Remember Lot's Wife

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Preacher: Rev John Maclean

[0:00] Turn with me now to Luke's Gospel, chapter 17. We shall read from verse 20 of Luke's Gospel, chapter 17.

Remember Lot's wife. Especially those words in verse 32. Remember Lot's wife.
These words which were spoken by Jesus are, rather can be applied to our own hearts today. Because the Lord and Saviour was speaking to those who go only a short way in religion or in Christian things.
And he says to such people who only go so far, he says to them, remember Lot's wife.
[1:16] She went only so far. And what I want us to remember about Lot's wife this tonight. First of all, to remember her concern.

And then to remember her sin. And then to remember her judgment. First of all then, when we remember the concern of Lot's wife.
We see from the passage that we read that she was spoken to in a very definite way. She was spoken to in a very definite way.
And as a result of that, she was, for a time, concerned about the future. In other words, she was troubled.
She was bothered. She had a desire to change. She had a desire to leave the cities of the plain.
[2:25] And to go in obedience to the command of the angels. To leave the cities of the plain. And to make their way up into the mountains.

She was concerned. And she had a desire for change. She had a desire to leave her old life. And to make a new start.
But what we notice about Lot's wife is this. It was only a fleeting desire. It was only a fleeting desire. In other words, she did not go the whole way. And there are many like that. Just like Lot's wife. Many things trouble them.
Many things will concern them. Many things give them a desire to change. It may be that some put it like this.
[3:27] That they want to turn over a new leaf. They want to live better lives. They want to be finished with the past. And with all its wrongs.

And so on. There are even those like Lot's wife. Who have a desire to go in the ways of God. They have a desire. They have a desire.
But sadly with many. It could be termed as a fleeting desire. That is they fail to exercise our right. The desires that are given to them. And maybe you can think of experiences that you have gone through. Times of trouble.
Times of difficulty. And you believe that you are being spoken to through those difficulties. God was using those things to speak to your heart.
[4:28] Maybe you can remember a time when death suddenly came into your home. Or into your community. And through that you felt you were being spoken to.

You felt alarmed within yourself. You were bothered and you were troubled. And you had a desire to change your ways. You had a desire to live a better way.
To live even in the ways of God. Lot's wife was in such a position. You know God can use many things to speak to us.
But today when many are being spoken to. And when many are being troubled and concerned. They fail to seek the Lord aright.
The word of God reminds us to seek the Lord. While he is to be found. And to call upon him while he is near. And there are many times when God draws near to us.

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[5:34] He can draw near to us in our times of difficulty. He does draw near when his word is being preached. Many times that he draws near to us.

And what we are being urged upon in his word. Is to call upon him when he is near. But what I want us to notice about Lot's wife.
Yes she was concerned. She was spoken to in a definite way. But what troubled her heart? What concerned and disturbed her?
What gave her the desire to leave the cities of the plain. And to go in obedience to the command of the angels?
What spoke to her life? What spoke to her heart? And I believe first of all. That the message. Or the special announcement.
[6:37] That the angels brought. Troubled the heart. And the mind of Lot's wife. We are told that they came with a message of judgment.

And because of the iniquity. In Sodom and Gomorrah. God was going to come. In wrath. And he was going to destroy.
The cities of the plain. And you can imagine. What was going through the mind of Lot's wife at this time. She knew about God.
She was taught to believe. That God was a covenant keeping God. And you can imagine. That going through her mind was this. God is coming in judgment.
But we are being encouraged. To leave this place. Where God is going to come in judgment. We are being encouraged. To go on to this place of safety. And you can imagine.
[7:38] What was going through her mind at that time. Fear would have. Began to come into her heart. And into her mind. The judgment of God.

Fear of what? Fear. Of maybe being left behind. Fear of what? When all the others are gone. That they would be the ones who would heed this call.
And they would make their way to the place of safety. And she was afraid that she was going to be left behind. That would have concerned her. And that would have troubled her.
And that would have spurred her on as it were. To make her way out of Sodom and Gomorrah. She was afraid. That she would be left behind. Or maybe she was afraid of just being too late.
That before she got out of Sodom. God would have come in judgment. At the fear of being late. Or maybe the fear. Of being lost.
[8:38] For all eternity. Those things would have gripped her. Those things would have challenged her heart. The judgment of God would have brought a fear into her heart.

The judgment of God would have concerned her. And troubled her. And given her a desire to make her way to the place of safety. I wonder.
Is that what has troubled your soul? Is that what has concerned you? Is that what concerned you maybe years back? You can remember sitting under the preaching of God's word.
And you can remember how the message of God was reaching to your heart. And you are hearing that one day God was going to come in judgment. You are hearing that God was a God of wrath.
That God was a God who was angry with the sinner. And that one day God was going to punish sin.
And you can remember sitting under the preaching of this word.
[9:48] And your heart was being troubled. You were being bothered. You were becoming afraid. Afraid that you were going to be left behind.

