

Eternal Perspective



By Rick Sibert

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Today is the Day!

For some time now, I have been dealing with an altogether unfamiliar phenomenon – *nostalgia*.

I can't explain it – perhaps it's a normal thing as I move at breakneck speed toward a half century on this earth!

It's interesting to say the least, as I am not normally sentimental. I don't typically think about yesterday; I am usually fully engaged in the realities and responsibilities of the present.

However, I've found myself thinking a lot lately about my childhood friends, the house I grew up in; times that, in my mind, were less stressful, and more peaceful.

Days seemed like they lasted forever.

It was always sunny.

People didn't hate each other.

At least that's how I remember it. (And they're my memories, so that's how it was!)

However, I believe, to wallow in the past can be disruptive to our walk with Christ and in fact stunt our growth in Him.

It's nice to remember old friends and old times, but I believe the word of God instructs us to be "in the present." (Psalm 118:24, Matthew 6:31, Isaiah 43:18) We are to take stock of things that are happening *today* in our lives, be thankful and as we seek Him, look toward our glorious future – which is secure in Him.

God doesn't want us to dwell on the things in the past. He doesn't want us to replay mistakes we made (you've been forgiven and set free!) – or even with vain imaginations "remember" how good we had it.

In the Bible book of Exodus, we read about the children of Israel, numbering upwards of a million souls, being miraculously delivered from over 400 years of slavery and bondage in Egypt.

Following the lead of Moses, they stepped into the Red Sea and watched as it parted in front of them – giving them dry land to walk on and across as they made their divine escape.

Once on the other side, they rejoiced and sang praises to their God (Exodus 15:1), but shortly thereafter, the grumbling began.

"Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them, 'Oh, that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.'" (Exodus 16:2,3)

It had been one month since their deliverance. One month.

They went from praise and worship to murmuring, complaining, and distorting the past in one month!

The children of Israel took their eyes off the ball.

They took their eyes off their Redeemer and put it back onto their circumstances. The reality was that they had only been in the wilderness for a month - there was no starvation going on. They were creating problems and envisioning scenarios that weren't there.

A short while later, again after the Lord had miraculously provided their continuing sustenance in the form of manna, the complaining intensified:

"The rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, 'Who will give us meat to eat?' We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic, but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna." (Numbers 11:4-6)

But oh, how they misremembered their past!

The children of Israel were slaves in Egypt – there were no “pots of meat,” free fish, or leeks and onions!

The Egyptians treated them harshly and with cruelty and they endured endless hard labor.

They weren't eating high on the hog every night!

When we allow negative thoughts to creep in and start to wish for that greener grass on the other side of our memories, we are apt to miss the most important thing - what the Lord has for us right here and right now!

Just as with the children of Israel, God has promised to meet our every need – *today*. The Bible tells us we aren't even promised tomorrow, so why worry about it!

And don't dwell on your yesterday's.

I think it's okay to take a peak (especially remembering the deliverances He's brought you through) but it's important that we keep our spiritual eyes focused on what the Lord God is doing in our lives today – all of the miracles He's doing, the deliverances He's providing for you, and the way He is growing you and conforming you into the image of Christ.

Keep your eyes focused on Him, and remember, today is the day the Lord has made – let us rejoice in it!