

September 2011 Newsletter

We Walk By Faith

XX. Faith In Accepting The Present.

“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,” Philippians 3:13

We know that we are to be forgetting the things of the past, especially our hurts, failures and disappointments, and we are to keep pressing toward the things that lie ahead for us, namely, the plan of God for our lives, but all too often we are so mentally occupied with the things of the past, or hanging on to the things of the past, or projecting our minds toward the future, that we fail to live in the present blocking it out all together!

If we have been subjected to repeated trials, suffering, hurt, disappointment, then we are much more prone to cling on to the past, to go back to the past and live in it, at least the pleasant parts of it, because the present is too painful and the future looks dreadful. The logic being, “if this is what my present life has come down to, I hate to see what lies ahead!” **So trauma will often result in the individual escaping from living in the present, hanging on to the past and dreading the future.**

If a believer has gone through a series of trials, injuries, overwhelming pressure and testing, setback after setback, loss of friends and family, loss of job, health, or finances, rejection, abuse, growing old, or anything else that severely impacts the soul, then they run the risk, no the probability, that they will experience trauma! And trauma can be both physical and psychological.

Psychological **trauma** is where one has had a severe emotional wound or shock that creates substantial lasting damage to one's psychological development, often leading to neurosis. It can result in the individual wanting to go back to live in a pleasant time in the past and at the same time have severe anxiety about the future. It can come about as the result of a serious emotional shock to the soul, or as the result of a series of negative impacts or shocks on one's personal life, as we see with Job. Even purifying, that is, cleansing the heart from negative emotions and memories can be traumatic.

So to live in the **present**, that moment in time somewhere between the past and the future, we have to adjust to the present situation, not just the day, but our place in life and the situation we are currently existing in, by living in the spiritual life dynamic. We do so by concentrating on Bible doctrine and learning to accept the present and getting to the place we are actually thankful for the present.

In every believer's life there have been good things and bad things, good experiences and bad experiences, joys and heartbreaks, good times and bad times, loves and lost loves. Life is made up of all kinds of experiences from crushing disappointments and sadness to overwhelming joy and successes. **But the one thing they all have in common is that they're in the past!**

Good, bad, or indifferent they are all behind us. **The key is what do we do with them?** How do we look at them? Are we looking at the bad, or the positive? Because what we do with them, how we look at them will determine how we will look at the future and what we will do in the future! **The past can't hold us back if we forget it, and that includes the negative experiences of childhood.**

Paul wrote “**forgetting** the things that lie behind”. *Epilanthanomai* is in the present middle participle, which tells us that this is something we are to practice daily and that we will be benefited if we do. With *epi* prefixed to it, it intensifies the idea telling us that we’re to completely forget the things that lie behind! And why not! These things are just **the beginning of our journey into eternity!** The intensive idea also carries with it that this will be difficult at times and that we will really have to apply ourselves in forgetting the things of the past, to stop hanging on to the things of the past.

The word **forget** in our usage here is from the Old English *forgytan* and means to care nothing about, to disregard, to take no note of, to consider as unimportant. But how do we do that when many of our life's experiences and the people we knew and loved were so important to us? We have to see that to **forget**, *forgytan*, also had the idea of a letting go; a letting go of the past, our past.

And how do we do that? We have to put it all in context. As mentioned earlier, all of our experiences here on earth, all the things that we have gone through here in our lives is just **the beginning of our journey into eternity!** The love that we wanted, which we never got, is over. We'll never have it. The things that we wanted in life; the things that we had and loved, but were taken from us, we will never have. We have to view the past is gone, and is really unimportant, because we're heading into eternity.

“*The things that lie behind*”, *ta men opiso*, referred to that part of the race that we have covered and is behind us, but *opiso* was used predominantly of persons. It looked at the idea of friendships and personal relationships, personal attachments to people that we have known, loved or been acquainted with; the people of our past. In life we come across many people, some have had a positive effect on us, others a negative one, but this tells us that we have to leave them behind as we go on with the Lord.

But when the believer has been traumatized by a major event, or by a series of events, then they will be prone to go back in time to past pleasant experiences and try to relive them. Or, if they don't try to relive them, they will constantly dwell on them. Hanging on to the past is one way people can and do try to escape the harsh reality of what they are presently going through.

This is what Job was doing after he went through trial after trial in his life. The Sabeans swept down and stole his oxen and asses killing all his servants. Then fire fell from heaven and destroyed all his sheep and servants. Then the Chaldeans came down and stole all his camels and slaughtered his servants. This was followed by a great wind striking the house of his oldest son, where his sons and daughters were drinking and partying, and they all died! All this was then followed by Satan striking his body covering him with sore boils from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet. His wife turned against him, his friends and relatives found him offensive and turned against him, even the low life living free on his property turned against him.

