

The Necessity of Forgetfulness

Philippians 3:13

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,

Luke 9:62

And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

1) Introduction

a) We have often thought of forgetfulness, as being a weakness, a problem area, and it is true that, often, being unable to remember can be very frustrating to most of us.

However, there is a time when forgetfulness becomes an absolute necessity.

Powerful quote:

b) "The farther behind I leave the past, the closer I am to forging my own character." Isabelle Eberhardt

2) We must even forget our past successes

a) Paul told the Philippian church of how great a success he could be considered.

i) He was the "perfect Christian", if you will

(1) Circumcised

(2) A Pharisee among Pharisees

(3) Blameless in the law

(4) Zealous of his belief to the point of persecuting others

b) Yet Paul goes on to say that nothing he has done in the past is worth counting; indeed, he counts it all “but dung that I may win Christ”

i) It does not, and it will not, matter how successful you may be in this life here; all that really counts is whether you know Him!

(1) And may I continue on to say that there is a difference between just “knowing who He is” and “winning Christ”.

c) “We can draw lessons from the past, but we cannot live in it.”
Lyndon B. Johnson, 1963

3) We must forget our past failures

a) Isn't it ironic that Paul speaks of his past successes, yet refuses to bring up his past failures?

i) It was no secret how horribly evil Paul's past was; everyone knew that this man was responsible for the imprisonment and murder of the Christian movement.

Yet Paul refuses to bring it up and talk about it.

(1) I don't believe Paul was simply too ashamed to talk about his past.

a) There are some who believe that these memories were his “thorn in the flesh”.

(2) I believe Paul had simply conquered the art of forgetting what was behind him, and reaching instead toward the future, and toward a more intense knowledge and relationship with Jesus Christ!

b) In Aristotle's writings, Agathon makes this statement: “This only is denied to God: the power to undo the past.”

i) GOD will not—matter of fact, He CANNOT—go back and undo the mistakes you and I have made in your life.

He WILL, however, cover them with His Blood, and forget them.

4) Luke 9:62 No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

a) Did you know...? It is almost impossible to plow a straight furrow when you're constantly looking back over your shoulder! Likewise, it is impossible to do anything for the Kingdom of GOD if you continually dwell on your past...be it failure or success!

b) Jesus said a man that does this—dwells on what is behind him—is not “fit” or well-placed.

c) You'll never be able to handle the future if you cannot shake your past!

5) Conclusion

a) Romans 8:35 39 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

b) Notice that in all of this, Paul never mentions the past.

i) The reason is simply this: Your past is the only thing that can—and will—ever separate you from Christ.

ii) It will not separate Christ from you, because He has already proven that He has the ability to forget. But it will draw us away from Him, because forgetting is an art that few of us can ever master.

c) And in the final analysis, here is a quotation from (ironically) a book called The Devils Dictionary, by Ambrose Pierce:

i) PAST, n. That part of Eternity with some small fraction of which we have a slight and regrettable acquaintance. A moving line called the Present parts it from an imaginary period known as the Future. These two grand

divisions of Eternity, of which the one is continually effacing the other, are entirely unlike. The one is dark with sorrow and disappointment, the other bright with prosperity and joy. The Past is the region of sobs; the Future is the realm of song. In the one crouches Memory, clad in sackcloth and ashes, mumbling penitential prayer; in the sunshine of the other Hope flies with a free wing, beckoning to temples of success and bowers of ease.

6) Close

a) There is a necessity of forgetfulness in our walk with GOD. It is an absolute imperative if we are ever going to know Him in the depths of His Spirit and Anointing. We **MUST** forget.