

The Rear View Mirror

Today's Message – "Look Back, But Not For Long"

Message Study Guide

Introduction

Ready or not, 2008 is now only hours away from its conclusion. Let that thought sink in deep! Another year has passed us by. Another year of our lives has slipped away. For some, the year will not be remembered for its happy or enduring memories. They may have experienced things that brought much pain and sadness that they will never forget. For others, it was a year that will be remembered with affection and with fondness. Both of these groups of people will spend some time during the New Year reflecting and looking back on the past year, either for good, or for bad. The point is that all of us do look back to some extent!

One of the best illustrations about "looking back" is the rear view mirror in your automobile. When driving your car, we all know how important it is to use your side mirrors and your rear view mirror. Mirrors give a much needed perspective on where you have been and what is now behind you. But, as important as mirrors are, it would be virtually impossible to proceed forward in a car and operate it in a safe manner if you only looked in the mirrors all the time. The illustration is a simple one. The best way to operate your car safely is to keep both hands on the wheel and keep your eyes peeled on what lies ahead, only looking back occasionally.

Herein lies a tremendous Biblical principle. God's Word clearly teaches the importance of spending some time "looking back" on the good or the bad with gratitude and thanksgiving for the providences of God in leading and guiding your life. But, the greater message of the Bible is the importance of "looking forward" into an unknown future with faith and confidence knowing that God is in absolute control of all things.

Discussion Points

Life was never intended to be easy. In fact, life is tough and hard! While many view the success or failure of the past year on the good or bad that has happened, God wants us to examine the worth of a year based on a much higher criteria. Has God been magnified in my life this past year? Period!

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think so many people have a tendency to live more in the past than they do the future?
2. Why do thoughts about the future bring so much fear for so many people?
3. What spiritual advice could you give to encourage someone about looking positively to the future?
4. What worries you most about 2009?

Think About It

God said in Romans 8:28, that during the past year He has been working ALL things together for your good. How does that verse encourage you for the coming year?

Do Something About It!

By reflecting on this past year, what can you do in a practical way to ensure that 2009 will be a great spiritual year?

Be Willing To Change

"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith..." Hebrews 12:2

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