



Two weeks ago, we considered the first elephant in Genesis 19 - the sin of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Last week we considered the second elephant in the chapter – the impossible choice Lot faced – to offer up his two guests or his two daughters to the men of Sodom to do with as they pleased.

This week we will look at a third elephant in the passage – the warning given by the angels to Lot and his family once they were outside of Sodom... and what happened to Lot's wife when she disregarded the angels warning and looked back.

After the angels rescued Lot, pulling him back into the house... and then blinding the men who were trying to break in... the angels urged Lot... **look at v.12-13**...

The angels urged Lot to get anyone who belonged to him out of the city... because they knew the time was short.

They knew the judgment of the LORD was imminent.

They knew time was almost up for the inhabitants of Sodom.

So, Lot went out - **look at v.14.**

Think about it... it's the middle of the night.

You're sound asleep.

And... your father-in-law is at your house... banging on the door.

And when you answer... he tells you... to run for your life.

What would you do?

Do you know what Lot's sons-in-law did?

They laughed... and went back to bed.

I think their response is meant to shock us... at how sin turns the heart of a person in on itself ... and away from God.

They were given an opportunity to live... and they didn't take it.

Lot returned home empty-handed... and I would think... discouraged.

With the coming of the dawn... the same word that Lot had used with his sons-in-law was used by the two angels with him.... **look at v.15.**



What did Lot do? **Look at v.16a...**



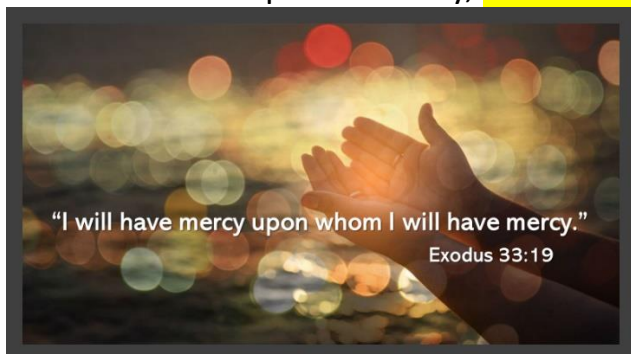
Why did Lot hesitate?

Was he hoping that his sons-in-law might change their mind and seek him out?

Or did he hesitate... because he knew... his wife wasn't sure she wanted to leave?

The fact is... we are not told the why... only that Lot hesitated.

But what the Scriptures do say, **look at v.16b,** is that...



God showed his mercy by having the angels grasp them by the hands and lead them safely out of the city.

Once outside of Sodom, the angels gave to Lot, Mrs. Lot and their two daughters... instructions as to what they were to do... **look at v.17:**

**“Flee for your lives!”
“Don’t look back!”
“Don’t stop anywhere in the plain!”
“Flee to the mountains, or you
will be swept away!”**



Was there anything in these instructions that was ambiguous?
Any detail that was fuzzy? No.

The angels had brought Lot and his family out of Sodom.
But Lot and his family were now responsible to flee... to the place of refuge.
They were to flee... in faith of God... that he would be true to his word... that they would not be swept away.

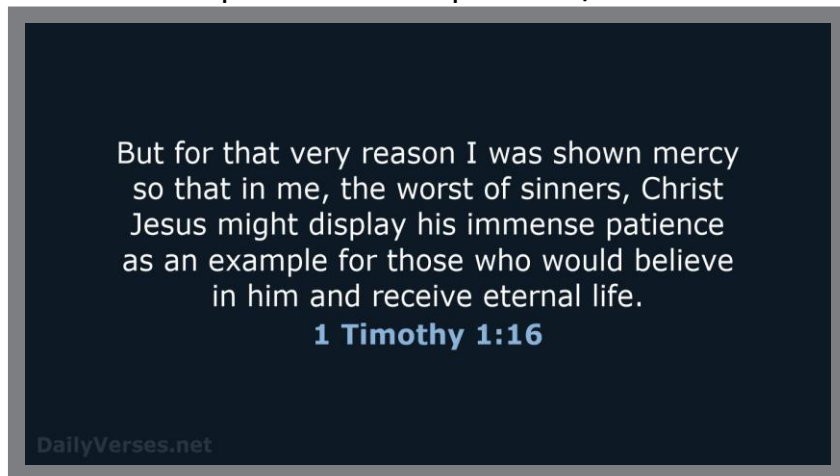
Look at v.18-20.

