LOT'S WIFE:

TRAGEDY OF A DIVIDED HEART

Luke 17:28-36

Before Reading the Scripture

I want to begin a series of messages that I have entitled “Dumb and Dummer.”

- You may have seen the movie by that same name that showed two young men who seemed to “out-dumb” each other all the way through the movie.
- Well, there are some dumb and dummer folks in the Bible. Folks who usually had a good head on their shoulders and, for the most part, tried to live right, but, for some reason, did something really dumb…and it cost them.
- The truth is, most, if not all of us, who try to live right and are reasonably smart folks, from time to time do some dumb things.
- I hope this series will help to deter us from doing dumb things.

In 1980 Harry Truman – no relation to the President – lived near Mount Saint Helen. He had lived there most of his life, but in 1980 scientific data showed that Mount Saint Helen was going to erupt. You may remember that for weeks TV crews went to his home and warned him that the eruption was about to take place and that he must leave. Night after night he stubbornly refused. He said that he had lived there most of his life and that the volcano had never erupted and he wasn't moving. On May 18, 1980, Mount Saint Helen erupted…with the force and power of three atomic bombs. Debris and melting rock were thrown 300 mph in all directions…and Harry Truman was buried 150 feet under ground.

Let me take you back about 5,000 years to Genesis 19. Abraham looks out his tent door toward Sodom and Gomorrah and sees smoke rising from those twin cities and knows God's judgment has fallen.

Read the Passage

To fully understand the passage you must go back to Genesis 13-19.
When Abraham left Ur he had a tag-along – his nephew. God blessed Abraham and Lot and they had great herds and were very rich. But strife broke out between the herdsmen of Abraham and the herdsmen of Lot.

In Genesis 12 Abraham said to Lot: “Let there be no strife between you and me or between our herdsmen. We will separate. You choose which way you want to go and I will go the other way.”

Lot chose the plain of Sodom. The plains there looked like the Garden of the Lord. He knew he would grow even richer there.

There was one problem. Genesis 13:13 says, “But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord.”

Lot knew the wickedness of Sodom. He knew the dangers of being influenced and contaminated by sin and, yet, he chose to go to Sodom.

Both Lot and Mrs. Lot came from a good family.

- Uncle Abraham was the Billy Graham of that day.
- They had lived with Abraham...they went everywhere with him. They saw his good life, felt his spirit, watched his dealings with others, saw him worship at the altar of the Almighty.

I wonder if maybe Lot's wife was anxious to move into Sodom. There had been little social life for her out in the fields. If she could just get to the city she could amount to something. She could entertain important folks...maybe be the president of Sodom's Women's Club.

Lot could be the big man because of his money. He could move in the best circles and be invited to the finest homes.

And so they moved to Sodom...he even sat at the gate, which means Lot was most likely the mayor of Sodom.

- They had been there in Sodom for about 20 years when we come to Genesis 19.
- Lot's years in Sodom might have been years of moral enrichment to Lot and his family and Sodom as well, if he had been true to his faith.

- But Lot didn't change Sodom; Sodom changed him.

- If we don't try to change our world for the better, it will change us for the worse.

Life in Sodom had been disappointing to both of them in spite of their love for it.

- They had never been able to forget the faith that was once theirs.

- They had build altars along with Abraham.

- They knew how to pray.
- They had been disgusted with the evilness of Sodom many times.
- They saw the influence Sodom had on their children and family.
- 2 Peter 2:7-8 says that Lot's righteous soul was **vexed** because of the filthy life-style of the people of Sodom.
- The word “vexed” means he was troubled deeply – even tormented – inwardly with the immoral, outrageous behavior of the people there.
- His heart was in Sodom and, yet, he hated the sin of his culture.
- But he was too spiritually weak to do anything about the sinfulness. He didn't have enough spiritual motivation to change the city or to move away.

But God was about to do something about it! That brings us to Genesis 19.

This chapter in Scripture (Gen. 19) is not for those with weak hearts and stomachs.

- B. H. Carroll said of this chapter to his students, “I want you to read this chapter alone. It is too foul for public speech...This last sin of Sodom gives a name to a sin, 'sodomy.'

- Leupold said, “There is hardly a more horrible account anywhere on the pages of Holy writ.”

- Luther confessed that he could not read the chapter without a feeling of deep revulsion.

- Griffith Thomas said, “This is one of the most terrible chapters in the Bible and is a reminder of the hideous possibilities of sin.”
As unpleasant as Genesis 19 may be, it needs to be earnestly studied and pondered in our day; for two reasons:

1. It reveals, in the conduct of Lot, the pathetic performance of a worldly Christian.
2. It shows the hellish, foul character of homosexuality and God's great condemnation and wrath upon it.

Yet, in our day there is increasing acceptance of this filthy conduct.

