



# NEW YEAR SERMON (2)

Sunday 3 January AM

# INTRODUCTION

- We are entering a New Year . . . new possibilities

# LAST WEEK

- Q. How pleased were you with your spiritual growth in 2015?
  - Did your faith increase? Trust
  - Did you seek GOD's will? Prayer
  - Did you get involved? Service
  - Did you stay faithful? Worship, prayer, Bible study
- Most importantly . . . did you do the same works Jesus did?
- As we await His return . . . John 14:12 <sup>12</sup> "I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in Me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works
- Can we do the same works He did?

His works only ever pointed to GOD

- Whenever He . . .
  - Comforted
  - Instructed
  - Encouraged
  - Disciplined
- HE GAVE GOD GLORY . . . it was never about Himself
- We are therefore to be like Him! Examples

That sounds impossible . . . but remember

1. We have the Holy Spirit . . . John 14:15-17

NLT <sup>15</sup> "If you love Me, obey My commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. <sup>17</sup> He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive Him, because it isn't looking for Him and doesn't recognize Him. But you know Him, because He lives with you now and later will be in you

2. We have His Word . . . John 14:13-14

NKJV <sup>13</sup> You can ask for anything in My name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. <sup>14</sup> Yes, ask Me for anything in My name, and I will do it!

- So let's get serious about doing the works of Christ in 2016

## THIS WEEK

- Jesus also gives good advice to us Luke 17

Luke 17:20, 26-33

NLT <sup>20</sup> One day the Pharisees asked Jesus, "When will the Kingdom of God come?" Jesus replied, "The Kingdom of God can't be detected by visible signs. <sup>21</sup> You won't be able to say, 'Here it is!' or 'It's over there!' For the Kingdom of God is already among you." <sup>22</sup> Then He said to His disciples, "The time is coming when you will long to see the day when the Son of Man returns, but you won't see it. <sup>23</sup> People will tell you, 'Look, there is the Son of Man,' or 'Here he is,' but don't go out and follow them. <sup>24</sup> For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other, so it will be on the day when the Son of Man comes. <sup>25</sup> But first the Son of Man must suffer terribly and be rejected by this generation. <sup>26</sup> "When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah's day. <sup>27</sup> In those days, the people enjoyed banquets and parties and weddings right

up to the time Noah entered his boat and the flood came and destroyed them all. <sup>28</sup> "And the world will be as it was in the days of Lot. People went about their daily business—eating and drinking, buying and selling, farming and building—<sup>29</sup> until the morning Lot left Sodom. Then fire and burning sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. <sup>30</sup> Yes, it will be 'business as usual' right up to the day when the Son of Man is revealed. <sup>31</sup> On that day a person out on the deck of a roof must not go down into the house to pack. A person out in the field must not return home. <sup>32</sup> Remember what happened to Lot's wife! <sup>33</sup> If you cling to your life, you will lose it, and if you let your life go, you will save it.

## AS YOU BEGIN A NEW YEAR . . . DON'T BE TEMPTED TO KEEP LOOKING BACK!

### Remember WHAT HAPPENED to Lot's wife!

- GOD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19)
  - Hardened hearts toward GOD
  - Sinful activity abounded . . . immoral . . . corrupt . . . evil
  - Didn't care . . . they did it their way
- Before GOD destroyed the city He sent two angels to rescue Lot and his family

Genesis 19:15-17

NKJV <sup>15</sup> When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, "Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city." <sup>16</sup> And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. <sup>17</sup> So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed."

- The former life you knew . . . is to be no more
- You must move on . . . to a new life

Genesis 19:24-26

NKJV <sup>24</sup> Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens. <sup>25</sup> So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. <sup>26</sup> But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

## The LORD's instruction

- We shouldn't be constantly looking back

"If we drive looking in the rear-view mirror we're going to end up in the ditch!"

"One of the dangers of growing old is that we get more excited about the past than we do about the future!"

Ecclesiastes 7:10

Do not say, "Why is it that the former days were better than these?" For it is not from wisdom that you ask about this

## Two very valuable lessons

### 1. Don't look back with longing to your old sinful attitudes and ways

- Jesus says . . . that is Lot's wife!

It wasn't that she looked back over concern for her family?

It wasn't that she was necessarily evil or wicked

- GOD simply read the motive of her heart

Her heart was still in Sodom

IOW a significant part of her wanted that to continue to live as she had always done . . . without accountability to GOD

That is Jesus' argument in 17:33 **If you cling to your life, you will lose it, and if you let your life go, you will save it.**

What was she clinging to?

§ In Sodom there were very few rules

§ You could get away with pretty much anything . . . carnality, immorality

§ There was no accountability to GOD . . . disobedience was rife

§ Hardness of the heart, pride, prejudice, bitterness, envy, jealousy, slander, filthy language, hatred, murmuring were all ok

§ Since everyone was doing it, it was considered normal

Her heart remained in Sodom

- Our hearts shouldn't be where they once were
- If you are born again you should have moved on from the way that you used to live . . . the rebellious nature, bad attitudes

2 Corinthians 5:17

NKJV 17 Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

- If you look back . . . you risk not being fit for the Kingdom of GOD

Luke 17:33

Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it

- It isn't just things of the world . . . it's clinging to 'your way'

The Message 17:33 If you grasp and cling to life on your terms, you'll lose it, but if you let that life go, you'll get life on God's terms

James 1:14-16 . . . don't be misled into thinking you can dabble

NLT 14 Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. 15 These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death. 16 So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters.

## 2. Don't look back with regret over mistakes you've made

- Many in Sodom regretted their decisions . . . Lot's two sons-in-law!

Genesis 19:14

NKJV 14 So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, "Get up, get out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city!" But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking.

- Their fatal mistake . . . they didn't take GOD seriously

- We're prone to the same . . . same mistakes lead to regrets
- But don't allow yourself to wallow in these . . . IOW you have to stop . . .

§ Dwelling on the injuries inflicted by others

§ Dwelling on the injuries you have caused others

§ Or just dwelling on the fact that

- You haven't yielded to GOD
- You've been lukewarm toward GOD
- You gave grudgingly
- You were too much of a faultfinder
- You had evil desires
- You despised others
- You've robbed GOD
- You've been too arrogant
- You've been a complainer

- Repent 100% YES
- But then move on . . . get your eyes off that rear-view mirror
- GOD has great things in store for you

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope



## Isn't that what the battle in your life is all about?

- GOD has great plans for us . . . but Satan doesn't want them to be fulfilled
- And if he can get you to dwell on your past mistakes . . . *he wins!*
- That is why Jesus referred to him . . . as a '*thief*'
- He has stolen too much from us already . . . let's not let him steal anymore!

So in 2016 . . .

- Seek to do the work Jesus did
- Stop looking behind you
- And then watch Him bless you . . . time and time again

## 3. If you are going to look back at all . . . it should be to recall GOD's faithfulness to us

This is what Joshua did . . . Joshua 21:45 . . . **Not a single one of all the good promises the LORD had given to the family of Israel was left unfulfilled; everything He had spoken came true**

- Joshua . . . my life would have been nothing without You
- Q. What would our lives be like without Christ?
- It may not seem so grand . . . but it could have been much worse!

## Closing thoughts:

Jonathan Edward's made two resolutions

Resolution 1: I will live for GOD

Resolution 2: If no one else does, I still will!

Living for GOD isn't . . .

Looking back with longing on your old past life

Looking back with regrets for mistakes made

Living for GOD is being willing to give up our lives for Christ

Luke 9:23-24

<sup>23</sup> Then He said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be My follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow Me. <sup>24</sup> If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for My sake, you will save it.