He handled the first waves of traumatic events doctrinally, but when his body was affected, and the whole thing drug on with more things befalling him, including the loss of his business, fortune and his reputation, he started to go back in his mind when life was better for him. He started to wish for the past to be back. He certainly didn't want to live in the present, nor accept the present.

We see this in Job 29:2, “*Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me;*”. The word for **Oh** is *miy-yetten* and was a customary phrase used for wishing. The NIV translates it as, “*How I long for the months gone by, for the days when God watched over me,*”. Job's psychological state was one of fear and dread for the **future**, bitterness about the **present**, and a longing for days gone by in the **past** when life was more pleasant for him.

“*To press forward*” is also a present middle participle of *epekteino*, which tells us that we will also have to practice this everyday, that we will be benefited by doing so, and at the same time, we have to do both of them to succeed in this. It also has the **intensive idea in it telling us that it will not be an easy thing**. We will have to mentally apply ourselves everyday to **forget the things that lie behind** and to **press forward to what lies ahead for us**, and some days it will be difficult to do it.

What lies ahead for us? **What lies ahead is the wonderful perfect plan of God for our lives here on earth**. A life of production, prosperity, promotion, a life of blessing, service, a life of accomplishments, a life of excitement, enthusiasm, challenge and adventure. Why wouldn't we want to press forward to realize it for our lives? And what ultimately lies before us is eternity with God!

To press forward uses the idea of the runner running his race who is completely focused on attaining his goal of crossing the finish line. **The athlete is not concerned with the things behind him in the race, but only on finishing his race**. And that's the lesson we need to learn of finishing God's purpose for our lives. We need to be so focused on moving forward in the plan of God that we forget, or leave behind, the things that lie behind.

And some of those things that lie behind us on the trail were meaningful to us and touched our hearts very deeply. As many a pioneer family could testify to about their young baby, who had died on their journey west, that they had to leave behind on the trail. **And so we need to do with those things of the heart that we have been holding on to. We must leave them behind. We must leave them behind so we can embrace the present and move forward into the future!**

There's also the idea that **we must forget the things that lie behind** so that **we can press forward!** Too many believers, because they are holding on to the things of the past, everything from hurts and bitterness to nostalgia, lost loves, lost opportunities, regretting one's mistakes and failures, cannot move forward. So for them, **they have to let go so they can move on in the plan of God**.

Forgetting the past, accepting the present, while moving on into the future can be very difficult for us when the things of the heart so well up to the surface that we are overcome by them. But this is where the application of the Word of God comes in and the difficulty factor of the intensive idea of forgetting the things that lie behind and pressing forward to the things that lie ahead.

By the way, this matter of things welling up in the heart could also be a phase of growth that the Lord is taking us through, where he is now cleansing our hearts of the things that have been there all along and have been holding us back. And by the application of Bible doctrine in the process we have the cleansing, removal and relief from these things that have been holding us back, so we can press on into the future that God has planned for us and accept our present situation and reality!

We must force ourselves, (actually our heart, for it is the heart that has such a problem with letting go of old memories, loves and personal experiences), to let go and leave behind the things of the past, to force ourselves to not be living in the past, to force ourselves to accept the present reality as it is, not as what we wanted it to be, and to force ourselves to think of everything in light of the eternity that we are journeying toward! Accepting and fully embracing the present as it is, not what we wanted it to be, or hoped it would be, or yearned for it to be, but what it actually is, even without those things that we wished would be in our lives, is key to this matter of letting go of the past! And we are able to do this by the faith application of Bible doctrine to our lives! And once we let go of the past and are living in the present we are able to go into the future!

YY. Avoiding despair by faith.

“I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.” KJV Psalm 27:13 *“I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living.”* Psalm 27:13 NASB לֹא־אֶדְאָא מְנַתִּי, לְרֹאֵת אֹת בְּטוֹב-יְהוָה: בְּאֶרֶץ חַיִּים

“I had fainted”, or, *“I would have despaired”* are not found in the original, but are added by the translators because of the context. They show this by *italicizing* the words. David is facing fierce hatred and opposition by his enemies, who seek to destroy him with their lies. In this context it is easy to see why his soul would faint, or be in despair. But there was something that was keeping him from despair and that was his faith that he would continue to see the goodness of God in life.

It comes from the conditional negative compound, *lulay*, which tells us that something negative would happen if one does not do something else, which is revealed in the passage by joining it to the hiphil preterite of *amen*, to believe. So what it's saying is that something negative would be going on in his soul, despair, fainting, etc., unless he had believed. **Believed what? Believed that he would see the goodness of God once again in the land of the living!**

There are several ideas found in *amen*. First of all, it meant to prop up something, or to support it. Then, that something was founded, firm and stable, therefore, one could be sure of it certain that it would hold you up. Therefore, one could count on it, rely on it, depend on it, lean on it, etc.. When used in referring to a man, it said that he was reliable, dependable, trustworthy. He could be counted on. When used of an individual's actions, it said that he was relying upon, depending on, counting on someone else. He was leaning on them.

