

# FAITH CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY

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"From the Pastor's Desk..."

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## WHEN WE DWELL TOO MUCH ON THE PAST

If you are like myself or most people my age, there is a tendency for some of us to dwell too much on the past especially when we feel the present is not very glorious. It is reported that 69% of Americans believe the country is on the wrong track. Wall Street Journal recently reported that such pessimism hasn't been seen since the 1970's.

Recently in my devotions I read a passage of scripture from the Psalmist (Ps. 77:7-10 NIV) which revealed much of this type of thinking when things were not running very smoothly for him. He begins by asking such questions as:

Has the Lord rejected me forever? Will he never again be kind to me? (NLT)  
Has his unfailing love vanished forever? Has his promise failed for all time? (NIV)  
Has God forgotten to be merciful? Has he slammed the door on his compassion?  
Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? (NIV)

Then the Psalmist concluded his temporary thoughts with: *And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.* One of the Bible translators translated the word, infirmity as "weakness." "And I said, Is this my weakness? Or another translation: "Is this [apparent desertion of Israel by God] my appointed lot and trial?" (Amplified)

**What was the Psalmist doing?** He was comparing his present trial with the past. He even admitted in verse two of this same chapter that he had refused his soul to be comforted. His soul ached when he remembered God. But this is often a state of mind when we have great memories of God at work in the past, and instead of it giving us faith for the future it only pains our soul and leads us to deeper despair.

**Which raises the question:** Do we spend too much time thinking and living our daily lives in the past? The Scripture has already given us this advice: "Say not thou, *What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.*" Eccl. 7:10 KJV

**There are two ways in which we can dwell on the past.** We can dwell in such a way that it will lead to depression and despair. Or we can dwell in such a way that it encourages us to trust God all the more in the light of what He has accomplished in the past.

***This is what the Psalmist decided to do. Please observe the change in his tone and thoughts.*** "I will remember the works of the LORD: Surely I will remember they, and wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work and talk of thy doings. Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary who is so great a God as our God?" Psalm 77:11,12, 13 KJV.

## CURRENT POLITICAL EVENTS

By the time that you receive this newsletter you will probably have had the opportunity to observe two of our major political party's conventions. Depending upon your political view you may have come away from their particular conventions inspired, depressed, or confused. You may be even in a state of anxiety as to what this nation holds for you especially if you love this nation as most of us do. You can allow what took place on television or what is reported in the news to affect you deeply, or you can choose to look to God as the source of your comfort and faith.

I realize that most of us are not so much concerned for ourselves as we are for our children and grandchildren. Despite our enormous potential as Americans it is reported that a clear majority of today's parents see a darker future for them. Some 56% believe their children lives will be worse off than their own. A little more than a third believe better days are ahead. As a parent, grandparent, and now great grandparent I feel that our own will survive because of what has been instilled in them from infancy.

I just wonder how many of those parents who are despondent over their children's future failed to take those precious little ones to the house of God on Sunday, but chose to take them to their sport activity instead? Our children must have a Spiritual education and enlightenment if they are going to survive in this wicked world. It is our responsibility as parents to provide such and God will hold us as parents accountable for such. And if you have raised your children right, even if they are not living as they should do today, still have something inside of them which can turn them around when the Holy Spirit will remind them of those things which they have been taught.

*We see our children attending institutions of learning, especially in higher education, where it is becoming hostile to the free exchange of ideas. On many campuses a climate of intellectual conformity has replaced open debate and inquiry, stifling discussion on a host of topics ranging from history to science, to economics and religion. Dissenters are demonized, ostracized, and treated with scorn and derision. It is this that disrupts the process of discovery and challenge which is at the root of learning and progress. But such strong handed tendency will one day backfire and when that happens many of these youth could turn to the Lord.*

## WE CAN LEARN FROM THE PAST

***What God does in our lives can be a great testimony to others when we learn from it and can use it to encourage others...that is if not abused.*** In church we call it testimonies. There can be a tendency to compete in Christian circles of outdoing the other one to the point of exaggeration which doesn't really help in making the testimony credible. I read a story of one such a man that loved to tell his story as to how he survived "*the great Johnstown flood.*" The man is said to have told the story repeatedly in every great detail. After the testifier died, someone told the "tale" of what may have happened when he went to heaven. He wanted to testify there too someone amused. When given permission was warned by the angels, "*Yes, you may share, but just remember that Noah will be in the audience tonight.*"

***The past should never be a hitching post where we stay and live out our lives.*** If we are still telling the same old stories we told twenty years ago, we may not be growing as we should. We need to see what God has been doing in our life recently. If we have nothing to share maybe we have not allowed Him to take us any further in our walk with Him. We need that daily dependency on him. It is this that produces a real live testimony.

The benefit of trials is what they are able to produce in our lives in personal Spiritual growth. I believe much of the Psalms is a record of men and possibly women who made a journal of daily events in their lives. We have such a great historical account of their moods, good and bad, but at the same time of when their faith took hold and the joy and victory that came as a result.

We need to take the good and the bad that happens in our lives and move on to those things which are Spiritually productive, profitable, and truths which we learn from the experience to remind us in the future when we are facing what is uncertain that we can trust God with confidence that the God of yesteryear will be there awaiting us as we continue to move in the realm of tomorrow.

*My wife recently had the misfortune of having a large truck move into her driving lane and destroyed much of her new car. Thank the Lord she was not hurt. The truck driver, we assume, never knew what he did and went on and never stopped. Insurance will repair the damage, but the experience can leave one shaken. I think I am shaking more that she is. Actually, she took it pretty good. You see, I love her very much...that is my concern. When you love one deeply you can be shaken by the bad. But we must nevertheless trust Him with our life and the ones we love so deeply. The great thing to know is this....we can!!! Amen.*