Why did Lot... at that moment... when every second counted... decide to plead for a place closer than the mountains?

We are not told.

The only thing I could think of... is that God reveals to the reader how great is his patience with those who have believed in him.

This was the apostle Paul's experience/



The patience of God is immense, as is the mercy of God. We see this in what the angel said next... **look at v.21.**

Ephesians 3:20 states that the LORD is able to do immeasurably more than all his people could ask or imagine.



Do you see it... how Lot and his family experienced God's... "immeasurably more." Theirs.... is the experience of all who walk with God.

And then... yet again... the angels stressed to Lot and his family the urgency with which they were to run - **look at v.22.**



True to his word, God waited for Lot to reach Zoar – **look at v.23-25.**

Mrs. Lot's life had been spared... by the mercy of God.
She had escaped Sodom.
But when the angels had told them to run, to not stop, to not look back....Lot's wife disobeyed – look at **v.26.**

Before we answer the question what her looking back entailed... we need to quickly address another question... why when she looked back did she become a pillar of salt?

Bruce Waltke writes in his commentary that in those days... it was the practice of an invading army to scatter salt over fertile fields in order to condemn them to perpetual barrenness and desolation. p.279

What happened to Mrs. Lot serves as a warning.
A consequence of disobeying God, of living without him, is to experience barrenness and desolation.

Everyone wants their life to matter, but without God... one will experience bitter frustration that it doesn't.
Everyone greatly desires to live with abundance, but without God one will experience emptiness and desolation.
This is the consequence of life without God.

But you need to know that becoming a pillar of salt was not the worst thing that happened to her.
Becoming a pillar of salt visually illustrated to us her eternal destiny.
She had lived without God in this life, and she now lives without God in the life that follows physical death.
And it is an enduring life of desolation.

Genesis 19 doesn't explain what her looking back meant.
But something Jesus said in Luke 17:20-37 does.
Let's look at the passage.

Luke 17:20-37

Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst."

Jesus' answer to the Pharisees question... was brilliant and confirmed what he had repeatedly taught.

He said... the kingdom of God was among them.

What is God's kingdom?

It is his reign.

Jesus said the kingdom of God was among them... because the reign of God was embodied in him... and... in the lives of those who had committed themselves to follow him.

The next verse doesn't specify, whether or not Jesus had left off speaking with the Pharisees... it only says that he spoke to his disciples.

Maybe he spoke with them in the hearing of the Pharisees.

But this much is clear... Jesus was not speaking at this point to unbelievers... but to his disciples.

Luke 17:20-37

Then he said to his disciples, "The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. People will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!'

Do not go running off after them. For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

The OT and the NT reveals there are two comings of the kingdom of God.

The first coming was when the Son of Man, was born, lived, taught and healed, suffered many things, was rejected and put to death by the generation alive when he walked upon the earth.

But the second coming of the Son of Man will be vastly different. When he comes again, like lightning that flashes from one end of the sky to the other... everyone... will know he has returned.



John Piper says that the difference between the first and second coming of Christ is like the difference between a little candle and a bolt of lightning.

Always Pray and Do Not Lose Heart.

Jesus continued speaking to his disciples.

Luke 17:20-37

“Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man.

People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.”

Jesus said that his second coming would happen suddenly...like the flood in the days of Noah.

Noah was a preacher of righteousness – 2 Peter 2:5.

While he built the ark, he testified about God... he spoke of the judgment that would soon come upon the inhabitants of the earth... and he pointed any who listened to him... to the ark as God’s provision of rescue.