***Amen* means more than to just believe in God, or to believe God, or to believe what his communicators teach. What it means is to base one's life and decisions on it! It means that you are really relying on God's Word, because you're hanging everything in your life on it.** The Ninevites believed God, after Jonah had preached to them God's warning about Ninevah's destruction, that is, they trusted in him. Jonah 3:5. But Christians are not to believe the wicked, (unbelievers, or believers in reversionism), even if their speech is fair and their words are wonderful, do not believe them, that is, do not count, or rely on what they say or promise. Proverbs 26:24,25.

So when we consider the idea of faith found in *amen*, it has the idea first of all, that the one we are having faith in is himself, faithful and reliable. And because he is, we can count on what he says. It tells us that he has the power, the integrity and the will to do what he says. If he promises to do something, he has the power to carry it out, and the personal integrity to keep his promise. Therefore, we lean on him for support; we count on him to do it; therefore **we make our decisions based on God's faithfulness to his covenant**. And with God we have the perfect person to place our trust in.

We see this idea when David was under pressure, where he relied on the fulfillment of the doctrinal promise to *“once again see the goodness of Yahweh in the land of the living”*. Psalm 27:13 **David believed this and counted on it as he moved forward in faith in the Lord**. This is what we have to do when facing discouragement or despair in our lives, when we're faced with changes and situations that get us down. **We have to convince ourselves that God is faithful to us and to his Word and he will bless us again in life**. The hiphil stem of *amen* brings out the idea that David was caused, because of the pressure, to lean on the fact that he would see God's goodness again in his life.

ZZ. Activating hope by faith.

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in **hope**, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” Romans 15:13 ο δε θεος της ελπιδος πληρωσαι υμας πασης χαρας και ειρηνης εν τω πιστευειν εις το περισσευειν υμας εν τη **ελπιδι** εν δυναμει πνευματος αγιου.

We have seen that the believer needs to stop hanging on to the past, accept and live in the present and be pressing forward into the future. We have also seen that accepting one's present life and situation is very much needed in letting go of the past, but **he also needs to have a certain mental attitude in the present concerning his future!** And this is where hope comes in.

Hope, elpis, is a mental attitude, a spiritual mental attitude, but a mental attitude nonetheless. But it is a **positive mental attitude, a confident mental attitude that good things await him in the future!** And if good things are awaiting him in the future, then there is nothing to be afraid of concerning the future.

The verse tells us that God is the God of hope, but **how** do we get that hope? The passage tells us how by the phrase *en to pisteuein*, εν τω πιστευειν. En plus the present active infinitive of *pisteuo*, to **believe**, tells us a dynamic is activated within the sphere of a certain activity, which activity must be supplied by the believer. **That activity is faith, faith in the Word of God, and when the believer's faith in the Word of God is activated, there, in the sphere of that faith, certain spiritual dynamics are activated in the believer's soul and they are: joy, peace and hope!**

As we have just seen, David had to believe that he would see the goodness of God once again in the land of the living to keep him from despair. Psalm 27:13 But **once he got his faith up and running**, in spite of the tremendous problems that were working against, which problems actually caused him to trust the Lord once again, **he had hope once again concerning the future!**

Hope is the confident mental attitude that good things are going to happen to the believer in the future. And we know they are because God has promised that **he will cause all things to work out for our good!** Now everything we go through in life is not always good. In fact, they can be down and outright miserable at the time. But God has promised to make them work out for our good! “*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*” Romans 8:28

Abraham knew what to was to believe and have hope in a hopeless situation for he went through this before God gave him his son. “*Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.*” Romans 4:18 “*Who against hope believed in hope*” is ος παρ ελπιδα επ ελπιδι επιστευσεν. *Para* used with the accusative of hope tells us that something is beyond hope, or contrary to hope.

The **first use of hope** looks at his situation from the human perspective. Abraham was completely unable to perform sexually, so there was no way that he could ever have children. His was certainly a hopeless situation, at least as far as the eyes of man looks at things. But the **second use of hope** has it as, *in hope he believed, ep'elpidi episteusen*, which can be rendered as, upon hope he believed. *Epi* tells us that his faith was resting upon something. It was resting upon the hope that he had concerning the promise that God had made to him about a son. He had come to the place long before this of believing God's promise to him and this settled faith in that promise gave him hope concerning his life and future. And the hope from that settled faith became the basis upon which his faith rested thereafter.

AAA. Salvation comes by faith in Christ.

“Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” 1 Peter 1:9 κομίζομενοι το τέλος της πίστεως υμών σωτηριαν ψυχών.