While others were going to be taken to safety. While others were going to be saved. You were going to be left. Or maybe you thought to yourself when you heard this message of judgment.
That it was going to be too late for you. Oh you were so troubled. You were so concerned. And you began to move in a particular direction.
Afraid of being too late. Maybe you heard the story of Noah. How God was going to come in judgment upon the people.
He was going to send the flood. And maybe you were like the people in the day of Noah. You didn't believe. But the people in the day of Noah began to believe when they felt the raindrops.
[10:53] And when they saw the flood coming. They began to believe then all that Noah was saying. But it was too late. And maybe you were seeing yourself in that same situation.

You were seeing yourself too late. That you were going to be left behind. While others were going to be brought in. You were going to be left. Because you were too late.

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And maybe what was troubling you. Maybe what concerned you at that particular time. Was the thought of being lost. Oh you began to hear about hell.
It was preached to your heart. With all sincerity. With all urgency. You can remember in all love. The message of hell was coming to you.
Reminding you that this would be the place. Where every sinner would go. And you can think of how that troubled you. And how that concerned your heart.
[11:55] Lot's wife was concerned. Lot's wife was moved by what she heard from the angels. The message. The announcement that she heard.

Can you remember that? Times when you were moved by the preaching of God's word. Times when your soul was troubled. When you had a desire to go on.
I ask you. Where are you now? Did you go on to seek the Lord? Did you exercise aright those desires that were within you?
Or was it just a fleeting desire? And you just let it go past. That's what happened in the case of Lot's wife. But then.
I believe that she was spoken to. In another way. And that is. By the anxiety of her own husband. Not just by what she heard from the angels.
[12:57] Not just the special announcement that they brought. But the anxiety of her husband. And I believe that Lot's wife knew her husband. And she would have known when things would be troubling him.

And I think that on three occasions in this short space of time. She would have noticed the anxiety. On the face of her husband. And that anxiety that she was seeing.
Would have been reaching to the very cords of her own heart. But. Remember too when. The message came from the angels. That would have concerned Lot.
That God was going to come in judgment. And that he was going to judge. Not only the cities. But all the people within it. That would have concerned Lot.
And she would have been seeing the anxiety of Lot. And that would have moved her. And that would have troubled her. But also. The rebuff that his sons-in-law gave to him.
[14:05] He went out to where they were. He told them all that was going to happen. And the word of God reminds us. That he seemed as one that mocked. They wouldn't really believe him.

And you can imagine how much that would have troubled. And concerned Lot himself. And how anxious he would have been. Because his own sons-in-law.
The rebuffed him. And Lot's wife would have noticed that. And in all probability. She would have asked what happened. And he would have told her.
And he would have expressed to her. His concern. About their rebuff. And that would have also stirred at her heart. But then to the reaction of the crowd.
When they came to the door. And all that was in their mind was sin. And all that they wanted to do was to satisfy their own lusts. Yes the suggestion that Lot made was not right.
[15:07] But you can imagine how troubled Lot was. At all that took place at that particular time. How the crowd reacted to his words. That would have caused him anxious thoughts.

And his wife. Would have been aware. Of that anxiety. And I believe that that would have reached her conscience. And that would have troubled her heart.
I wonder have you been in a similar situation like that. Where the anxiety. Of a loved one. Has stirred.
The cords of your heart. A loved one in Christ. It may be a mother. It may be a father in Christ. It may be a husband.
It may be a wife that is in Christ. It may be a child that is in Christ. But because you are still a stranger to Christ.
[16:10] And maybe because of your own waywardness. Because of your sin. Because of the type of life that you live. You're causing anxious moments.

And anxious thoughts. On your loved ones who are in Christ. They are concerned for your soul. They are concerned about your waywardness.
They are troubled that you seem so heedless. And so careless. You may remember times when you witnessed that. You may have come home late.
You may have come home very guilty. Maybe under the influence. And you can remember the picture that faced you in the door.

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You didn't get any row. You didn't get any scolding. But the anxiety on the face of a loved one. It reached at your heart. And you can remember how that spoke to you.
[17:15] And you can remember how that moved you. And how that was giving you a desire to change your ways. And to make a better life. And to make a better life.