But Noah's warning was ignored.
People kept living exactly as they had been living.
They did not take God nor Noah seriously.
And then suddenly... the time to repent ran out.

Jesus continued speaking to his disciples.

Luke 17:20-37

"It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all."

Before the rain fell... before the fire fell... and before the return of Jesus Christ... Jesus said... that people will be preoccupied with all the stuff of ordinary life – eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting and building.

Did you notice that when Jesus spoke about the people of Noah's day and the people of Sodom, he didn't identify any particular sins.

Other passages of Scripture do.

But here Jesus made a significant emphasis.

John Piper explains...

**The good things in life
can make a person
just as insensitive
to the reality of God...**

**John Piper
Always Pray and Do Not Lose Heart**

For the people in Noah's day and for the people of Sodom... God simply was not a factor to be considered.

Their lives had no room for him.
In this regard, they lived... **god-less** lives.

They rejected the mercy which God had offered to them.
They suppressed the knowledge of God... revealed in the creation.
They ignored their own conscience, given by God as a gift...searing it until it was left with no voice.

Even in the ordinary things of life.... sin had so turned them in on themselves... that in every regard they did what was right in their own eyes.

Jesus continued...

Luke 17:20-37

"It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. On that day no one who is on the housetop, with possessions inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything."

Remember Jesus was speaking to his disciples about his second coming.
Since the ascension of Jesus, God has waited.
Humanity has had 2000 years of opportunity.

80 generations

Eighty generations have come and gone.
And still God continues to patiently wait... for it is his glory to save sinners.

But what did Jesus mean... when he said... do not... go back for anything?

Luke 17:20-37

“It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. On that day no one who is on the housetop, with possessions inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything.”

And then, for the sake of emphasis, Jesus said...

Luke 17:20-37

Remember Lot's wife!

So that there would be no misunderstanding, Jesus explained...

Luke 17:20-37

“Remember Lot's wife! Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it.”

This theme of “keeping” and “losing” one's life... is a theme which Jesus spoke of often.

Turn back a few pages in the gospel of Luke.

Luke 14:26-35

Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.

In the gospel of Matthew Jesus spoke of this same theme.

Matthew 16:24-26

If anyone would come after me, they must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.

What good will it be for someone if they gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?

Jesus insisted that to follow him a person must deny themselves.

Jesus demanded that he be loved supremely above all other loves.

Jesus refused to negotiate on this matter – he will be the uncontested LORD of one's life, the One who is in charge, the One who calls the shots.

When compared to having the entire wealth of the earth or to be in relationship with Jesus Christ... the choice according to Jesus... is easy.

Only a fool would choose the wealth of the entire world.

While you and I can contribute nothing to our salvation, it is, from start to finish, a gift of grace.... which is granted on the basis of faith in the sacrifice of Jesus for our sin... it will cost you and I everything to follow Jesus.

Do you better understand now, why Jesus said – remember Lot's wife.

Her look back was not a look of curiosity.... but one of regret.

She loved Sodom.

She loved its comforts.

She loved the life she had lived there.
She felt at home in Sodom.
The people there were her people.

Lot's wife might have been physically pulled out of Sodom by the angels... but Sodom remained in her heart.
She was like the kings and the merchants of the earth, in Revelation 18, who wept and mourned when Babylon fell.

Sodom was her treasure.

The last week of his life, when he taught at the temple, Jesus came back to this same theme which he had spoken of in Luke 17 and Matthew 16.
But instead of urging his followers to remember Lot's wife, this time he warned them that in the last days... there would be an increase of wickedness... and as a result of this increased wickedness...

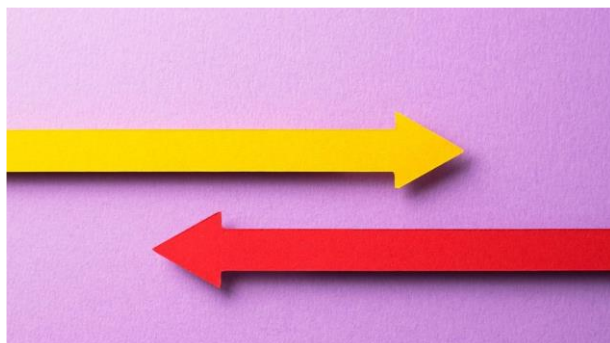


Why did Jesus want his followers to remember Lot's wife?

