

NO LOOKING BACK

INTRODUCTION

Life is a journey...full of changes.

1. Tour de France riders in Peloton can look back and **not** change direction
2. This is dangerous looking back can cause crashes
3. Cubs coach spoke of the BEST base stealers don't look back
4. The Bible speaks of the danger of looking back

I. LOOKING BACK TO SIN

- A. Lot living with family in Sodom the iniquity was great, destruction imminent
- B. Lot, his wife and daughters are told not to look back - **Gen 19:15-17, 24-26**
 - we sometimes look back on sins and revel in them
 - we look back on our former life and wish for it again
- C. Children of Israel long for Egypt (bondage)
 1. At the Red Sea - **Exo 14:12**
 2. When Moses delayed to come out of the mountain **Acts 7:36-39**
 3. We remember the food of Egypt **Num 11:5**
 4. The report of the spies **Num 14:1-3**
- D. Don't desire the bondage of sin, instead PRESS ON toward the goal of heaven

II. LOOKING BACK WITH REGRET

- A. Judas did it **Matt 27:4-5**
- B. Paul didn't do it, he pressed on.
 1. Paul was a persecutor of the church and did lots of bad things
 2. For some, that kind of past would render them useless for the future
 3. Paul said he was the chief sinner Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. **1 Tim 1:15**
 4. But he did NOT LOOK BACK **Phil 3:13-14** He PRESSED ON
- C. Often we look back with regret
 1. At past sins regrets of what we have done
 2. Mistakes and missed opportunities
 3. The stock market crash... if only I had moved my money out of the dot coms?.
- D. We play the "if only I had game", or the "coulda shoulda" game
- E. It keeps us from moving forward, stops us from making progress
- F. Take Paul's advice -- PRESS ON!

III. LOOKING BACK WITH LONGING

- A. Looking back to when times were better.
 1. Look back at our days of youthfulness
 2. A time when our children were small our family intact
 3. Look back to when my job was going well, when things were good
 4. Looking back when the church here was stronger?
 - B. IF ANY COULD HAVE LOOKED BACK WITH LONGING IT WAS CHRIST!
 - C. **Phil 2:5-8** Jesus didn't look back -- consider where he had been!
 - D. **Luke 9:62** Jesus warns us..."no man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."
 - E. Our Father refreshes us on the journey with some pleasant inns, along the way but will not encourage us to mistake them for home.? C.S. Lewis
- Mason Coole: "The past is always waiting to entangle and deflect us."*
- F. IF we are true to Christ, the BEST is yet to come!

THE BEST IS YET TO COME

The sound of Martha's voice on the other end of the telephone always brought a smile to the preacher's face. She was not only one of the oldest members of the congregation, but one of the most faithful. Aunt Martie, as all of the children called her, just seemed to ooze faith, hope, and love wherever she went. This time, however, there seemed to be an unusual tone to her words "Preacher, could you stop by this afternoon? I need to talk with you."

"Of course, I'll be there around three. Is that ok?"

It didn't take long to discover the reason for what had been sensed in her voice before. As they sat facing each other in the quiet of her small living room. Martha shared the news that her doctor had just discovered a previously undetected tumor.

"He says I probably have six months to live." Martha's words were naturally serious, yet there was a definite calm about her.

"I'm so sorry to ..." but before her pastor could finish, Martha interrupted.

"Don't be. The Lord has been good to me. I'm ready to go. You know that."

"I know," the preacher responded with a reassuring nod.

"But I do want to talk with you about my funeral. I have been thinking about it, and there are things that I know I want."

The two talked quietly for a long time. They talked about Martha's favorite hymns, the passages of Scripture that had meant so much to her through the years. When it seemed that they had covered just about everything, Aunt Martie paused, looked up with a twinkle in her eye, and then added, "One more thing, preacher. When they bury me, I want my old Bible in one hand and a fork in the other."

"A fork? Why do you want to be buried with a fork?"

"I have been thinking about all of the dinners and banquets I attended through the years," she explained. "One thing sticks in my mind. At those really nice get-togethers, when the meal was almost finished, a server would come by to collect the dirty dishes. I can hear the words now. Somebody would lean over my shoulder and whisper, 'Keep your fork.' And do you know what that meant? Dessert was coming! When they told me I should keep my fork, I knew the best was yet to come!"

CONCLUSION

Longing for things to remain the same is to miss the point that we are on a journey. We are all traveling a path that leads to heaven. Let us all get there where there will be no regrets, no looking back, but an eternity of joy and praise of our Lord

Song: I Have Decided to Follow Jesus