Or even to go on in the ways of God. God. And to make a better life. She was moved. And she was concerned. By. Not only by what she heard.
But by what she saw. Not just by the announcement of the angels. But by the anxiety of her own husband. but I believe also by what she felt not just by what she felt with all that was going on around her but what she felt when the angels came and took her hand this action of the angels not only had they told her about what God was going to do not only did they urge her and encourage her to leave the place but we are told that they took her by the hand and I believe that very action of the angels it moved her and she began to go on in that way in the way in which they were leading her she was spoken to in a dramatic way she was concerned I wonder then is that how you feel even tonight or can you remember that this was how you felt at one time you felt that you were concerned you felt that you were spoken to in a very definite way there were many things that spoke to your heart the question is again but where are you did you go on to seek the Lord or did you quench those desires that you had that leads on to the second point we notice her concern she was spoken to in a deliberate way notice then her sin she sinned in a deliberate way she sinned in a deliberate way disobedience oh it looked like a such like a small sin it looked just like a small sin all she did was the record tells us she looked behind she looked that's all it was but what that look involved it was a deliberate disobedience it was a look of disobedience the command of the angel was escape to the mountain and look not behind thee she looked only a look but it was a deliberate disobedience but notice too what it indicated this look indicated where her heart really was her heart was still in Sodom and that's why she looked it seemed such a small thing to be punished for but it was a deliberate disobedience and it indicated where her heart really was but then too notice that it was what you could term a secret sin because it is made very clear that she looked from behind him now they were about to enter into the place of safety and you as they were making their way up say this path out of the cities from the cities of the plain to that place where God where the angels said that they could go in a line maybe on their way into this place of safety or maybe what Lot's wife was doing she was sort of lingering behind slowing down and then as she thought when no one else was looking and especially when her husband when Lot was not looking she looked behind she turned she looked from behind him
I think it is there is something important to learn from that that she seemed to be far more afraid of what Lot would have thought of her rather than what God was going to think of her and you know there are many who sin just in this deliberate way and you might be saying to yourself but my sins are only small or they only seem so insignificant but what is involved in that sin maybe you're saying to yourself but nobody knows I'm not the person that sins openly but nobody knows the sin of your heart God knows the sin of your heart and the word of God reminds us that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked and it may be that you have this secret sin and oh you'd be horrified you'd be ashamed if anyone else knew about this sin and you're in this situation where you're more afraid of what man thinks of your sin rather than what God thinks about your sin you're troubled that man would but what man would say to you what would others say to you because of that secret sin but the question is what does
God say what does God's word think God's word says that all sin is dishonoring to him his word reminds us that the wages of sin is death all sin no matter what that sin might be and here she sinned in a definite way she deliberately sinned against the command that was given to her if not in open then maybe in secret this is the way you are living you are deliberately sinning against God and maybe not openly but maybe in your heart you are rejecting what God is saying you are rejecting his word and maybe within your heart you are rejecting his offer of salvation that you are rejecting the gospel or you don't want to give that impression you wouldn't like others to think that this is what you are really doing but deep down in your heart you are rejecting the gospel and you are saying no to all that God is offering in other words you are deliberately disobeying his commands
[24:26] God knows your sin and God will if you remain in that condition God will one day punish you for all your sin the word of God reminds us be sure your sin will find you out but the question is why why did she look back why did she sin in this deliberate way now I believe there were a number

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of reasons why she looked back first of all a failure to submit to God's word and to God's ways a failure to submit to him why do many turn back today or why do many not go on today they have they have desires to go on or desires to know him but why do they not go on a failure to submit to his word and to his ways in other words there is a selfishness within their hearts there is a pride within their hearts there is a lack of humility within their hearts they imagine that their way is more important and better than God's way a failure to submit to him the word of God reminds us that those that would follow him

