

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Selective Memory

Selective amnesia occurs when people are striving to survive traumatic events. Understandably, they do not want to revisit the pain. As we approach the end of the year, what should we remember? What should we forget? Does God want us to have “selective memory”?

If we have had a difficult and sad year, our thoughts may drift back to more pleasant times. God tells us it is unwise to think the past is better as we experience the present. Here is His warning: “Say not thou, ‘What is the cause that the former days were better than these?’ for thou does not inquire wisely concerning this” (Ecclesiastes 7:10). Such comparison is not wise, because we tend to focus on the past in the spotlight of our youth. We build a mental bridge to simpler and unburdened times, and forget the difficulties and painful moments that also occurred. The danger is that we can start a new year thinking our better days have passed.

As Christians, we do not ignore our pain. We “reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to usward” (Romans 8:18). Paul, considering his suffering for the cause of Christ declared, “For our light affliction,

which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more an eternal weight of glory...” (2 Corinthians 4:17). Paul’s inspired perspective vaporizes the smoke screen of the lies of nostalgia, and keeps us focused on our future glorified bodies enjoying the eternal joys of heaven (cf. Romans 8:19-23; 2 Corinthians 5:1-4).

Peter exhorts us to remember the sure basis for our hope in Christ. Peter pointed to things we should “call to remembrance” after his death (cf. 2 Peter 1:15). “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Peter 1:16). In Jesus’ coming we should also remember “we have the word of prophecy made more sure...” allowing Jesus to rise in our hearts as the sun rises and brightens a new day (2 Peter 1:19).

If we are not spiritually diligent, we can “willfully forget the cleansing of our old sins” (cf. 2 Peter 1:9). Such “selective memory” is one cause of not growing spiritually. Think with God! Through Christ, we have escaped the corruption of sin and have been made sharers in the holy divine nature of God (2 Peter 1:4). For this very cause,

Peter exhorts you to add on your part all diligence in your faith and supply virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love (2 Peter 1:5-7). When we grow or abound in “these things” we develop a deeper, encompassing knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Developing the godly character keeps us from stumbling, and thus makes the future of our calling through the Gospel sure (2 Peter 1:10).

If we are not serious about our Christianity, we can look into the mirror of God’s Word and “forget what manner of man” we just saw when applying God’s penetrating word personally. (James 1:25). We see what needs changing. We may even want to make needed changes. But it may be too demanding, restrictive, or polarizing for your current taste, causing you to set the “new you” aside and go about your day unchanged.

After today in worship, how will you spend the remaining days of this year? The Lord willing, you will have 48 hours to live to the glory of God. Spend the time well with work and rest. Give time to meditating on God’s word, and allow “selective memory” to form a wiser and better you!