

## Sunday Morning Message

January 13, 2019

*Don't Look Back*

Text – Genesis 19

Congregational Reading – Genesis 19:24 - 26

### Introduction

In our daily devotions this past Sunday, we were reading from the Book of Genesis this familiar story regarding the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah. These two cities were known for their wickedness and immorality, and God had apparently become fed up with them and was set on destroying them. The only problem was that there was a man who lived there with his family who was a man of faith. The New Testament, in 2 Peter 4:7, tells us that Lot was “just,” meaning that he was justified in the sight of God. Justification is a theological term that is used in reference to saved people. So, in the city of Sodom, there was at least one man who was saved, and he had a family that included a wife, at least two married daughters and their families, and two single daughters. God had to do something about Lot and his family before he destroyed the city.

Genesis 19, not only tells the story of God’s dramatic destruction of Sodom, but more importantly, it reveals to us God’s grace and mercy by removing a somewhat reluctant saved family from within the city before He destroys it.

### I The Coming of the Two Angels (vs. 1 – 3)

I would like to point out a couple of things from these verses:

- 1 Lot is sitting “in the gate” of Sodom when the angels arrive. The cities in Bible days were typically walled cities that would have a gate. Anyone leaving or entering the city had to come in through the gate. The gate became an important place of business for the city. It is believed that Lot may have been an important person, possibly even a judge for the city because of his seat in the gate. When Lot first separated from Abraham back in Genesis 13, he was a herdsman who pitched his tent toward Sodom, but now he is a city official dwelling with his family inside of the city.
- 2 Secondly, Lot had enough spiritual discernment to recognize these angels. The men of the city have no clue who these men are. Lot was definitely outside the will of God, but he was a child of God and he knew these visitors were sent from God.

### II The Character of the City Revealed (vs. 4 – 11)

Sodom was a wicked place. The men of the city, including both old and young, probably drunk out of their minds, attempt to break into Lot’s home so that they could be immoral with these visitors who they think are just men. Had they known that the power of these angels they would not have attempted it.

Notice also the affect that Sodom had on the spiritual character of Lot. His faith is so weak, and he is so far away from God that his only solution to this problem is to give his daughters to these wicked people hoping that they would satisfy their lusts with them and leave his guests alone. Of course, the angels intervene and solve the problem.

Practical Note – It is impossible to live within the spiritual filth of this world and not get some dirt on you. We live in a world that is almost as bad as Sodom was. Jesus said that we were to be “in the world”, but not “of the world.” If we are going to keep ourselves clean while living in a very dark and wicked place, we are going to have to be filled with the Spirit, saturated in the Word of God, and separated from the world.

### **III The Compelling of the Angels (vs. 12 – 17)**

The angels are very insistent. Lot has to get his family, and get out of the city. Unfortunately, Lot’s testimony is so damaged because of the compromises that he has made, that his married daughters and their husbands mock him as he tries to warn them to flee the city before it’s too late. The angels practically have to force Lot and his family out of the city.

Practical Note – When you are away from God spiritually you cannot see the dangers that are out there in the world. You become numb to the reality of a coming judgment.

### **IV The Conflict of Lot and the Compromise of the Angels (vs. 18 – 22)**

Lot does not want to go to the mountains. He has developed a taste for city life, and he begs the angels to let his family go to Zoar.

Practical Note – Stay as far away from the world as you can get. Too many Christians today are in love with the world, being conformed by the world, instead of being transformed by the Word of God.

Notice in v.22 – “I cannot do anything till thou be come hither.” This is a wonderful picture of eternal security. God would not destroy Sodom until Lot and his family were out of it. As backslidden as Lot was, He was still God’s child and God was protecting him.

### **V The Calamity of Looking Back (vs. 23 – 26)**

The Angels warned Lot not to look back once they left Sodom. Unfortunately, Lot’s wife could not resist the temptation of taking one last peek at the life she was leaving behind.

Humanly speaking, I can understand why she did it:

1. She had family and friends back there in Sodom that she cared about.
2. Everything she knew was behind her, and the future was uncertain.
3. Her flesh enjoyed living in Sodom. Carnal Christians have a difficult time enjoying the separated, Spirit-filled life.

Looking back destroyed Mrs. Lot. Too many Christians today are also looking back at their old life and are being spiritually destroyed.

Jesus uses the story of Lot’s wife to warn the saints during the Tribulation Period to not look back once they flee from Jerusalem escaping the antichrist. (Read Luke 17:22 – 37)

Today, Jesus warns those that have surrendered to serve him to not turn back.

*"And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:61-62)*

Paul warns us to not turn back in our beliefs:

*"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;" (Ephesians 4:11-14)*

James warns us not to turn back in our faith:

*"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." (James 1:5-8)*

## **Conclusion**

If you are saved, don't look back at your old unsaved life. Don't go back to your old unsaved friends. Immerse yourself in what God has for you now. Get into your Bible. Get around God's people. Don't look back.

If you are called by God to serve Him, don't look back. The road may be difficult, the giants may be big, and there may be a lot of obstacles out there, but God's with you. Don't look back.

Illustration - When God called Elisha who was a farmer to serve Him, he first burnt his old plow and sacrificed the animals that he used to pull the plow with. He took a drastic step in order to see to it that he would not go back to plowing after God had called him to preach.

Illustration – In 1519, Spanish conqueror, Hernan Cortez, upon arriving in Vera Cruz, ordered his ships to be destroyed. He sent a strong message to the 600 men with him, that they would not be turning back.

When it comes to the spiritual life, we really do need to burn the bridges that connect us to the old life.

Illustration – Missionary William Borden who was an heir to the Borden family fortune left all of the wealth behind and became a missionary. Tragically, he died at the very young age of 25 after contracting spinal meningitis. In the back of his Bible were written the following words: "No reserves, no retreats, no regrets."

We sing the song, "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus". One of the key phrases in that song is, "no turning back, no turning back."