Because in this present time, the followers of Jesus face a daily struggle, which in fact is a battle.

What kind of a battle are we talking about.

A battle to maintain, as John Piper says, **“a radical, heart-felt, self-denying faith in Jesus Christ.”**



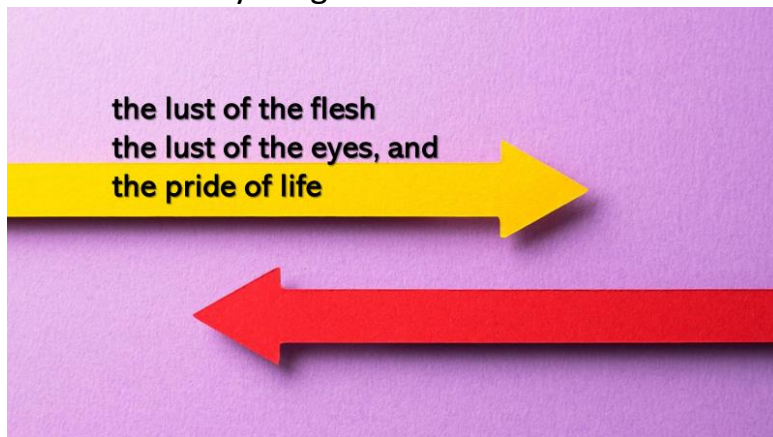
Every day the people of God move in a different direction than the people of our culture.

Every day there is pressure, brought to bear upon us... as Romans 12:2 says, **“to be conformed to the pattern of this world.”**

This is why the apostle John urged his readers in his first epistle, 2:15, to not love the world or anything in the world.

Why did the Holy Spirit move him to write these words?

Because... everything in the world –



– is diametrically opposed to God and to his rule and reign in our lives.

These things – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life... will do everything in their means, not only to oppose... but to smother and to quench our love for God.

We are to remember Lot’s wife.

She is a warning to us.

She loved the world... and as a result... turned back.

The fact that Jesus urges us to remember Lot’s wife....

... is our motivation to ask of God for daily grace that we would not lose heart; but would endure in our faith... and be empowered by the Holy Spirit to resist the siren call of sin... which tempts us... ever so seductively... to love and then to treasure things other than God... things that have no eternal value.

Paul, wrote to the church at Philippi, expressing the resolve of all who are born of the Spirit and in whom the Spirit lives.

Philippians 3:7-14

But whatever were gains to me I now consider **loss**
for the sake of Christ.

What is more, I consider everything a **loss** because of
the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my
Lord, for whose sake I have **lost** all things.

Remember Lot's wife.

Philippians 3:7-14

I consider them garbage, **that I may gain Christ and**
be found in him, not having a righteousness of my
own that comes from the law, but that which is through
faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God
on the basis of faith.

Remember Lot's wife.

Philippians 3:7-14

I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his
resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming
like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the
resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already
arrived at my goal, but **I press on to take hold of that**
for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

Remember Lot's wife.

Philippians 3:7-14

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to
have taken hold of it.

But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and
straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward
the goal to win the prize for which God has called me
heavenward in Christ Jesus.

This morning as we come to the Lord's Table.

Doing so is a most sacred time.

It is an opportunity to remember with gratitude the most precious gift given to us by our Savior – his life.

It is also a time to renew our commitment to Jesus, by confessing as needed our sin, and then appropriating his grace that forgives and cleanses us.

As we come to the table we ask this of the Lord – does my heart 100% yours?

If anything has crept in, this is the time to confess, to lay it down and rekindle our first love.

The table of the Lord is a table of mercy.

His love welcomes us to come.