

Come quickly, Lord Jesus!

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent

December 6, 2009

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

Hecla, SD

Text: Luke 17:26-33 ***“And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so it will be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lot’s wife. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.”***

Theme: Preparing for Jesus’ Second Advent: REMEMBER LOT’S WIFE

*O Lord, how shall I meet You, How welcome You aright?  
Your people long to greet You, My Hope, my heart’s Delight.  
O Jesus, let Your Word be A lamp to light my way,  
To show me how to please You, To guide me ev’ry day. Amen. (WS #704:1)*

Dear fellow redeemed in Christ Jesus, fellow heirs of eternal life through faith in Him,

Are you prepared? It depends what you are talking about, I suppose. Something in life we try to prepare ourselves for, such as natural disasters or the flu. Other things it seems we are never prepared for, such as death. When I lived in the San Francisco area, we told what we needed to do to be prepared for an earthquake. We should have a 3 days supply of food and water prepared. We needed to know where the shut off valve for the gas line was. Here in tornado country, some our schools prepare the students for what to do in case of a tornado by having tornado drills. In our homes and at school we are to practice fire drills with our kids, so they are prepared in case there is a fire in the house. Now that winter is upon us, we are told to have our cars prepared in case we were to get stuck or stranded in a snowstorm.

Situations like these don’t happen every day, so we need to be as prepared as possible in case there is one. So we have drills and rehearsals, just in case. Advent is a season of preparation. Not preparation for an earthquake or snowstorm, but preparation for the end of the world. Preparation for the return of Jesus. Let us prepare for His return by remembering Lot’s wife. ***“Let these words sink down into your ears.”*** (Lk 9:44) May God the Holy Spirit sharpen our focus as we eagerly await the return of our Savior Jesus!

Have you ever wondered why people often make excuses for the condition on their house when you visit? I’ve said it of my house more times than I care to admit and I’ve heard others tell me, “Oh, please excuse the mess.” I’ve even been in houses that I would consider immaculate, but was told to excuse them for the house being messy. We say these things

because we are embarrassed to have other people see our mess. We don't want them to see the dirty laundry and the trash we've left out. We don't want them to see the dirty dishes. While everyone knows that we have dirty laundry and dishes, we'd rather hide it from them and pretend it doesn't exist when they visit.

Our hearts are much the same way - aren't they? We know we sin, but sometimes we'd much rather hide it and pretend it doesn't exist. As we prepare for the return of Jesus, though, we cannot afford to do that. We need to take a good hard look at our lives and our hearts. We need to see the examine the dirty laundry and garbage that exists there. One way in which we do that is by remembering Lot's wife.

The only mention of Lot's wife in Scripture is less than flattering. We are told that when Sodom and Gomorrah was being destroyed that she looked back and turned into a pillar of salt. That is all we have to remember about Lot's wife. But why? Why did God turn her into a pillar of salt and why does Jesus want us to remember her?

It will be helpful if we first remind ourselves of what Lot's wife was looking back at. We read that in Genesis that after Abraham and his nephew Lot settled in Canaan, that Lot chose to dwell in the area of Sodom with his family and his herds. That territory appeared to be good grazing land. But when we hear of Sodom we usually don't think of fertile pastureland. Sodom and Gomorrah are notorious for being sexually depraved and extremely wicked cities. These cities were so wicked that the LORD decided to wipe them off of the face of the earth. He sent two angels to bring the destruction these cities. ***"We will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it."*** (Gen 19:13)

As an example of just how wicked the people of these cities were, when the angels came to Sodom, they appeared as human travelers. Seeing them at the city gate, Lot urged them to stay with him and his family. But when the men of the city heard about these travelers, both young and old from all over the city surrounded Lot's house. They demanded that Lot bring the men out so they could have sexual relations with them. In order to protect these visitors Lot offered the sex-craved crowd his two virgin daughters. But the men of the city did not want his daughters, they wanted the travelers.

So great was their wickedness that God judged them not worthy to exist on His planet any longer. He destroyed those cities by sending fire and brimstone from heaven. But because God loved Abraham, He rescued his nephew Lot, Lot's wife, and their two daughters from the destruction. The angels warned Lot, ***"Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lets you be destroyed."*** (Gen 19:17) So the four of them fled from Sodom for their lives. Three of them made it to safety. Lot's wife, however, disobeyed the command to not look back. ***"His wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."*** (19:26)

This is what Lot's wife was looking back to. She may have fled from Sodom with her feet, but her heart still remained there. She looked back because she longed for that sinful city, rather than heeding the warning from God and obeying His command. She was destroyed right along with those wicked cities on that day. "Remember her!" Jesus says. Remember that her heart was tied up with those evil cities, rather than being devoted to God.