Jesus says if any man will come after me let him deny himself take up his cross and follow me and maybe you're not willing to submit yourself not only to his word but you're not willing to submit yourself to his way in other words there is a failure to submit to him but then a second reason where you can imagine how her fears began to subside oh in the evening when she heard that message she was troubled and when she saw how her husband reacted to the situations around that increased her anxiety but maybe after a few hours and as they were making their way out of Sodom and Gomorrah her fears began to subside she didn't feel so afraid anymore she seemed to lose this thought of being lost forever her fears were subsiding is that why you didn't go on to seek the Lord your fears were subsiding you can remember a time when you were really bothered and really concerned but then maybe when the morning came your fears have subsided and you forgot even the vows that you made some of you might have even experienced this men at sea in a storm many as a man in a storm at sea has prayed and out of fear for their lives they have prayed and in their difficulty they have prayed and they have asked God to save them and God to take them out of this difficulty and many as a person has vowed that if God would save them then they would follow him for the rest of their lives many many have done that but then the moment they got into the calm the moment their ship got into harbour their fears were now subsiding they forgot the plans that they had made and the vows that they had made is that what you have done but then in the case of Lot's wife her friends and some of her family were in Sodom and I believe that was another reason why she turned back friends and family in Sodom I wonder is that what would make you turn back is that why you have turned back is that why you have not gone on because of what friends might have said or because they were not going on with you because of family they were not going on with you so you just turn back with them is that the reason why you are not going on or you have turned back or is it that you have now like Lot's wife maybe a feeling of safety in other words she was so near to the place and she thought to herself we must be all right now there is no more judgment to come upon us now and she was feeling safe but she deliberately looked back and she we're told that she was turned into a pillar of salt she deliberately sinned she deliberately disobeyed and God judged her but then we can add a number of things to that list why do people not go on today or why do they only go as it were a little way and then turn back well I believe that they have never really been aware of their sin never really aware of sin it never really bothered you that much you weren't really concerned you weren't really convinced about the awfulness of your sin you didn't really see that it was your sin that had separated you from
God you weren't really seeing that it was your sin that was eventually going to take you to a lost eternity you didn't really become aware you weren't really aware of your sin and also you didn't really hate your sin enough you didn't abhor your sin you didn't want to turn from it you didn't really want to leave it behind you you'd have rather cling on to your sin rather than leave it and follow after God you know when you think of what repentance means it could be summed up in this way where you have a loathing for sin where you want to leave it behind you and where you have a longing to be right with God and a longing to walk in his way but that is something that is absent from your heart if you turn back but then also
[31:15] I believe that there are some who maybe go a short way and then turn back because they do not really appreciate the beauty of Christ they do not really appreciate all that he did upon the cross of Calvary they are looking upon him like we are reminded of in Isaiah chapter 53 they still see him as a root out of a dry ground they see him as one who has no form nor comeliness no beauty that they should desire him they don't really appreciate the beauty of Christ that's why many turn back or don't go on coming then to the third point her judgment it was unexpected she didn't expect it at this time she didn't expect nobody would have expected it as I hinted at already she was so near to the place of safety it was an unusual thing to happen that

God would judge in this particular way but remember what really happened to Lot's wife it's not just that she deliberately sinned it's not just that she was turned into a pillar of salt but it is this because

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she deliberately sinned against God she perished and that's what we have to remember or she was she was making her way out of Sodom and Gomorrah she was making her way to the place of safety but she deliberately sinned and God dealt with her because of her sin and God punished her because of her sin she was she perished she was lost and when we remember her punishment we have to remember that this will be the punishment of all people it's not just that you have rejected Christ it's not just that you have deliberately sinned against him there is a lot oh it is the fact that you have rejected Christ is the reason why you are going to perish but it is not that you have rejected Christ and that's all it's not that you have sinned and that's all God is going to deal with you because of your sin now I mentioned earlier the soul that sin shall die the person that does not go on to seek the Lord the person that deliberately rejects the offer of the gospel is going to perish there is no alternative there is no other way and it is perishing in a lost eternity in a lost hell and the word of God reminds us that there there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth we are reminded that there it is the place where the worm dieth not and where the flame is not quenched we are being reminded there that in hell people are there for all eternity someone seeking to illustrate eternity use this illustration imagine a sandy beach and a bird coming once a year to take away a grain of sand from that beach and when it had finally taken every grain of sand away you'd have said that was the length of eternity but it goes on further it's longer and longer than that it is without end an eternity without

Christ without end an eternity suffering and being punished for your sins an eternity with regrets an eternity longing that you had I believe in the case of some longing that you had believed an eternity in a lost fire in a lost hell remember Lot's wife that's where she went because she disobeyed she perished and she went to a lost eternity and what was true for her will be true for every person who has rejected his offer of salvation every soul that has said no will perish but notice in spite of her many privileges she perished in spite of her many privileges she was lost and you think of the privileges that she had even the privileges that she had because she was related to Abraham the uncle of Lot there was a time when

