



We are honored and blessed to have you worshipping with us today and we extend our warmest welcome. Our service is modeled after the New Testament pattern of worship. If you have questions or concerns please express them to us. We are all here to serve.

Prayer

Health: Zandra, Gloria, Donna, Ebony, Wanda, Leola & Larry, Sister Irma, Sylvia & Patrick, Thom & Mary Elizabeth, TC, Lenard and Vicky, Rebekah, Prince, Carol and her mother Loretta, Lorena and family, Mike's family as they mourn, Leona's health and well being. The health and well being of Kathy Brass, Shannon.

Also: The family of Leola's friend Sherry Smith as they mourn the passing of her son Reggie Fergusonson.

God's Plan of Salvation

- Hear Romans 10:17
- Believe Mark 16:15-16
- Repent Luke 13:3-5
- Confess Matthew 10:32-33
- Baptism 1Peter 3:1
- Live Faithfully Revelation2:10

Schedule of Services

- Sunday AM Bible Class 10:00 AM
- Sunday AM Worship 11:00 AM
- Sunday PM Worship 5:00 PM
- Wednesday Bible Class 7:00 PM



God Uses People To Change the World

I've waited too long to believe. Way too long. What can I possibly do now for God?

God uses people to change the world! People! Not saints or super humans or geniuses, but people. Crooks, creeps, lovers, and liars— He uses them all. No wagging fingers. No crossed arms.

Only sweet, open arms! If you've ever wondered how God can use you to make a difference in the world, just look at those he's already used and take heart. Look at the forgiveness found in those open arms and take courage.

By the way, never were those arms opened so wide as they were on the Roman cross. One arm extending back into history, the other reaching into the future. An embrace of forgiveness for anyone who'll come.

A hen gathering her chicks...a father receiving his own...a Redeemer redeeming the world! - Max Lucado



Remember Lot's Wife

Louis Rushmore

A few decades ago, I preached for a small congregation perched on the ridge and border between Virginia and North Carolina. I so loved those Blue Ridge Mountains. Apparently, the congregation was more interested than I was in the wall clock at the back of the auditorium. Hence, I hung a framed message just below the timepiece, which simply read, "Remember Lot's Wife." Years later after my family had moved away from there, the little sign remained just where I had placed it. I don't know if it still complements the clock today.

The episode regarding the flight of Lot, his wife and two of their daughters ahead of the impending divine destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is well known. It also was well known in Jesus' day so that He simply could say, "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32 NKJV). The next verse defines His reference to Lot's wife thusly, "Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it." In the context, Jesus contrasted the normal things people do and the possessions they cherish with spiritual pursuits. It is not wrong necessarily to be about the ordinary affairs of life (1 Timothy 5:8) and to have even many possessions or to be wealthy. Yet, especially things and wealth are often snares to even the children of God (1 Timothy 6:7-10). There is a proper sequence and estimation of importance to spiritual interests versus one's temporal activities and possessions (Matthew 6:33-34).

Why did Lot's wife look back? There are numerous reasons that doubtlessly contributed to Lot's wife looking back to what she was leaving behind. Let's identify Lot and his family so that we more easily can envision who these people were and what was transpiring in their lives prior to the appearance of angels in Sodom.

Lot was the nephew of Abraham (Genesis 12:5). Lot, like his uncle Abraham, was a wealthy nomad, having large herds and flocks (Genesis 13:5-6). Subsequently, they parted from each other so they could provide for their animals, and Lot chose the plain of the Jordan River Valley toward Sodom (Genesis 13:11-12). Eventually, Lot moved his family into the City of Sodom (Genesis 14:12). It was ordinary for people who could to live within the safety of a walled city and for their agricultural activities to occur outside of the city. Nomads didn't usually live among settled populations but resided in tents (Genesis 13:12). However, Lot departed from that norm and settled in Sodom.

Lot and his family, though, experienced consequences because they resided in Sodom. Lot maintained his godliness in an extremely wicked community, though "that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds" (2 Peter 2:8). "...Righteous Lot... was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked" (2 Peter 2:7). Furthermore, two or more of Lot's daughters married men from Sodom (Genesis 19:14), and when Lot and his family were to be evacuated from Sodom by God's angels, they did not leave with Lot, his wife and his two unmarried daughters (Genesis 19:8, 15-16).

In the span of hours, Lot's family went from wealth to poverty; whatever they could not carry with them as they were led by their hands (Genesis 19:16) out of Sodom had to be left behind. Likewise, two or more daughters, their husbands and possibly



grandchildren were left behind also to their impending doom. Upon their departure and as fire and brimstone rained down from the sky upon Sodom, Gomorrah and other cities of the plain (Genesis 19:24-25), Lot's wife looked back and became a pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26). Yes, the noise, the smell, the fire and the smoke alone would likely draw anyone's attention. However, much more than that, Lot's family left everything behind to the inferno that consumed their wealth, property and other family members.

The ungodly and worldly environment of Sodom claimed some of Lot's family who remained in Sodom. He lost all that he had, too, in the destruction. Lot lost his wife also. Later, Lot lost himself and his two remaining daughters to immorality, and Lot became grandfather to the wicked nations of Ammon and Moab (Genesis 19:30-38).

We, too, should not underestimate the ungodly influence of the world upon our families and upon ourselves (Deuteronomy 7:3-4; Judges 3:6; 2 Corinthians 6:14). "Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits'" (1 Corinthians 15:33). "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:1-2).

Recently, wildfires have devastated California. Lives have been lost, and real estate and personal property have been reduced to ashes as whole neighborhoods have been engulfed in raging fire. Imagine that your family—at a moment's notice—had to flee suddenly from the destructive path of an unmitigated inferno. You would have to abandon your dwelling, your things—maybe collections and mementos collected over a lifetime or even passed down from generation to generation. All gone! Irrecoverable!

Imagine further in addition to stuff, you had to leave behind two or more family members—children or parents. Unthinkable and horrific to consider, pain for their loss would far exceed the depression at the loss of things—no matter what value or sentimentality were attributed to them. Would we look back? Would our possessions warrant a parting and longing glance? Could we refrain from looking back, knowing that our loved ones were perishing even as we escaped? Things and family were the backdrop to the failure of Lot's wife to obey the instruction, "Do not look behind you..." (Genesis 19:17).

Lot and his family forgot their nomadic life as pilgrims and settled into an ungodly, worldly environment. They paid dearly for that choice. May we never forget that we are merely pilgrims passing through this world, longing for a heavenly city, whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:10). "Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Peter 2:11-12).

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. (Hebrews 11:13-16)