

Luke - Commentaries by Henry Short

The Christian Shepherd: 1997, Remember Lot's Wife (17:32-33)

On Lord's Day morning many of us had the privilege of answering the Lord's request to remember Him in His death. But there is someone else who died that the Lord has asked us to remember. In Luke 17:32-33 we have the account of the woman of whom the Lord said, "Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it."

Earlier, in verses 28-29, it says, "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all." Have you done any of those things this past week— eating, drinking, buying and selling? They are not wrong in themselves—unless they keep the Lord out of your remembrance.

Lot was a righteous man (2 Peter 2:8) who lived in the midst of a world that was daily occupied with these things. But that world had forgotten God. The moment came when God snatched Lot away, and the instant he was gone, righteous judgment fell on Sodom.

What if the Lord Jesus came right now and took His own to be with Himself and you were left still here. All those left (except for some Jews and those they convert—and you won't be one of them) including yourself, will be left for judgment. You dear children here who have Christian parents—if you're not saved—would be left alone in the meeting room, and what would you do? Well, it wouldn't make any difference, because you would be left for the very same solemn judgment.

In verse 31 it says: "In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away." Recently a young father spoke to me about the responsibilities and privileges of being a father. Perhaps our greatest responsibility is that we not sacrifice our children for the "stuff in the house." No country on earth has so much "stuff in the house." Judgment is coming; let him not come down to take it away. "He that is in the field"—that's our jobs. There is a real danger that our "stuff" and our jobs keep us and our families unprepared for the coming judgment. "Remember Lot's wife."

She died trying to save her life. Every hope and purpose she had was in this world, and when she turned around for one last look at it, God took her away in judgment. Where is your life? What is your purpose for living? Is it to save your life, your stuff, your job? Lot's wife lost her life trying to save it. The Lord lost His life saving others.

Let's go back to Genesis 9 and consider the family that Lot's wife was connected with. Noah comes out of the ark after the flood, gets drunk and sin comes into the world "that now is." It's the same world that you and I live in today. He had three boys, one of whom was called Shem. He said something quite marvelous about Shem: "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem." As it were, he looked at Shem and said, "He knows the Lord God. Shem has identified himself with God." I wonder if God is identified with your family. Shem's family is the one that Lot came from.

In chapter 11, we find that men are making a name for themselves. Down in verse 10 Shem is mentioned again. "These are the generations of Shem." Notice, beginning in verse 11, it says, "Shem lived," "Arphaxad lived," "Salah lived," "Eber lived," "Peleg lived," "Reu lived," "Serug lived," "Nahor lived" and "Terah lived... and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran." To this point the family of Shem is living while the rest of the world was dying. Are you living in a world that is dying? Is your family living in this scene of death? Babylon was being built, man was making a great name for himself, and all the while he was dying. But this family was living.

Then we read that "Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot." ("Remember Lot's wife.") Then "Haran died." Why did death come into this family that was marked by life? The answer is found in Joshua 24:2. Idolatry came into this family of faith and with it death came. You cannot take relationship with God for granted.

The idol of Christianity is not a statue or figure. We read in the last days that men would be "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." I think that pleasure is the chief idol of the Christian profession. There is such an emphasis on "playing" in these well-favored nations! We are so interested in doing what we want to do according to our pleasure. Idolatry came into Shem's family, and they began to die. When that took place, God started over again—He called Abram to separate from that family which had brought in idolatry.

Later on, we see that Lot followed Abram's path of faith until it became a question of whether he was going to save his life or his stuff. Which was more valuable to him? Lot looked at his stuff and knew that staying with Abram in the path of faith meant losing it. He made the wrong decision, kept his stuff and ended up in Sodom.

Someone has suggested that when he came to Sodom, he met and married his wife. I don't know if that is so—but somewhere she came into his family, into a life which was, in Sodom, a denial of the faith her husband confessed. We know the rest of this sad story. When Lot ventures to take a stand for the Lord, the citizens of Sodom try to destroy him. They will not have the holiness and purity of God in their lives, nor anyone who reminds them of their responsibility to God. The moment you take the place of a believer in this world and give testimony that God is going to judge it for its wickedness, you will be cast out. As long as you approve of its ways, you'll be tolerated. The angels save Lot, smiting the Sodomites with blindness. It was too late for them to find the door where the righteous man dwelt. They had rejected God once too often, and now for small and great it was too late. The world is going on in moral darkness and blindness waiting for God's judgment. We would have to be very dull to not see that this very thing is happening today. The present world is smitten with blindness, having shut their minds to the Word of God, and it is wearing itself out trying to find the door.

