

Messenger Of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16).

October 2, 2012

Issue No. 62     Mark Aites, Editor

The Past

"Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift of God, which is why we call it present." – Bill Keane

"No man is rich enough to buy back his past." – Oscar Wilde

"I can't. You can't rewrite the past." – Jay Asher, *Thirteen Reasons Why*

"The past can teach us, nurture us, but it cannot sustain us. The essence of life is change, we must move ever forward or the soul will wither and die." – Susanna Keasley, *Mariana*

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." – George Santayana, *The Life of Reason: Reason in common Sense*, Vol. 1, Ch. 12

As badly as we might want to, we know that it is not possible to change the past. Hollywood continues to make movies that explore time travel, but to return to the past and change it is simply not possible.

How should we view the past? One could go through life with a melancholy or morose spirit and not let ago of the things that have already happened. You can fret and despair over words and deeds but clinging to it will rob you of joy. Instead we should learn from our past that it might improve our future.

That principle was given by the apostle Paul concerning Israel's past. "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). Yes, we can learn from the mistakes of the past.

It is simply not wise to continue to cling to the past. Remember Paul's optimistic statement to the church at Philippi. "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus had also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12-14).

Forgetting what we did or failed to do in the past is not easy. I dare say it may not be possible; but we don't want to continue to hold to the past. Even Paul struggled with this remembering what he did to the saints before becoming a Christian (Phil. 3:6). But Paul did not allow his past experiences to keep him from moving forward for Christ, and neither should we!