

## STEWARDSHIP SERMON

March 09<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### LIFE OR MONEY?

**KEY TEXT: Genesis 19:12-17; 24-26**

#### INTRODUCTION

Ask the congregation to give some proverbs or Bible verses on money (riches) and/or on “one’s own life”.

Here are for instance some well-known bible verses that compare life to riches:

**Luk 12:15** « And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth ».

**Mar 8:36** « For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? »

**Job 1:12** « And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.» God wants to say “If money is lost nothing is lost, if life is lost everything is lost.”

**Luke 12:20** “But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?” This is the end of the rich fool story.

There are many other more. But today our focus remains on the case of Lot and his wife when angels revealed to them that God will destroy the city. They were requested to save their life.

« **And whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place** » : that is, whatsoever relations he had, whether more near or remote; for as for his goods, whether in his own house, or in any other part of the city, there was no time for saving them.

In God’s eyes, human being is more important than riches. He did not say “Take with you what you have, or what is important to you.” God did not ask him to sell his possessions and to go out of the city with the money.

#### I. LOT AS A PREACHER

He is directed to give notice to his friends and relations, that they, if they would, might be saved with him (Gen.19 :12) : “Hast thou here any besides, that thou art concerned for? If thou hast, go tell them what is coming.”

Gen. 19 :14. Lot is found here in the character of a preacher of righteousness, and his message is an example of that kind of warning which must be given to sinners. The command of a great duty, which was to do all he could for the salvation of those about him, to snatch them as brands out of the fire. Those who through grace are themselves delivered out of a sinful state should do what they can for the deliverance of others, especially their relations.

**1. Hence the righteous can offer salvation to the last.** Lot went out and warned his sons-in-law of the coming danger and exhorted them to escape. (Gen.19 :14). He was to them a preacher of righteousness, even when they were upon the verge of doom. The door of mercy remains open to the last, and men may find salvation though they come late. It is our duty to proclaim the mercy of God towards sinners while there is time.

The household of Lot, son-in-law and sons, were offered the same mercy. Though some of them were reckless and unworthy they were allowed to share in the blessings of the household covenant. Any connection with the people of God is a privilege which may be improved into a real benefit. They do not ask whether he knew any righteous ones in the city fit to be spared: no, they knew there were none; but they ask what relations he had there, that, whether righteous or unrighteous, they might be saved with him.

The fair warning that Lot gave them: *Up, get you out of this place.* The manner of expression is startling and quickening. It was no time to trifle when the destruction was just at the door. They had not forty days to repent in, as the Ninevites had. Now or never they must make their escape. At midnight this cry was made. Such as this is our call to the unconverted, to turn and live.

**2. Abrupt and pointed.** The case is urgent and admits of no delay. Those concerned, in this instance, were personally addressed, and the danger to which they were exposed was announced in few words. The preacher knew the danger, and men make short work of it when they feel intensely. Like the disciples in the storm, who did not venture upon a long discourse regarding the violence of the winds and the rage of the sea, but had only time to say, "Lord, save us, or we perish." Sinners must be roused by sharp and cutting words which admit of no doubtful meaning.

**3. Authoritative.** Lot signified to these sinners the authority by which he spake: "For the Lord will destroy this city." Ministers of the Gospel have authority for warning sinners of their danger. They are convinced of what they say.

**4. Affectionate.** Lot went forth at an unusual hour of the night to warn those who were bound to him by the ties of natural relationship. We may be sure that, though his language was earnest and faithful, yet his manner was loving and kind. From the deep affection of his heart he would implore them to obey his message. In such a manner must the righteous preach to sinners as to those who belong to the same family, but who are unworthy and rebellious children.

*That God's way of deliverance is only effective through His mercy.* There were four people to be saved, and between them, in the human forms they had assumed. The angels had to lay their hands upon Lot, and his wife, and his two daughters. There were four hands—one for each to deliver them from destruction, as it were, by a loving violence. Is not this work in which we all should share? Let us hasten the lingerers!

Lot and his family were brought forth and set without the city, "the Lord being merciful unto him." (Gen.19 :16). It was by constraining love that he was saved after all. His purpose was too weak to have accomplished his deliverance, and had he been left to himself he would have perished in the common destruction. It is fatal to look behind.

## II- THE RECIPIENTS OF THE MESSAGE

**Everything seems fine.** They had no belief that God would interfere, but thought themselves secure in their wickedness. The plains around them were full of rich beauty, their cities were flourishing, their houses were filled with coarse plenty. The constancy of Nature was uninterrupted, the bounties of Providence continued without stint or sign of withdrawal. The sun rose brightly on that day, and it promised to be fair and prosperous as any other. But, in a moment, the fiery rain from heaven came down and swept them with sudden destruction. This is an example of what shall take place when the last Judgment shall arrive. It shall be then “as it was in the days of Lot” (Luke 17 :28-30).

The slight they put upon this warning: *He seemed to them as one that mocked.* They thought, perhaps, that the assault which the Sodomites had just now made upon his house had disturbed his head, and put him into such a fright that he knew not what he said; or they thought that he was not in earnest with them. Those who lived a merry life, and made a jest of everything, made a jest of this warning, and so they perished in the overthrow. Thus many who are warned of the misery and danger they are in by sin make a light matter of it, and think their ministers do but jest with them; such will perish with their blood upon their own heads. Mocking is the last refuge of those who oppose the truth.

In the face of all discouragements. our efforts may be unavailing. Lot’s message was received with derision, yet he warned them to the last. He did his best. Lot “seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law.” His warning had no effect upon them. They refused to receive the offered mercy. We must do our duty though our message may be rejected with a heartless disdain.