God's judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah were a preview of the final Judgment to come. Peter writes that on the Last Day the heavens and the earth will be destroyed with fire. ***"The day***

*of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass a way with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be...?"* (2Pt 3:10-11a) On the Last Day all of creation will melt with fervent heat. Reserved for fire, just like Sodom and Gomorrah, because of the sin and wickedness that exists in this world.

Knowing this, we must prepare ourselves for Jesus' return by remembering Lot's wife. With her feet she ran away from that sinfully corrupt city, but her heart still remained. Remember her and do not allow your heart to be as divided as hers was. Jesus says in verse 31 of our text that on the Last Day, ***"he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back."*** The only reason someone would do such a thing is because those things were important to them. What was in the house was more important than the coming of the Son of Man. The man working in the field cared more for what he left behind than the return of his Savior. Like Lot's wife, they loved the things of this world more than they loved God.

This is what I meant about examining our hearts to see what garbage and dirty laundry may be there. Have we hearts set on things above or on the things of this world? Are we storing up treasures for ourselves here on earth - treasures that will all be consumed by the fire of God's wrath - or are we storing up treasures in heaven? Do we love Sodom more than the commands of our God?

One way of finding out what is in your heart, is by asking yourself how you would feel if Jesus returned right now. Would you be excited to hear the trumpet sound and see Jesus? Or does it make you a little bit sad to think about that? Maybe life pretty good right now, and you don't want Jesus to come and end it. Maybe you your home or your farm just the way you want it. Are you attached to your cars, your machinery, or your fortunes such that you have to think twice about losing them?

All of us are guilty of having a divided heart. Our old Adam, our sinful flesh, loves the material things of this world and always craves more. We have goals we want to accomplish for ourselves and for our families. We have financial goals we want to meet. We have our eye on certain possessions which we want to attain. We want to do the very things that Jesus says the Noachites and Sodomites were doing. We want to "eat and drink, marry and be given in marriage, buy and sell, plant and build."

Now, Jesus is not forbidding us from getting married or eating. What He is warning us about is our attitudes toward such things. Do not love them. John writes in his first epistle, ***"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."*** (1Jn 2:15) Jesus warns us against the unpreparedness of the Noachites and the Sodomites. Though Noah was a preacher of righteousness for those decades while he built the ark, those people ignored the divine warning and were unprepared for the coming destruction. ***"Until,"*** Jesus says, ***"Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all."*** Their hearts were set on the things of this world. The judgment came and destroyed them all with their possessions. They sought to save their lives in this world and lost it.

It was the same with the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot warned them against their wickedness, but they said he was being judgmental and ignored his warnings. Lot tried to save his sons-in-law by warning them of the coming destruction, but they thought it was a joke. Lot's wife ignored the divine warning and looked back. They loved their lives in this world, tried to

save it, and lost it all.

A greater destruction is coming to this world than the Flood or Sodom and Gomorrah. The second Advent of Jesus will bring with it the end of the world. Everything in this world will be destroyed by fire. But Jesus does not want us to perish with the things of this sinful, wicked world. The reason for His first advent was to save us from the eternal fires of hell that our own sins brought on ourselves. He came to rescue us and save us. He valued our lives, our souls, our salvation more than He valued His own life! He gladly and willingly died on the cross to save us from our sins.

Through faith in Jesus, everything He did becomes our own. God credits us with Jesus' righteous, holy life. His death means the death of our sins. Through our baptisms we were raised with Christ. Therefore, Paul writes, ***"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth."*** (Col 3:1-2) Life in this world is temporary and passing. Our eternal dwelling place is in the mansions which Jesus is preparing for us. Whoever loses his life, Jesus says, will preserve it. Set your minds on things above, not on the things of the earth. Remember Lot's wife!

And so let us continue to prepare ourselves for the second advent of our Savior Jesus. Look forward to that day when the trumpet will sound and you will see our Savior face to face. When He will welcome you into the eternal Kingdom which He died to give you. So continue to prepare yourself by remembering Lot's wife. Remember that this sinful world was more important to her than her own salvation. Jesus is coming. Keep yourself prepared! Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus. Amen.