

A SALTY REMINDER

Scripture Reading: Read Luke chapter 17

One of the saltiest bodies of water in the world is the Dead Sea in Israel. This 42 by 11 mile sea is almost nine times as salty as the oceans. Such high concentrations of salt in this lowest water surface on earth make life virtually impossible (with the exception of certain types of bacteria and microbes that can handle the high salt content). No wonder it's called the Dead Sea!

It's also a place of death for another reason. It's in this region where the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah once stood before they were destroyed by God on account of their wickedness (see Genesis 18-19). Just before he overthrew the cities, according to the writer of Genesis, two angels brought Lot, his wife and his two daughters out of the city of Sodom in order to spare their lives. The angels warned Lot and his family to flee and not to look back. Tragically, Lot's wife disobeyed and, after looking back, she was turned into a pillar of salt.

Almost 2,000 years later, Jesus makes use of this event to provide a warning to his disciples about the necessity of being prepared for the events of the end and his return. In today's chapter reading, Jesus notes that prior to the destruction of earth in both the days of Noah and the days of Lot people went about their business oblivious to the reality of coming judgment. So it will be at the return of Christ. People will be caught up in daily living and fail to take seriously the calls to repentance and righteous living. When the end comes, it will be too late.

Jesus' warning challenges us not to hold too tightly to this world's trinkets nor allow our heart to adopt this world's values. The brief three-word exclamation by Jesus in verse 32 drives this point home: "Remember Lot's wife!" She turned back because her heart was still in Sodom. She refused to let go of her old life and, as a result, lost her life. She serves as a reminder to us of the importance of keeping our eyes on Christ. If we remember Lot's wife, we won't look back.

There's an old hymn we often sing at baptismal services that illustrates the mindset we need as believers: "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus." One of the verses goes like this,

The world behind me, the cross before me,
the world behind me, the cross before me.
The world behind me, the cross before me;
No turning back, no turning back.

Action Step: Although we have looked at this issue of values before, it doesn't hurt to take one more look. How tightly tied to "my stuff" am I? If God told you today to give everything away and follow him, could you? Would you?

Prayer Focus: Ask the Lord to reveal any areas where you are tempted to look back. Go to the cross with these things and give them to him today.

Take-away: *Lot's wife is a salty reminder to keep the cross before us and the world behind us.*