

FAITH CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY

13820 Seal Beach Blvd PO Box 3444 Seal Beach, Ca 90740
Rev. Gwyn & Ginny Vaughn, Senior Pastors
Rev. Sheri Leming, Associate Pastor – Gary Leming, Business Administrator

562-598-9010 revgwynvaughn@gmail.com or www.fcachurch.net Fax 562-598-2116

Vol. 25 No. 6

"From the Pastor's Desk..."

June 2017

A REFLECTION ON THE PAST

This month we will be celebrating Father's Day. But this is also the month in which my mother was born; June 8th, of course that was over 102 years ago. That in itself is mind blowing to me. Of course the closer I get to 80, just two years from now I guess that, for me, this should not be such a shock. Recently Ginny and I attended a funeral of a friend and while there found ourselves sitting at a table with a party that knew many of my old friends of days gone by.

It was at that table certain names of friends that I knew would come up in the discussion. I could not get over how many of them have passed on. When I left the facility after having that kind of discussion I could not help but think...probably I too will be soon numbered among them as well. It is a sort of thing that can be jarring and earth shaking especially, if you have been so busy that you haven't really stopped to think about it that much. As most of my readers know, I do conduct a lot of funerals, but one that I have not prepared that much for is my own.

Oh, yes, I have written my will and am setting up my trust and have picked out the place where my wife and I will probably need to be buried for. You see, even after fifty-seven years of marriage, she still wants her body to be near mine in death. Now isn't that precious...just shows you that she still has a lot of grace in her heart...she is definitely going to heaven. Because when you can forgive seventy-times seven you really do have a lot of grace. The Scripture says, *"For if you forgive people their wrongdoing, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well."* Matt. 6:14 (Holman Bible)

Yet in spite of making earthly preparation for my soon departure, still there hasn't as yet come to me any sense that I should start making mental or spiritual preparation for what I would call an early departure. I guess I still have some goals or desires to achieve before that time comes such as completing my next book. But I did have a thought about that, that I should always be writing a book. The reason: If I always want to write a book that will keep me studying the Word, because that is what I like to write about. My research will always be enlightening me on things I have not as yet learned in these past 78 years...therefore I have concluded I need to always be writing a book, preparing a sermon, or doing something which keeps my soul searching and my mind developing.

REFLECTION ONE

One of things which I have observed about some of my dear old friends of the past is this...many of them live right up to the day of their death. I like to refer to them as the friends that walked into their casket. No, I don't mean literally, but even if they had to endure the rush to the hospital, the hospital encounter with a doctor, nurse or two, and spent a little time enduring the dying process...they still were active most of their lives which God gave to them. They were like Jacob whom the Scripture said, *"When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people."* Gen 49:33 (NIV) I mean he was barking orders till he died. Wow! What a life...and what a way to die. (I don't mean barking orders, so much, but mental alertness and full of spirit.)

I still like to tell the story about one of our men at the church named George Prettyman. He died like that. He told his wife fifteen minutes before his departure after having quite a day. "Elena," he said, *"when I am gone in the morning, call for the cleaning lady to get over here and clean this mess up."* She smiled and said, "Okay dear." I love that story.

You see most people don't die the way that Hollywood has produced it in the movies. Dying can be exhausting for the family and especially for the married companion. That is why we need to do everything in our power to eat right, exercise, keep our minds active by learning, reading, praying, and keeping our faith intact on the promises of God. Not giving in to self-pity, regrets, and bitterness. Accept life as God handed it to you and thank Him for what He was able to help you to endure, handle, and overcome. The Scripture tells us that we are more than overcomers. (Rom 8:37)

REFLECTION TWO

I have discovered that life seems to turn out better for people who believe things that the Bible says. One of those things is when they are able and willing to say, "I can." I can walk. I can work. I can do this. I can exercise. I can eat right. I can learn to do this. *"I can do all this through him who gives me strength."* Philippians 4:13

Anyone can say, *"I can't"* or *"I won't"* or *"I don't want to."* Such negative attitudes will destroy the opportunities of lifetime. Such words bind a person in a hospital room, a mental facility, a prison cell, without a key from ever enjoying personal freedom. It locks the door of opportunity from ever opening. It reveals to those who would help one along the way that such a person has given up and may affect their decision to even help them make a positive attitude possible.

It has been my joy in the fifty-seven years of the pastorate to see people walk out of hospital rooms, jails, wheel chairs, poverty, and deep demonic bondages who were willing to let God enable them to be set free. I see it happen both to the young and to the aged. One of the reasons was because they were willing to let their hearts hear the Word of God, the word of counsel, the encouragement that came from the people who loved them enough to tell them the truth. It is wonderful to see a person change their whole perspective from a negative attitude to one of faith and trust in loving God who is able to make all things new.

REFLECTION THREE

The third and final reflection is the positive impact of prayer. People who have lived positive and meaningful lives, to me, are the people who have taken the power of prayer seriously. They learned early that without God they can do nothing. So they lived their lives depending on God for His help. How did they do that? Every decision they made they prayed about it.

I don't mean they talked about praying about it. They actually prayed. They took the time to pray. I don't mean they said a prayer like *"O God, please help me."* They took the time to listen to God in prayer. They took time to wait on God until they came up with a sense of direction. If at first when they prayed nothing happened as far as receiving a sense of direction from him then it was by a verse of Scripture that he brought to their mind...or a deep sense of peace over the situation. They would wait before they acted and seek God on another day or as time revealed the answer in another form. But they kept their minds and hearts fixed on Jesus.

We live in such a fast paced world that we assume God works with that kind of schedule with His people. Well let me tell you something. He doesn't. He still tells us at times to wait on Him. And as I have often said, *"He may just tell us to wait some more."* Why; because there is a timing for all things. Our time when we want to act may not God's time. But if we are willing to wait for His time, then we can be confident it will be the right time. For He doeth all things well. (Mark 7:37)

FINAL WORD

The above are three things of which I have been reflecting upon since sitting at the table discussing so many of my friends which have passed on. Some of them, their lives ended well. Others, it could have ended better if only...Others, their lives ended in pain, alone, away from the very people who loved them the most in this life. This is what concerns me in the hour we live. How will each of our lives end? Will it end in victory, in joy among those who love us and care for us? What will the story be when our days are full and complete, I pray it will be one whose soul is anchored in Jesus, the Church, among the godly and friends.