

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume III

Issue 17

Published occasionally for Zion's mourners

Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

FORGETTING

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:13-14

Once, a friend and I were discussing forgiveness when he said he could forgive someone for offending him but he could not forget the offense that had taken place. After pondering that statement for awhile, I have concluded that he was partially right. Our mind is like the hard drive on our computers, when something is burned into our memory it will always be there. We can attempt to erase it but it can always be reconstructed. Only the LORD can forgive and totally forget an incident as though it never happened. (see Ps.103:12) That very concept is at the root of the doctrine of justification which the LORD has brought to pass by the redemptive work of JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOR. Through HIM, we are considered just and justified. (see Rom.4:25; 5:1,9; 8:30) This literally means that we are treated in a fashion as though we had never sinned. The sin of GOD's children will never be brought up again in a judicial manner. *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus"* (Rom. 8:1) Our sin was laid on HIM and is now completely taken away. We stand clothed, not in our own righteousness, but covered completely from head to foot in HIS. When the FATHER sees us HE sees the perfection of HIS SON. (see I Cor.1:30; II Cor.5:21)

Now while my friend was partially right, he was mostly wrong if we look at the scriptural concept of forgetting. We have already established that is humanly impossible to "forget" things. Yet here Paul is describing this very action. When Paul says, "forgetting those things which are behind", he is not espousing wishful thinking but is describing the necessary mindset of the true child of GOD. We are not only admonished to be a people who "forget", we are, by the grace of GOD, enabled to do so. So what does the scripture mean when it says "forgetting"?

Primarily, "forgetting" means abandoning or casting off. This very action forms the core of true repentance. The most popular definition of repentance is feeling sorry for ones actions. While sorrow for ones failures is indeed a part of true repentance, it is but a starting point. (see II Cor.7:10) The repentance spoken of in scripture is a "turning away from" our old way, or a casting off of those things in which we delighted and took comfort in, and a turning to something new. (see II Cor.7:11; Acts 3:26;) Judas wept over his disgraceful conduct yet there is no evidence that he abandoned it in favor of something new. He continued in the disgraceful way he began and embracing darkness, took his own life rather than turning to the only one who could deliver him from the darkness that enveloped his soul.

The LORD said, *"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."* (Luke 9:62) Lot's wife "looked back" upon Sodom and was turned to a pillar of salt. The children of Israel murmured and complained on their journey longing for the leeks and onions of Egypt and that whole generation died in the wilderness and did not enter the Promised

Land. Yet the scripture says of faithful Abraham and his family, *"And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned."* (Heb 11:15) They were not "mindful" of that country they came out of, rather they "abandoned" that land, putting it out of their minds pressing on in that land to which the LORD called them. So the children of GOD are admonished by Paul's example to abandon the old way and keep pressing on to that new and living way which is in CHRIST JESUS our LORD.

We are not looking behind us to savor the pleasures of sin which did so easily beset us. "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor 6:11) *We are given a new life and have been called out of the darkness and into the light, how can we then live in that way which we have been delivered from? (see Rom.6:2)*

We do not entertain those thoughts of malice and revenge which ruled us when we were stumbling in the darkness and deadness of our sin. *"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."* (Eph 4:32) *Though we may not be able to absolutely forget an offense in the recesses of our mind, we can abandon it or cast it off insofar as we think of restitution for it, and forbear one another as if the offense never occurred. Shouldn't we be willing to be defrauded for our brethren's sake? (see 1 Cor.6:7) "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves, every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself."* (Romans 15:1-3)

We are in the world but not of it. *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."* (1 Peter 2:9-10) We have a completely different mindset than the majority of those we live among. We march to the beat of a different drummer. We do not desire the endorsement of the men of this world but seek only the approval of our MASTER. The world will approve of religion but will always reject those who embrace JESUS CHRIST. *"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."* (2 Tim 3:12)

mam