### **III- SAVING OTHERS AND SAVING SELF AT THE SAME TIME (GEN.19 :16)**

Too much of Lot’s heart was in Sodom, so he was not anxious to leave the city. This lack of urgency to do the things of God is a common sign of compromise and a backslidden condition. But we learn from this history *that God’s way of deliverance is often against our will.* Lot lingered as if still unwilling to leave the city. As the Heb. word imports, he delayed, or hindered himself. He suffered many cares and anxieties of business still to hold him to this doomed spot.

The effect of Lot’s life of compromise is clearly seen. When he spoke with utmost seriousness to his sons-in-law about the judgment of God, they did not believe him.

There iare some christians who claim the closeness of Jesus’s coming but sinners can not see in the life of these messenger the meaning of this message. When you tell to your relatives that the end time is near, could they see its expression in your manner of living ?

*Lot forget what should be his chief care.* It was *life* here that was at stake. House, and goods, and residence in a rich and pleasant country are of little moment when compared with the value of our lives, with a possession so close and intimate, nearer to us than anything else—ourselves. A man is not profited if he gains the whole world and loses *himself*. It is folly, when the greatest treasure of all is threatened, to run any risk by losing time over insignificant matters.

(Gen.19 :17). Life is at stake, and Lot has no promise of safety but in flight to the mountain. If he lingers behind, and refuses to make haste, he must be involved in the general destruction. God will not save him without some effort on his part. This is our case. Nothing less than our life is concerned. There is only one way of escape—by renouncing ourselves, our trust in our own strength, our sins, and accepting fully of God’s way of salvation. We must not linger in the plain

of self, or stand still in regretful contemplation of what we have renounced, but must flee to the mountain, to the rock that is higher than we are, for there alone can we rest in safety : Jesus.

#### **IV- SHE LOOKED BACK BECAUSE SHE WAS NOT READY TO LEAVE**

The angels who had come for the salvation of Lot commanded him, saying, “Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters which are here, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city” (Gen.19 :15). He is told, further, to escape for his life, not to look behind him, but to escape to the mountain lest he be consumed.

Lot and his daughters pressed on, but his wife looked back and God turned her into a pillar of salt as she fled from the destruction of the city.

Why did she look back? It was not a casual glance. The word *looked back* has the connotation of *looking intently*. It might possibly be rendered *lagged back*, or maybe even *returned back*.

Perhaps she didn't want to leave the city because some of its dark ways had crept into her heart. It was more than just not having time to gather her things and prepare for the trip. No amount of time would have prepared her for the transition. So she looked back.

Many are awakened to flee, yet look back. Lot's wife was not deaf to the call; did not think it fancy; really believed; felt the danger, and fled. But the sun rose; the valley beautiful; home attractive; no signs of danger.

#### **WHY A PILLAR OF SALT?**

According to the Old Testament, all animal sacrifices had to be seasoned with salt (Leviticus 2:13), it was used in ratifying covenants (Numbers 18:19) and Elisha throws some into the pool of Jericho to purify it (2 Kings 2:20,21).

The New Testament uses salt figuratively in a couple of places. Paul says our speech should be “seasoned with salt,” (Col 4:6) and Jesus calls us “the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13). This quick look through the scriptural use of salt shows a progression of meaning. Because it was something of great value to those in the Ancient Near East, it became a metaphor of the transformational power of the presence of believers in the world.

We are here now, to be salt and light in a world that needs us, and when the time is right, God will take us home. Rick Warren writes, “You were put on earth to make a contribution. You weren't created just to consume resources—to eat, breathe, and take up space. God designed you to make a difference with your life. You were created to add to life on earth, not just take from it. God wants you to give something back.”

God chose to turn Lot's wife into a pillar of salt because she failed at being the “salt of the earth” that Jesus spoke about on the Sermon on the Mount. It is ironic.

#### **CONCLUSION**

<sup>1-</sup> What are you giving back? Are you salt and light in a world that needs you to point them to the right way? Or at the end, will your life be a monument to regret, a pillar of salt reminding everyone who passes by what could have been?

2- Jesus would use her sin as an example in Luke 17:32–35. It says, “Remember what happened to Lot’s wife! (V. 33). In other words, no Christian should have a heart like Lot’s wife as we see the end of the age, a heart that loves the world, and will in some sense, regret the judgment God will bring on it. Whoever clings to this life will lose it, and whoever loses this life will save it. (V. 34). Jesus, talking about the final rescue at the end of time when He will take His people home, uses what happened to Lot’s wife as a warning for the believers who will be rescued.

3- What happened to Lot’s wife reminds us that this earth is not our home. We were made for another place—a place Jesus has gone to prepare for us—a place He will return to take us to. LOOK FORWARD We need to look *forward* to our deliverance, not *back* at a world passing away and ripe for judgment.

4- God warned us that this earth will be soon destroyed. Let us take the example of Lot to warn our relative, our own family. So let me ask you the same question : “Hast thou here any besides, that thou art concerned for? Tell them quickly that God will destroy this city.

5- The life of Lot shows us that it is possible to have a saved soul and a wasted life. Lot will be saved, but his life will accomplish nothing, as in 1 Cor.3 :15 « *If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire* ». Lot was nearly lost. And his wife was nearly saved.

6- One’s life is more important than the sum of all our riches. Sooner or later, time will come when all we have earned for many years will disappear in the blink of an eye. We struggled when we earned them and we will struggle to release them. It is better to release them for God’s case now than to release them for nothing on that day. When you earn something, you have to be ready to separate from it.

7- Remember that when we warn others, let them see that you are escaping at the same time for your own life. Let you be sure of your message so that they be sure of it. May God bless you as you are going to prepare you relative for the coming destruction. And may He stretch His hand to lead you out of this bad city to the safety refuge, the place He has prepared for you: Heaven.

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