DON'T LOOK BACK!

A 6-Day Sermon Review & Devotional Bible Study

Ridge Avenue United Methodist Church Pastor Kabrene Pittman

October 26–31, 2026

Sermon Scripture: Genesis 19:15–29 Key Verse: Genesis 19:26 (KJV)

"But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."

Weekly Theme: Moving Forward in Faith Without Being Held Captive by the Past

Sometimes the greatest obstacle to our future is our attachment to our past. We remember the way things used to be, the people who were once present, the opportunities we once enjoyed, and the seasons when life seemed more prosperous.

But God is not finished with us!

This week's devotional invites us to reflect on the story of Lot's wife, examine the dangers of living in yesterday, and discover how God calls us to move forward with courage, obedience, and renewed faith.

Each day includes a different scripture, biblical teaching, sermon study notes by Pastor Kabrene Pittman, personal reflection, and a practical faith challenge.

Monday, October 26, 2026

Day 1: When God Says Move, Move!

Scripture: Genesis 19:17 (KJV)

"And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."

Today's Bible Lesson

God sent angels to rescue Lot and his family from the destruction of Sodom. Their instructions were clear: leave the city, do not stop, and do not look back.
God was offering them an opportunity to escape destruction and experience a new beginning. However, they had to be willing to leave behind what had become familiar.
Sometimes God calls us out of situations before we fully understand where He is leading us.
Faith requires movement, even when the destination is uncertain.

Sermon Study Notes by Pastor Kabrene Pittman

The difficulty with moving forward is that we often become comfortable with what is familiar, even when it is no longer fruitful. A congregation may remember when the pews were full, the choir was large, and the church was the center of neighborhood life. Those memories are precious, but they cannot become the limits of our expectations.
God did not rescue Lot's family so they could spend their future longing for Sodom. He was leading them away from destruction. Likewise, God is calling the church to honor its history without becoming imprisoned by it.

Reflection Question: What familiar thing might God be calling you to release?

Today's Faith Challenge: Identify one area of your life where you have been resisting change. Ask God for the courage to take one step forward.

Tuesday, October 27, 2026
Day 2: Don't Become a Pillar of Salt
Scripture: Genesis 19:26 (KJV)
"But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."
Today's Bible Lesson
Lot's wife had been given an opportunity to escape, but she looked back.
Scripture does not explain everything that motivated her glance. Yet her actions reveal the seriousness of disregarding God's instructions.
Her story reminds us that we can physically leave something behind while remaining emotionally attached to it.
We can move into a new season while continuing to measure everything against yesterday.

Sermon Study Notes by Pastor Kabrene Pittman

Salt preserves things. In the ancient world, salt was especially valuable for keeping food from spoiling.
Consider the spiritual picture: Lot's wife became a pillar of salt while looking toward the place she had been instructed to leave.
The sermon reminds us that we cannot spend our lives preserving yesterday while God is calling us to participate in tomorrow.
There is nothing wrong with remembering the past. The danger comes when remembering becomes refusing to move.
The church cannot become a museum of what God used to do. It must remain a living community of what God is doing today.

Reflection Question: Are you preserving memories or allowing those memories to prevent your growth?
Today's Faith Challenge: Celebrate one wonderful memory from the past, then name one new possibility God may be placing before you.

Wednesday, October 28, 2026
Day 3: God Is Doing a New Thing
Scripture: Isaiah 43:18–19 (KJV)
"Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert."

Today's Bible Lesson
The prophet Isaiah spoke words of hope to God's people in the context of exile and promised restoration.
Israel had experienced God's mighty acts in the past, including deliverance from Egypt. But God wanted His people to understand that His power was not limited to what He had already done.
The God who made a way through the sea could also make a way through the wilderness.
Our past experiences with God should strengthen our faith in His future possibilities.

Sermon Study Notes by Pastor Kabrene Pittman

Sometimes we spend so much time talking about what God did that we fail to recognize what God is doing.
We say, "Remember when we had this?" or "Remember when the church used to do that?"
But perhaps God is asking, "Can you recognize the new thing I am doing among you?"
The church may not look exactly as it did thirty years ago. The neighborhood may have changed. The congregation may be smaller.
Yet God's ability to transform lives has not diminished.
The methods may change, but the mission remains: love God, make disciples, and serve our neighbors.

Reflection Question: What new opportunity might you be overlooking because it does not resemble the past?
Today's Faith Challenge: Think of one new way you could serve God, your church, or your community this week.

Thursday, October 29, 2026
Day 4: Stop Looking Behind You
Scripture: Philippians 3:13–14 (KJV)
"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Today's Bible Lesson
The Apostle Paul understood the importance of moving forward.

Before his conversion, Paul had persecuted Christians. Yet after encountering Christ, he devoted his life to proclaiming the Gospel. Paul did not allow his former accomplishments or failures to determine the limits of his future.
He understood that Christian discipleship involves continual growth. Forgetting what lies behind does not mean erasing our memories. It means refusing to allow yesterday to control tomorrow.

Sermon Study Notes by Pastor Kabrene Pittman

Imagine trying to drive your car down the highway while looking only into the rearview mirror.
The rearview mirror is useful. It tells you where you have been and helps you understand what is behind you.
But you cannot safely navigate the road ahead by staring backward.
Life works the same way.
We need our memories, our experiences, and the lessons of yesterday.
But our attention must remain focused on where God is leading us.
A congregation that constantly looks backward may miss the people standing right outside its doors who need the love of Jesus Christ today.
Reflection Question: Are you allowing past disappointments, regrets, or successes to distract you from God's present calling?
Today's Faith Challenge: Take one practical step toward a goal, ministry opportunity, or personal change you have been postponing.

