

Forgetting those things which are behind

Greetings everyone in wonderful, matchless, awesome, name of Jesus Christ our Lord! It's always a pleasure to be in the house of the Lord, to be in the presence of God's people. I always enjoy the opportunity to praise and worship the Lord! I love to lift up the name of Jesus, to magnify Him, to glorify Him, to exalt Him, to minister unto Him through music, praise and prayer.

Let's take a few moments right now to let the Lord know how we really feel about Him! Let's take this opportunity to enhance our personal, intimate, eternal, relationship with the Lord our God! Let's enter in right now and ask the Lord to lay his hand upon us that we may receive from Him that which He would have us to learn. Let's pray right now that the Lord would pour out His anointing upon me as the pastor as I attempt to bring forth what I feel He has given to me to give to you. Let us pray!!!!

Spend as much time in prayer as the Lord directs.

If you would turn with me to:

Philippians 3:13-14 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, **14** I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Forget your past

As the passage we just read says, we're to forget those things which are behind. Too many times we let the Devil get the best of us because he's so good about reminding us of our past. He tells us about all the things that we've done wrong in our lives. He tells us that no one could ever love us, we've been too evil. We've done too many things wrong, made too many mistakes for anyone to ever love us.

The Devil loves to tell us how holy God is, and God is holy. He likes to tell us that God, above all others hates us. Because God is so holy He could never forgive us of our sins. Because God is so holy, evil will never be allowed into

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heaven, and it won't... Therefore, we're to just live for the Devil in the daily pleasures this world is capable of giving us for a season... but only a season.

Personally, I don't think the Devil even has a clue as to just how awesome God is. **Yes**, God hates sin, and sin will never be allowed into heaven. **Yes**, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. It tells us that in **Romans 3:23**. **Yes**, God hates that which is evil, but He is a **loving** and **forgiving** God as well. The Devil never wants to tell you that part. **It says in:**

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- If we'll just confess our sins,
- Our past failures
- Our past catastrophes
- Our past breakdowns
- Our past fiascos
- Our past disappointments
- Our past collapses of our character
- GOD WILL FORGIVE US!!!!

If God has forgiven us, who is the Devil to dispute that fact! God will forgive us if we ask Him to, and then He will restore us to our proper place of fellowship with Him. But it's going to take effort on our part. We have to ask God to forgive us; when at the same time we have trouble forgiving ourselves.

We have to seek God **consistently** in prayer in order to have fellowship with Him. We need to **study** the word of God in order to understand His purposes. We need to **seek** the Holy Ghost in order to put it all together into an effective package of reconciliation, restoration, and righteous living.

You see forgiveness is only the first stage of forgetting those things which are behind. We need to effectively train our brain to forget our past. **It says in:**

Luke 9:62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

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There's a logic behind this statement that is not apparent to a non-agrarian society. We look at all those straight furrows in a field and think that must be easy to do. Let me tell you what folks, it's not! You have to pick a spot at the other end of the field and concentrate on it... Hard!!! If you **lose** that concentration, or worse yet, you look behind you to see your handiwork, when you turn back around you'll find that you've **left** the straight and narrow and you've gone **seriously** astray!

It's the same thing with our Christian walk. We have to keep our focus on the long term goal, which is to make it to heaven! We may have to live in this world; but we have to keep our concentration on the end goal so we don't become a part of this world. If we forget our end goal and we take our eyes off the straight and narrow, we might go astray at the wrong time and be lost for eternity!

Keep your eyes on the Lord at all times! Make Him the focus of all that you do in life! In everything you do, whether in the church, or in your home life or even on the job, do it as unto the Lord. You don't work for your boss, you work for the Lord! Follow my walk with God only as I follow Christ Jesus. Love your spouse as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it!

Don't worry if no one gives you a nod of approval for your efforts. God knows what you're doing, and that you're doing it for Him. There may be those at work that go to extreme lengths to be the boss's pet. Don't worry about them or even about the Boss, your real boss is the Lord Almighty and He knows the true score!!!!

