Introduction

Having escaped the tempting call of Demas to dig in his silver mine and serve Mammon rather than God, Christian and Hopeful crossed the plain of Ease and spotted an old monument by the side of the road. “It seemed to them as if it had been a woman transformed into the shape of a pillar.” After carefully studying the inscription above the head, Christian discovered this message:

Remember Lot’s Wife
These three words were spoken by Jesus in the context of his warnings regarding the coming Kingdom (Lk. 17:32). He reminded his disciples that his coming will be “just as it happened in the days of Noah” and “the same as happened in the days of Lot” (vss. 26,28). Jesus, reflecting on what happened to Sodom, said, “But on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them
all” (vs. 29). After these two illustrations he drove his point home for his listeners (including us today): “It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed” (vs. 30). It was in this context that Jesus exhorted his disciples to remember Lot’s wife.

**What does he want them to remember?** First, let’s get some help from Dr. Van Groningen.
“More striking evidence of righteous and just Yahweh God’s character is the judgment he executed on Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18:16-19:26). Note that reference is made to Abraham being informed about what was to take place so that Abraham, his children, and household would do ‘what is right and just’ (Gen. 18:19, NIV). The point is that Abraham and his people were to observe
and learn from Yahweh God’s righteous and just ways with the wicked cities, one of which had become the home of Abraham’s nephew Lot (Gen. 13:12-13). Lot went to Sodom, a city of wickedness and great sinning against Yahweh (Gen. 13:13). The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was so grievous that Yahweh God was going to destroy it (Gen. 18:20). What specific sins were being committed is not detailed, but the account does refer to inhospitality and sexual immorality (Gen. 19:5). The text states the fact of divine justice tersely:
‘The Lord rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah’ (Gen. 19:24). The cities and the entire plain with all inhabitants and vegetation were destroyed. As Yahweh God brought blessings so also he executed the curse, causing total destruction.”
Lot and His Family

• The Command: “Flee for your lives! Don’t look back, and don’t stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!” (Gen. 19:17).

• The Disobedience of Lot’s wife: “But Lot’s wife looked back...” (Gen. 19:26).

• The Judgment of Lot’s wife: “...and she became a pillar of salt” (Gen. 19:26).
“Remember Lot’s Wife”

- **Remember** that her looking back seemed to be a small thing, but it was a great sin.
- **Remember** that she disobeyed an explicit command of the Lord.
- **Remember** that she looked back on her neighbors with more compassion than was proper – their day of grace was over and divine judgment was now being carried out.
Small Things, Great Consequences

For want of a nail the shoe was lost.
For want of a shoe the horse was lost.
For want of a horse the rider was lost.
For want of a rider the message was lost.
For want of a message the battle was lost.
For want of a battle the kingdom was lost.
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.
“Remember Lot’s Wife”

- **Remember** that she longed for her house and material goods and didn’t want to leave them.

- **Remember** that her looking back suggests her desire to go back to Sodom.

- **Remember** that “she placed earth above heaven, material things above spiritual” (William Hendriksen).
“Remember Lot’s Wife”

• **Remember** that she was married to Lot who, with all his faults, was a righteous man. Blood ties are no guarantees of divine grace.

• **Remember** she never had any spiritual life and showed her love for Sodom in her distinct disobedience to God.

• **Remember** she went part of the way to safety - and yet perished.
Almost Saved,
But Not Quite
“Lot was advancing to a place of refuge; his wife was following, but her heart was truly in Sodom, even though Lot had renounced the city. To all such we should trumpet forth the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, ‘Remember Lot’s wife’ (Lk. 17:32). Was it curiosity, or longing, or love for friends or neighbors? Her motives do not matter. The fact is that she looked back, and consequently she was instantly struck dead by God. For looking back, she became a monument
to all future generations that God demands that we turn wholeheartedly away from Sodom...Her heart in Sodom, the woman was only savorless salt, and her physical body transformed in judgment as a monument to warn against carnal love and its association with the most depraved in judgment. The warning comes to us, ‘Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If any one loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him’ (I John 2:15).’
“When the time for separation arrived, Lot’s wife could not tear herself away from the world. She had always been in it and had loved it and delighted in it. Though associated with a gracious man, when the time came for decision, she betrayed her true character! Flight without so much as looking back was demanded of her, but this was too much—she did look back and thus proved that she had sufficient presumption in her heart to defy God’s command and risk
her all—to give a lingering love-glance at the condemned and guilty world. By that glance she perished.”
Lot’s wife escaped one judgment (Sodom) but was destroyed by another (looking back).

Lot’s wife is a warning and an example that we should avoid her sin.

The men of Sodom ignored the kindnesses of God and provoked him to jealousy.

Those who sin in God’s sight and ignore his warnings will be partakers of the severest judgments.
Rest for Christian & Hopeful

• Christian and Hopeful continued on their way and came to a refreshing river, the River of God, also known as the River of the Water of Life.

• Here they enjoyed plenty of fruit and water as well as the beauty of the lilies which had been planted in the meadow.

• God provides rest for his children so they may be prepared for further kingdom usefulness.
By-Path Meadow

• By-path, *n.* is “a side path, as opposed to the highroad; a private, retired, or unfrequented path” (OED).

• The primary path had become rough and made their feet sore.

• As they continued on their way, they became discouraged and began to long for a better path. Christian went to the stile to explore his options.
A stile is “an arrangement of steps, rungs, or the like, contrived to allow passage over or through a fence to one person at a time, while forming a barrier to the passage of sheep or cattle.”
Christian’s First Impressions

• “This is what I have been longing for.”
• “It is the easiest route.”
• “It goes along in the same direction.”
• “It was much easier on their feet.”
• Following Vain-confidence, he said, “Look, didn’t I tell you? See, we are right!”
Christian’s & Hopeful’s Errors

• They had been discontented and longed for a better way.
• They went up to the stile to look over it.
• They climbed over the stile.
• They had been encouraged by following a bad example, Vain-Confidence.
The Meaning of By-Path Meadow

• Some habit or mode of self-indulgence or self-gratification; yielding to one’s own desires or longings. Paul calls these “the deeds of the flesh” (Gal. 5:19).

• Shrinking back from some difficulty on the journey. “John left them (Paul & Barnabas) and returned to Jerusalem” (Acts 13:13).

• Evading or shunning one’s duties.
“The truth is, that the active duties of the Christian pilgrimage are never in themselves so delightful as the river of the water of life flowing through the soul; that is, they require self-denial, and are attended with difficulty. When the affections are drawn out after Christ, and are warm towards God and
Preparation for Usefulness

heaven, and all external things go pleasantly, how easy and how sweet it is to wander up and down along the banks of the river, treading the soft grass, eating the wholesome and delicious fruits, and breathing the fragrance of the flowers!”
“Restful seasons are given to us...not for indulgence to the flesh, but to invigorate and prepare us for active duty; not to constitute a rest, which we may quietly enjoy, but to fit us for remaining toil, for increasing activity and usefulness.”

- G.B. Cheever
Remember Lot’s Wife
Delight in Solitude and Rest
“I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments” (Ps. 119:176).