- Frequent marches exhibiting it and exalting it.
- Legislation to pass laws to protect it.
- Schools teach it.
- Homosexuals get very upset when you call them perverts; yet there is nothing right or normal about homosexuality.
- To dignify homosexuals by giving them favor, rights and the same recognition as those who practice a normal, decent sex life is to throw wisdom out the window.
- Yet, the courts will defend the homosexual in law suits!
- It ought to scare the daylights out of the people of our country that homosexuals are so public in their sin, so popular, so accepted, so respected as they are today.

We may think our land is a moral cesspool of filth now; but if homosexuals are increasingly tolerated, the moral cesspool of today will smell like a perfume factory compared to what it is going to be like in our land.

Genesis 19:1 says that two angels came to Sodom to tell Lot and his family to flee Sodom

- Can you imagine – Angels in Sodom!!
- Lot invited the two angels into his house but they refused saying that they would spend the night in the open square.
- When Lot heard that, he insisted they come inside. He knew what the men of the city would do to them.
- Notice Genesis 19:4-8 Can you imagine a father willing to give his daughters over to a pack of homosexuals. It would most likely mean their death. See Judges 19:22-27. (V.24 - “humble” means “debase”) (Sodomized her all night long.)
- Genesis 19:9-11
- The angels told Lot to get all his family out of Sodom. So he went to his two married daughter's house – Note 19:14.

While the city was doomed, Lot and his wife and two single daughters were offered an opportunity to escape...of beginning a new life in the clean atmosphere of the hills.
• Notice Genesis 19:17
• Five times the angels had to tell Lot and his wife to get out (19:12, 14, 15-16, 17, 22)

  - They said, “Do we have to?” “We'll postpone obeying as long as possible.”
  - Many postpone being a Christian as long as possible...”We'll put off the 'hard ordeal' of being a Christian as long as we can.”
  - “And the only reason we'll be a Christian is to escape the doom; not that we'll be better people or influence others.”
  - The angels took them by the hand and drug them out! (19:16)

That's the long introduction. Now for the short message.

I. Lot's Wife Halted Gen. 19:26

(As the angel released his hold on her hand...)

• The word “back behind” is the Hebrew work “achar” and it means “to drift back.” She had already started lingering back before she looked back.
• You can't live in Sodom without it affecting you.
• I'm sure when they first went to Sodom, the lief-style of sin shocked them, but they gradually got used to it until it began to seem like the normal life-style.
• The homosexuals know if they can keep their style of living before folks – talk about it, teach it, push it – pretty soon we as a nation will get over the shock of the sin. SHE WAS CONTAMINATED BY HER ASSOCIATION!
• Why did Lot's wife look back? Because of her contamination, she lost all her sensitivity.
• There is a plant called the sensitive plant. When you touch it, it vibrates. Touch it again and again and it will vibrate less and less. When it stops vibrating, it's dead.
• We can get so accustomed to sin that it will kill our sensitivity to sin.

II. Lot's Wife Was Salted Gen. 19:26

• Preacher, do you really think she was turned into a pillar of salt? That's what Moses said and Jesus validates what Moses said.
• What's the meaning of this weird story? Did God strike this woman dead for such an innocent thing as looking back to the city she had lived in for years?
(1) She was not so much punished FOR her sin as she was BY her sin.

- That backward look was an indication of a fatal disease of her inner life.
- A divided life and heart spells tragedy.
- “No man can serve two masters...”

(2) Her divided heart resulted in indecision; which means she missed both places.

- Where did she die? Neither in Sodom nor in the hills of Zoar.
- Trying to make the best of both worlds, she lost both.

- A cow jumps the fence...but in trying to jump the fence, she falls on the fence and gets tangled in the fence. Her hind legs are in one pasture; her front legs in the other pasture.

She would moan and groan and get nothing to eat from either pasture.

4

(3) Looking back hinders your progress

- No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God
- Looking back robs us of spiritual power to go forward.

(4) We miss the whole point of the story if we think the tragedy of this woman was physical death. The tragedy is not physical, but spiritual.

- She died in the very act of her sin.
- Sudden death didn't freeze her face in the wrong direction. She turned before she died.

Death just froze her backward look so that all future generations could see that she ignored God!

- Ironically, if she had been salt, as she should have been, she would not have been turned into a pillar of salt!

What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?
III. Lot's Wife is Exhalted Luke 17:32

- Remember that a wrong choice led to a wrong character
- Remember that God gave her a chance to make a new start
- Remember that she had a divided mind and heart and will and to Almost do something is not to do it at all.

Here's someone who says, “I almost was saved today at church.” Almost is not to be saved at all.

Remember that Jesus is referring to His second coming:

- Remember the appeal – Escape for your life and do not look back lest you be condemned.
- Don't look back...Look Up!!
- Don't postpone...do it now. Don't try to obey at the last possible moment...Come to Him – NOW!!