To **receive** is the present middle participle of *komizo*. *Komizo* was used to denote the receiving of one's pay or wages, but more specifically it meant to receive what is coming to you, to obtain the fulfillment of something. It also had the idea of legality meaning that one is legally entitled to something. What this tells us is that when we believe on Christ as our Savior, we not only will receive the salvation of our souls, but that we are legally entitled to that.

The **end** is *telos* and it has the idea of the end or goal toward which a movement is being directed, the last part of something, the conclusion of a matter, the bringing a matter to a close. The entire issue throughout the Bible concerning this matter of faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior is the salvation of our souls! God has promised anyone if they believe on Christ as their Savior, he will forgive their sins and save their souls! That is, save their souls in the sense that he will not have them thrown in the lake of fire, but instead live with him in peace for all eternity!

There is a point in time when people do exercise faith in Christ and there will be a point in time when God judges all men with the saved going into the eternal state with him, while the unsaved will be thrown into the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels. **The end of our faith is that day when our souls will not be thrown into the lake of fire, but go into the eternal state. It will be the bringing of the whole matter of faith in Christ and the salvation of our souls to a close – forever!**

BBB. We have everlasting life.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” John 6:47 αμην αμην λεγω υμιν ο πιστευων εις εμε εχει ζωην αιωνιον.

Amen, amen is used to get our attention and listen to what he has to say. Now what we have here is the present active participle of *pisteuo*, to **believe**, and the present active indicative of *echo*, to **have**. Now from what we know the action of the present participle, to believe, takes place at the same time as the action of the main verb, to have. **So what this is telling us is that we have eternal life at the very moment that we believe on Christ as our Savior!**

CCC. We will never perish.

“That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” John 3:15 ινα πας ο πιστευων εις αυτον μη αποληται αλλ εχη ζωην αιωνιον.

In context we have Christ being lifted up on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins, for the purpose that anyone who believes in him will never perish, but have eternal life. Again we have the present active participle of **believe** used with the present active indicative of **have** eternal life telling us that the two occur at the same time. We have eternal life the moment we believe on Christ as our Savior.

We also have *hina* plus the subjunctive introducing a purpose clause. Christ died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins for the purpose that anyone who believes on him will **not** perish! They will not be destroyed in the lake of fire. We also want to note that their volition is preserved by the use of the active voice, for they must choose, they must make their own decision to believe on Christ.

DDD. No condemnation to those in Christ.

“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” John 3:18 ο πιστευων εις αυτον ου κρινεται ο δε μη πιστευων ηδη κεκριται οτι μη πεπιστευκεν εις το ονομα του μονογενου υιου του θεου

The **first** use of **condemned** is the present passive indicative of *krino* and its **second** use is in the perfect passive indicative. *Krino* is to judge, to make a decision after hearing all the evidence. From that comes the judgment, krisis, the sentence, and then the carrying out of the punishment.

Now it says that those who have believed on Christ as their Savior are not condemned. The reason why is that Christ bore our sins on the cross; he became the substitute for our sins; he was our sin-bearer; he was judged by God for our sins, and he bore the punishment for our sins on the cross. Therefore there is now no condemnation to us. *“There is therefore now **no condemnation** to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”* Romans 8:1

But the one who has not believed on Christ is already condemned. He is bearing his own condemnation and subsequent punishment because he has not accepted Christ's atoning death on his behalf and as his substitute. As such, he will have to bear his punishment in the lake of fire.

EEE. God wants us to know we have eternal life.

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” 1 John 5:13 ταυτα εγραψα υμιν τοις πιστευουσιν εις το ονομα του υιου του θεου ινα ειδητε οτι ζωην εχετε αιωνιον και ινα πιστευητε εις το ονομα του υιου του θεου.

The Apostle John is writing this letter to believers in Christ and he uses *hina* plus the subjunctive mood for the purpose that they may know that they have eternal life. To **know** is the perfect active subjunctive of *oida*. Now *oida* is one of those words for knowledge, but it goes beyond the idea of factual knowledge to the place where one has a full and complete understanding of the concept.

There are some groups in Christianity, and many Christians, who say that one can never be sure that one has eternal life. Some say that you can lose your salvation if you sin, others say that you can never really know for sure that one is eternally saved, even if they have believed on Christ. Others say that you have to believe on Christ and do something else to be saved, and even then, you can never know if you have done enough to be saved.

But here, the Apostle John, casts all that aside and **tells us that we have eternal life simply and only because we have believed on Christ!** Even to those who have just believed on his name! *“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God”*.

So what he's telling us, along with all the rest of the NT, is that forgiveness of sins, salvation, and the guarantee of eternal life comes to anyone for simply believing on Christ, even believing on his name! *“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:”* John 1:12 But not only do we have salvation because we have believed on Christ as our Savior, but **he wants us to know that we have eternal life!** And the present tense of *echo*, to have, tells us that we already have eternal life now!

