

Tuesday, January 5, 2021
Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...

"2020 Is Hindsight!"

**"Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own.
But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."**

Philippians 3: 13-14

God is always calling us to set our sights on what lies ahead, most specifically our complete sanctification which will be fully realized in heaven. The only time God wants us to look to the past is to be reminded of the cross and the empty tomb. The cross and the empty tomb are the things that enable us to look to the future with joyful anticipation.

The saying that we are familiar with is "Hindsight is 2020!" What that means is that if I knew then what I know now, I would have done things differently. It's easy to be a "Monday Morning Quarterback." Who can't sit back and critique something that was done in the past and then suggest what should have been done differently. It may be true that "Hindsight is 2020," but it is now equally true that "2020 is Hindsight." It's behind us. The year, that is, not the circumstances of life.

The excitement that goes along with the start of a New Year has always been kind of a funny thing to me. It's as though we have the idea that the turning of the page of the calendar has some magical effect on the circumstances of life. In reality, the only factor that has an impact on a new year, or a new day for that matter, is God. God is the only One who makes the future bright. The future is bright because God is there. In fact, for God there is no future or past. He is eternal. For Him, it is always NOW.

But as Paul wrote in our text at the top of this devotion, we can forget what is behind. Paul is, of course, referring primarily to our sins or the time before we were believers in Jesus, if you can remember such a time the way that Paul could. He could remember the time when He used to persecute Christians. He needed to be able to forget what was behind in order to rejoice in the Good News of Jesus.

I know that we would all love for the struggles of the year 2020 to be over just because we have turned the page of the calendar, but that's not the case. God will bring an end to the struggles of 2020 when it suits Him to do so. In the meantime, He remains our stronghold, our mainstay! My doubts and questions, and even my lingering bitterness from the previous year, don't need to follow me into the new year. They can be a thing of the past. They can be left in 2020. As believers, we can say, if I had it to do over again, I would do it differently.

By the grace of God, we do have it to do over again. You can bet that even if the pandemic were to disappear tomorrow, there would be something else that would call for our total reliance on God. We can learn to do "faith" over again in the coming year. If our 2020 faith is bruised and battered, we can begin this new year with a faith that God renews as well. The Bible says, "His mercies are new every morning!" If His mercies can be new as often as every morning, they can certainly be new every year. God is with us in this new year, and He will bring about the kinds of blessings that He sees fit for us.

God's Peace!
Pastor Jim