

Your Phil. 3:13 Message for the New Year

As I was preparing for work one morning, I dropped a hand mirror, and it went crashing to the floor. The pieces were everywhere. When I stooped down to pick them up, the phrase “seven years” immediately went through my head.

Now, I’m not a person who believes in luck, good or bad. The phrase probably came to mind because it’s one I’ve heard all my life—“seven years of bad luck.” But instead of finishing it, I heard a still small voice say, “Don’t look back,” then “Press on!”

I knew that sweet voice was the voice of the Lord. I also knew exactly what He was saying to me.

Unless you are looking into a mirror that is large enough to see only a small part of your face, you can normally see only your reflection, looking ahead, but also what is behind you. If you focus on the things behind, even though you’re facing the other direction, you are no longer looking forward.

I had been going through a very difficult time in my life and still wanted to hold on to some things that were virtually gone. The Father was telling me that it was time to let them all go, to mark the date, to build an altar, if you will. He showed me that looking back is very dangerous.

When the children of Israel left Egypt, they kept looking back. Many times, they complained that they had it better where they came from. Their former life of making bricks to build another’s kingdom seemed better than taking their own ground, even though they were headed for a land flowing with milk and honey, a place of freedom.

In spite of all God did for them on their journey to Canaan,

regardless of the times He proved Himself over and over, they still looked back, searching for what they once had. Most of them ended up dying in the wilderness.

The Morton Salt girl (Lot's wife) was the same way. She and her husband were raising their daughters in Sodom, a land of lust and perversion. Surely she and her daughters were safe. In fact, when two angels came to visit their house, the men in the town demanded that Lot send them out so the men could have their way with them! (See Gen. 19:4-5.)

To spare the angels, Lot, in desperation, offered his own precious daughters (see v. 6-8). Yet when he and his family were given the chance to get out of Sodom (vv. 15-16), Lot's wife couldn't bear to leave. Even though she was told not to look back, she did—and it cost her her life (vv. 17, 26).

I can remember instances in my life in which I experienced problems as a result of looking back. On more than one occasion, I have looked back for just an instant while walking or running. The moment I turned around again, I ran smack into a wall or door.

I've done it while driving too. I thought the person in front of me had already accelerated and looked back for one reason or another. The sickening sound of a crunch made me realize the person had *not* taken off as I had thought he had.

When I was reflecting on all this, God brought to my remembrance the Scripture about pressing on. In this verse, Paul says, "forgetting those things which are behind" (Phil. 3:13b). You can't get more specific than that. The Word also says that Jesus "set [His] face like a flint" (Is. 50:7b) toward the cross. He didn't look back. There was temporary death followed by eternal life for all.

I encourage you as we near the close of 2019 and look toward a new year, to begin looking forward to today. Our Father can help you forget "those things which are behind," And what He

has ahead for you is more wonderful than you can imagine (see Jer. 29:11).

Prayer Power for the Week of Dec. 22, 2019

This week in prayer, as we celebrate Christmas and look toward the new year, repent of past sins and failures, close the door on them and press on to what God has for you in 2020. Ask Him to reveal His goals for you this coming year and direct you toward them. Continue to pray for our nation and its allies. Pray that our leaders would seek God's will and wisdom, and heed wise counsel, especially as it's a crucial election year. Remember the needy and those suffering great loss. Ask the Lord how you can be a blessing. Read: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Jeremiah 29:11, Philippians 3:13. {eoa}