would have met his eye — a pillar of salt! Charred? No! Blackened? No! No sign of that fiery judgment had touched the Pillar of Salt. No! It stood the witness of the folly of going halfway, of being *half persuaded*, *almost* decided, but only *almost*. "Remember Lot's wife."

What turned her back? Love of the city she had left. Oh, whoever you are, decide for Christ now! Supposing the Lord were to shut the door tonight, where would you be? You, who think you would like to be a Christian some day, think it is a good thing to be a Christian, — mean to be one some day, — to you, I say, "Remember Lot's wife."

Ye halters, ye undecided, ye who know the claims of the world, think of her, on her way to salvation but never reaching it — having her back for a moment turned on the world, but turning round again. Let me beseech you, decide now: the way is open, the Lord calls thee, the evangelist beseeches thee, God urges thee, the Church would welcome thee; turn round, own your sin, confess your guilt, acknowledge your danger. Come to Jesus!

He will receive you, pardon you, you shall know now His salvation, know security and tranquillity likewise. There remains but one thing for you to do, get to Christ, reach Christ, believe on Christ.

How couldst thou bear, through the long, the morningless night of eternity, to be the counter. part of Lot's wife? And what is that? A person who was lost within sight of salvation, who went down to the pit passing by the open door of heaven on the road. Oh, do not risk such a fate! Come now — turn now!

May this lead you who are unsaved, so to remember Lot's wife, that you shall never be like her. If I remember her I will take good care never to be like her. The Lord give you to hear God's word to you, and to believe on His Son.

And for us who are Christians, if there is but one day more before the return of our Lord, may we know what it is to do as these angels, to seek to drag those whom we know out of the world, and to draw them to Christ.

Unsaved reader, wouldst thou "remember Lot's wife"?

"Then linger not in all the plain,

Flee for thy life, the mountain gain!

Look not behind, make no delay!

Oh! speed thee, speed thee on thy way!

Haste, traveller, haste!"

If thou slightest the warning of that Pillar of Salt thy future is thus solemnly pictured:-

"'Almost persuaded,' harvest is past!

'Almost persuaded,' doom comes at last!

'Almost' cannot avail; 'Almost' is but to fail;

Sad, sad, that bitter wail — 'Almost,' but lost!"