

Looking Back

Phil. 3:13

Introduction:

- A. This is time of year when people look back and ahead.
 - 1. Romans named January for Janus (two faces looking in opposite directions)
 - 2. Business people both review and plan.
- B. It is natural and often profitable to look back.
 - 1. In school, we review books, class work, etc.
 - 2. In business, we review year for profit, loss, taxes.
 - 3. In general, we review a day, month, year, lifetime.
- C. It is good for Christians to look back at times. (cf. Heb. 10:32).
 - 1. Not to live in the past.
 - 2. But to remind us of **three basic facts**.

Discussion:

I. We Have Reason To Be Thankful.

- A. For being enlightened by the gospel of Christ. (Heb. 10:32)
 - 1. Without it we would still be in spiritual darkness. (Col. 1:12-14).
 - 2. Without it we would have no fellowship with God and saints. (1 John 1:7).
- B. For all of God's blessings.
 - 1. Spiritual (Eph. 1:3).
 - 2. Temporal. (cf. 1 Tim. 4:4,5; Matt. 6:33)
 - a. Material things: Necessities and abundance.
 - b. Beneficial institutions: Home, government, freedom.
- C. For progress of church in Christ. (1 Thess. 1:2,3).
 - 1. Additions and restorations.
 - 2. Spiritual progress of many.

II. We Must Not Quit Serving God Now.

- A. We would lose all that we have put into the gospel. (Heb. 10:32-34).
 - 1. Every act of self-denial. (cf. Lk. 14:25-30).
 - 2. Every act of service and obedience.
 - 3. Every act of sacrifice and suffering for Christ.
- B. We would quit nearer to salvation than ever before. (Heb. 10:37; Rom. 13:11).
- C. We would lose the promise for which we started—heaven. (Heb. 10:34-39).

III. We Must Not Dwell on The Past.

- A. Past is a good teacher — but must not become a burden. (Phil. 3:12-14).
 - 1. No need to **brood** over past **failures** — correct by repentance. (Rev. 2:5).
 - 2. No need to **gloat** over past **success** — no room to boast. (Luke 17:10).
 - 3. No way to **rely** on past virtues to cover present vices. (cf. Ezek. 18:24).
- B. Past must be laid aside for race before us. (Phil. 3:13,14; Heb. 12:1).

Conclusion:

- A. The way to improve past is to improve today — today is tomorrow's yesterday.
- B. The way to correct past is to obey God today.