Lot was interceding for Sodom and Gomorrah but I believe more than that she would have had the instructions from Abraham himself and when Lot and his wife would have been with Abraham and sojourning with Abraham he would have been telling them about the covenant that God had made he would have been reminding them of the necessity of going along and believing in God's covenant she was instructed she was prayed for somebody was interceding for her and I believe she also had the influence of a home where God was mentioned and where God was honoured especially when she was with Abraham and you think of it in spite of those privileges she perished and I'm sure that many of us are in that same situation have had many privileges you have known that people have prayed for you or that people are praying for you you have had the influence of a good home you have had the instruction from a mother's knee you have been instructed from your [38:22] Sabbath school teacher instructed when you came to the house of God instructed in his word a privileged people but could it be that in spite of all those privileges you're lost and you end up in a lost eternity because you have rejected that influence you have rejected that instruction you have rejected those privileges that you have had then you will be lost in spite of those many privileges and I believe that there is something that can be written over all our lives every person who is still outside of Christ it can be said of you that you're left without excuse you can you can never stand before God's judgment and say I was not told or I was not warned you're left without excuse but then also in spite of a promising start oh she did make a promising start and in spite of her many privileges and in spite of a promising start she perished she was lost think of think of this she was impressed by what had taken place in her home and I believe that if you were to see her and if you were to speak to her she would have indicated to you that she really wanted to leave

Sodom and Gomorrah and that she wanted to make her way to the place of safety she was giving every indication that she was going to go on she was interested in going on she was giving this promising start and in spite of a promising start she turned back and she was lost maybe you're like that or you're interested and nobody could not say to you but that you are interested and you can remember you know or you accept that you are being influenced to an extent and again if you were to be asked you would you would say but I intend to be there I intend to go on I intend to reach the place of safety and maybe you're giving many indications but what are the real indications of someone going on what are the indications actions well I believe first of all that there is an attention to the things of

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God to his word to the preaching of his word to the reading of his word an attention to the things of God like coming to his house seeking him in the place of prayer that is an indication within your heart are you going on do you have these are you giving this attention do you have these desires or maybe another indication is the questionings in your heart the questionings that you'd like to put to someone who is on the way maybe what can I do what must I do to be saved and so on another indication may be where you begin to avoid certain sins I wonder are you going to go on to seek him she turned back in spite of many privileges she turned back in spite of a promising start and notice thirdly that she turned back in spite of her proximity to the place of safety she was so near but yet she turned away and if you read again that chapter that we read in
Genesis you see how near she was to the place of safety so near and yet so far and my friend you can be so near but yet turn back you can be so near and yet be far away some of you may have heard a story that took place an incident that took place when the Iliar was returning to this port many years ago there's a story told that a man managed to when the boat hit the rocks that a man managed to swim to the shore with a rope and that rope was fastened to the boat and in some way was fastened to the shore and men saw this as their only chance of escape and they clambered upon that rope and either the rope snapped or it gave way from the boat or from the side of the shore and there were many that could have reached safety many of them drowned but the story is this that there was one person who drowned that night and as last time he was heard to cry out these awful words my
God lost in sight of home lost in sight of home you pass the rocks of home and you look and just a short distance away you see the lights of Stornoway so near and yet so far lost in sight of home you could be in that very same position so near so close to the place of safety and yet you turn away what can we learn from the story of Lot's wife I believe there are three things three lessons that we have that we can learn first of all to those who are already trusting there is a glorious lesson to learn and that is there is no turning back for those who have trusted there is no turning back or you may have some upsets in the way you may slip on the way you may even back slide on the way but for the person who is trusting there is no turning back the
[45:14] Lord has promised to keep you and to him that is able to keep you from falling but remember this an evidence of your trust or an evidence that you have really begun is that you're going on that's your evidence that you're going on how do I know I've begun because I go on or it may be that you have a slip on the way it may be that you have as I have said back slidden in the way but I believe for the genuine back slider he wants to return he wants to go on the back slider doesn't want to go back so for those who have trusted there is no turning back there is no chance of being lost for the believer there is no way that you'll perish for the believer there is no way that one day

God is going to punish you in a lost eternity because of your sin so for those who have trusted there is no turning back but then for those who may be troubled maybe some things that have been said tonight are troubling your soul or some things that you have heard over these past days and weeks even over these past years your soul is troubled you feel a concern and your sin and the awfulness of your sin is coming before you you see the hopelessness of life without Christ in other words there is a trouble and there is a concern within your soul then go on to seek the Lord don't be satisfied with mere intentions don't be satisfied that you have those indications as it were within you seek the Lord seek him in his word seek him in the place of prayer if you are troubled go on to seek the Lord and then to those who may have turned back or to those who may be thinking of turning back remember if you turn back and you continue in that way of going away from him then no matter the promising start you made no matter all the indications you have shown if you are if you are wanting to turn back if you have no desire for him or for his word if your only desire is for the things of this world then you will be lost and you cannot in any way rely upon any experience of the past that you may have had no matter how wonderful it seemed to have been to you if you are turning back or if you have turned back and you're not bothered that you're turning back you have no concern about your sin or about your waywardness then remember this warning if you continue on in that way you can be lost you could be lost for all eternity remember
Lot's wife let us pray

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