Next the searching question to Lot: “Hast thou here any besides?... Whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place.” God has intended from the beginning to bless families and households. Now the test comes. Will this man of faith who has not walked the path of faith—choosing to preserve his stuff rather than to be identified with the father of faith—be able to save his household from God’s judgment? He speaks to his sons-in-law. “Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city.” Lot introduced his family to this wicked city, his daughters had fallen in love with men of Sodom, and their hearts had been captured by the city. Now he is telling them, “Get out, and leave your life behind. If you stay and try to save your life, you’re going to lose it!” What did they think as they looked at their father (and father-in-law) and heard him speak these words? He seemed to them as one that mocked.

They said: “Dad, you’ve got to be kidding—you can’t be serious. You accumulated all this stuff, thinking that this is such a nice place to live. You’ve taken up with the politics of Sodom, trying to make it a better place to live. Now, all of a sudden, you’re telling us to leave because God is going to judge it all!” They said: “Dad we don’t see this in your life—you saved your life in this world—and now you’re telling us to give it all up!”

It’s serious what we do with our families and what we attach their hearts to. Will we allow our daughters to have their hearts taken by the men of this world? I feel sad for those of you who are younger. We older ones have not portrayed a clear image of a crucified Christ in our lives. Our lives are a denial that we are heavenly people who do not belong to this world.

When Lot goes to get his loved ones, they won’t come. But the morning comes. That’s where we are. The church is about to be removed. The Sun of righteousness is about to arise with healing in His wings, but somewhere up there is the Morning Star. The Lord is coming to take his church first, and then the judgment—the morning—will come for this world.

The angels say, “Take thy wife.” Lot had won her heart and had lived a lie before her, saying to her, as it were, “The God of Shem is not worth living for.” How sad for this poor woman. What a sad testimony Lot rendered to his wife. He filled his house with stuff, filled her heart with the stuff, and then he says, “Honey, we’ve got to go and leave this stuff.”

The Lord’s hand of mercy and love took Lot’s wife towards a place of safety. But Lot said, “Not so, my Lord:... I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me.” He says, “You’ve shown me mercy and grace, but I still don’t want to live for you!” The grace of God in Lot’s life was bestowed in vain. Lot, still denying his profession, is going to save his life by going to a “little” city. The “little foxes” (Song of Solomon 2:15) can also destroy our lives. They make us impotent in the things of God.

Lot’s wife looked back. Where are you looking? God has made a promise, and He does not repent. He has appointed a day in which He will judge this world because they crucified His Son. He will “judge the world in righteousness by that man.” It is a solemn thing to be identified with the world that is guilty of the crucifixion of God’s beloved Son.

Lot’s wife looks back, for her heart was attached to Sodom. She could not give it up to walk the path of faith. So she becomes a pillar of salt. Dear dads who have the little ones beside you, “Remember Lot’s wife.” What are you living for? Your children know. What you live for is what you will attach your children’s heart to. Lot attached his wife to Sodom, and she (and at least two of his daughters) lost their lives there.

I don’t know what she was thinking. Maybe she fully intended to leave, wanting only one last look at the world. Maybe you are saying, “I do need to get saved, but I want to do this one last thing before I come to Christ.” Well, this was her last look. She never again looked at anything in this world. You don’t know when God is going to give you your last breath. Where are you looking now? What is your heart attached to? Christ or the pleasures of this life?

H. Short (excerpt of a talk)

The Christian Shepherd: 2000, Thoughts on Music and Dancing (15:25)

“As he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing” (Luke 15:25).

When someone draws nigh a believer’s home, he should hear it filled with music and dancing. The music would speak of those precious teachings of our Lord Jesus. He said in Luke 7, referring to His ministry, “We have piped unto you.” What a wonderful music that was!

But in the father’s home in Luke 15 we also have dancing—the proper response and effect in those who hear the music. In Luke 7 they heard the Lord as He piped to them—but they had not danced.

What makes a happy Christian home is that there is more than good teaching (music); there is also a good response (dancing). Oh! may we, especially we who are fathers, ever be found not simply being many teachers, but ourselves doers of the Word. Surely this will bring joy to our homes.

“Lo, Thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear Thy words, but they do them not” (Ezek. 33:32).

H. Short

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