Do everything you can to enhance your personal, intimate, eternal, relationship with God! Nothing else in this whole world matters! Nothing! If your spouse doesn't give you the attention that you feel you deserve, treat them special anyways. God knows your heart and theirs too!!! You're showing love to your spouse as God has commanded you, and you will receive that special reward in heaven for so doing.

Nothing in this world is worth losing your soul over! Absolutely nothing! Live each and every moment of each and every day for Jesus Christ. Make absolutely sure all that you do; and all that you say, bring glory, and honor, and praise unto God, and not to heap reproach upon His name.

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Remember that God has forgiven you of all your sins. You now have a new beginning in Christ Jesus our Lord. Forget those things which are behind and press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus!

But in order to forget those things which are behind, we need to create some new and better memories, which brings us to the next part of forgetting those things which are behind!

Next: We are to be overcomers

It says in:

Romans 8:36-39 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. **37** Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. **38** For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, **39** Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

No one is immune from trials and tribulations in this world! It's a fact of life that will not change anytime soon. In fact I would say that trials and tribulations are only going to be on the increase for born again believers in Jesus Christ. The media is constantly bashing Christianity because we're moral people and they feel condemned by that.

Therefore in the future we will be under increasing attack by those who prefer to live for Satan, because they feel that those of us who live for God are a threat to them.

- They want to be free to kill the unborn through abortion.
- They want to be free to exploit women through pornography.
- They want to be free to enslave us through socialism.
- They want to be free to tell us what we're allowed to think.
- They want to be free to tell us what we we're allowed to eat.
- And they can't do that as long as people believe in God!
- A people that believe in God are a people that believe in freedom.
- A people that believe in God are a people that believe in morality.

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- A people that believe in God are a people that believe in the sanctity of human life; young, old, born, or unborn.
- A people that believe in God are a people that have convictions they are willing to die for!

What are you willing to die for?

- Would you die for your family?
- Would you die for your freedom?
- Would you die for your God?
- Would you die for your convictions?

Living a life of conviction is a great way to forget those failures in your past. Creating new memories based on biblical principles will allow you to have memories you can look back on. Well, as long as you aren't living in the past! As the old saying goes, "What have you done for me lately?" You can do great things for God; I have confidence in God for this issue... **It says in:**

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

If we'll strengthen our relationship with God, He will strengthen us, it's a given! You need a personal, intimate, eternal relationship with God. I know I repeat that a lot around here; and that will continue because it's absolute truth. I will also continue to encourage you to fast, pray and read God's word on a daily basis.

Without fellowshiping with Christ, how can you expect to continue to remain in love with Christ? It's not enough to love Jesus; you have to be *in love* with Jesus. There's a big difference between the two. You can love someone without being in love with them. Anyone who has ever been in love knows exactly what I'm talking about!

But I digress. When we're fasting and praying and studying God's word, we have the power to live an overcoming life. We have the power through God to live above the levels where we've lived in the past. **It says in:**

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1 John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

It's only through Christ that we have the power to overcome the world and the things of the world that would drag us down into the pit of hell. Through the shed blood of Jesus we can defeat the enemy of our souls. The Devil stands no chance when we are at one with God through fasting, prayer and the study of the word of God.

You see, the scripture said, "greater is he that is in you". He has to be in you in order for you to overcome the world. We get Christ in us through seeking Him and through desire for Him to be the Lord of our lives. When we get to the point where we want Him more than anything in this life.... including life itself. Then He will fill us with the Holy Ghost, which will manifest itself through speaking in another tongue as the spirit gives the utterance.

We need to desire to not only live in Christ, but to have Christ live in us. He's only going to live in us as much as we want him to live in us. We have to want Him to live in us at all times. We need to praise Him at all times. We need to praise Him at all times. We need to fellowship Him in the spirit at all times.

God can't just be someone we love; we have to live for Him too. We can't just love God; we have to be in love with God at all times. He has to have first place in our lives at all times. If He isn't first in our lives, He is Lord of our lives. If He isn't Lord of our lives, He is Lord at all in our lives.