Friday, October 30, 2026
Day 5: There Is Still Work to Do

Scripture: Haggai 2:9 (KJV)
"The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts."
Today's Bible Lesson
The prophet Haggai encouraged the people of Judah as they rebuilt the temple after returning from exile.
Some remembered the former temple and were disappointed because the new building did not appear as magnificent.
But God reminded His people that His presence and promises were greater than the appearance of the building.
The significance of God's work could not be measured simply by comparing the present structure with the past.
God still had a purpose for His people.

Sermon Study Notes by Pastor Kabrene Pittman

This scripture speaks powerfully to congregations that remember more prosperous days.
Perhaps there was a time when the sanctuary was filled, Sunday school classes were overflowing, and every ministry had plenty of volunteers.
Those days deserve to be celebrated.
But a smaller congregation does not mean a smaller God!
The church's future should not be measured only by the number of people in the pews, but also by the lives being touched through its ministry.
A food pantry can be an expression of God's glory. Visiting the sick can be an expression of God's glory. Welcoming a new neighbor can be an expression of God's glory.

We may not be able to recreate yesterday, but we can faithfully build tomorrow.

Reflection Question: How can our church demonstrate God's love and presence in the community today?
Today's Faith Challenge: Perform one act of Christian service. Encourage someone, help a neighbor, donate food, or reach out to someone who may feel forgotten.

Saturday, October 31, 2026
Day 6: Keep Your Eyes on Jesus
Scripture: Hebrews 12:1–2 (KJV)
"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Today's Bible Lesson
The writer of Hebrews describes the Christian life as a race requiring endurance, discipline, and faith.
Believers are encouraged to lay aside the weights that hinder their spiritual progress and keep their eyes fixed on Jesus.
Some of those weights may be fear, regret, resentment, discouragement, or attachment to the past.

Jesus is both the beginning and the completion of our faith. We move forward not because we know everything that lies ahead, but because we trust the One who leads us.

Sermon Study Notes by Pastor Kabrene Pittman
The message of "Don't Look Back" is not that our history has no value. Our history matters. The sacrifices of those who came before us matter. The prayers, ministries, and faithful service of previous generations matter.But their greatest legacy is not simply what they built.Their greatest legacy is the faith they passed on to us.And now it is our turn.
Our turn to pray. Our turn to serve. Our turn to invite. Our turn to encourage. Our turn to believe that God still has something wonderful in store.
We cannot run tomorrow's race while standing still in yesterday's memories.
So lift your head, strengthen your faith, and keep your eyes on Jesus.

Reflection Question: What spiritual weight do you need to surrender so you can move forward more freely?
Today's Faith Challenge: Write a personal commitment beginning with these words: "With God's help, I will move forward by…"

Weekly Sermon Review

What Have We Learned?
As we conclude this week's devotional, remember these six spiritual lessons:

Monday: Obedience requires us to move when God calls.

Tuesday: We cannot allow yesterday to hold tomorrow hostage.

Wednesday: God is still doing new things.

Thursday: Faith requires us to keep pressing forward.

Friday: Our greatest ministry opportunities may still be ahead.

Saturday: We must keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.

A Final Word from Pastor Kabrene Pittman's Sermon Notes
The rearview mirror reminds us of where we have been, but the windshield shows us where we are going.
Our church has a wonderful history, filled with faithful people, cherished traditions, and memories worth celebrating.
But the same God who blessed us yesterday is still with us today.
We honor those who came before us not by standing still, but by continuing the work they began.
Don't let your past become your permanent address.
There are still people to love, children to teach, neighbors to feed, souls to encourage, and lives to touch.
We may not have everything we once had, but we still have the God who provided it!
So don't give up. Don't stand still. Don't spend your future staring at your past.
KEEP MOVING! KEEP BELIEVING! KEEP SERVING!
Because God is not finished with us yet!

Concluding Prayer for the Week

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for another opportunity to grow in Your Word and strengthen our faith.

Lord, we thank You for our history, for the people who came before us, for the sacrifices they made, and for the many blessings we have experienced along the way.

But Father, help us not to become so attached to yesterday that we miss what You are doing today.

Forgive us for the times we have allowed fear, disappointment, regret, or nostalgia to keep us from moving forward.

Give us the courage to follow You into unfamiliar places and the faith to believe that Your plans for us are not finished.

Bless Ridge Avenue United Methodist Church. Renew our spirits, strengthen our fellowship, and open our eyes to the opportunities for ministry all around us.

Help us to welcome new people, embrace new possibilities, and continue sharing the love of Jesus Christ with our neighbors.

When we are tempted to look backward, remind us of Your promises.

When we feel discouraged, renew our hope.

When we grow weary, strengthen our steps.

And when we wonder whether our best days are behind us, remind us that our future rests securely in Your hands.

Lord, we are grateful for where we have been, but we are excited about where You are leading us.

We will keep walking, keep trusting, keep serving, and keep believing.

Because our story is not over, our assignment is not finished, and our God is still at work!

In the mighty and precious name of Jesus Christ, we pray.

Amen.

Ridge Avenue United Methodist Church

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Pastor Kabrene Pittman

Sunday Worship at 10:00 AM

Don't Look Back. God Is Still Leading Us Forward!