As a song by the Gaither Vocal Band says, "God don't play second fiddle". He takes front row, first seat. Do yourself a favor and give your all to God, and do it today! Nothing less is acceptable to God, nothing less should ever be offered up to Him. God only wants our full effort and attention. God doesn't take throw away offerings. God always wants the best of the best that we have to give Him!

Remember that God told Moses that He wouldn't accept the lame or the blind or the sick animals as an offering to Him. God wanted the very best the people had to offer. In return God blest their flocks abundantly, He blest their crops abundantly, He blessed their families abundantly!

God curses a bad offering! He curses those who would rob Him through a lack of effort. He curses those who refuse to give Him their very best, but seek to pawn off those things they no longer want in order to keep the best for

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themselves. We have to understand that we only have victory through Christ, so why would we want to give Him less than our best? **It says in:**

1 Corinthians 15:57 But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

All glory, all honor, all praise, belongs to God. When we give Him our best, he gives us the strength to do our best for Him. As we continue to grow in Him; and live for Him, we will accumulate memories of victory in Christ Jesus that will allow us to forget those things which are behind that do not glorify God!

Next: Remember that restoration is coming

Jesus told us in:

John 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

So many of us have had the Devil steal, kill, and destroy so many things in our lives that we wonder where did the wonder go? This life should be a wonderful thing to behold. It should be a blessing that we look forward to each and every morning.

But for many of us it's not a blessing but a dread. We hate for morning to come because we have to face another day of stress, another day of pain. Sometimes this pain is physical; injuries prevent us from doing the things we once did. Sometimes the pain is financial; a lack of funds prevents us from having extra things or even anything above a meager existence. Sometimes this pain is emotional; our future is too bleak to allow us to enjoy the present. Sometimes this pain is spiritual, the devil continually tormenting us with our past failures.

But if yo'll remember, the name of this message is "forgetting those things which are behind":

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- Too many times we forget that heaven is in our future.
- Too many times we get focused on the here and now.
- Too many times we forget that Christ has saved us.
- Too many times we forget that He want us to lead others to him!

Remember:

- It doesn't take great physical prowess to tell someone that Jesus loves them.
- It doesn't take great financial wealth to invite someone to church.
- It doesn't take a great future length of life to live Godly before the lost.
- It doesn't take a perfect past in order to live for God today!

God knows what you have to go through each and every day, and God has a future plan for you. It might not all be fulfilled in this life time, but if not it will in the next! **The Apostle Paul said in:**

1 Corinthians 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

We have a life to come that will be without sorrow, without pain, without suffering, without stress, without knuckleheads, financial worries. We have a future so bright, we've gotta wear shades! But not all that God has for us is going to have to wait until heaven. **It says in:**

Joel 2:25-26 And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you. **26** And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed.

If we'll live Godly before man and Christ Jesus, The Lord will restore to us what the devil has taken away from us. Most of the time we lost it because we served the devil. He didn't take it away from us; we just gave it up while serving the devil.

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But when you serve God, He gives you good things! He may not give you everything you want but He always gives you what you need. Heaven is going to be so awesome and we'll have everything we desire once we get there. But while we're still here on earth, God is going to take care of us as well.

God allowed the devil to take everything away from Job but his life and his wife. But once the trials and tribulations were over, God gave more to Job than what he started out with. But the key is; during his trials and tribulations, Job was faithful to live for God the best he knew how to do!

Sometimes we just have to endure until God brings us the victory which He intends for us to have! But rest assured, there is a day of restoration coming! Inevitably that day is coming, whether this side of heaven or the other I don't know, but I do know that it's coming if we will just live faithfully for Jesus Christ our Lord and savior! It says in:

Revelation 22:1-5 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. **2** In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. **3** And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: **4** And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads. **5** And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

So when the devil tells you of your past, don't just remind him of his future, remind him of your future as well. When finances get you down, remember that in heaven the streets are paved with gold. When you're sick, remember there will be tree leaves that will heal your every hurt, and when you're lonely, remember that you will see Jesus, and you will never be lonely again!

As we close, let us keep these three things in mind:

- Forget your past.
- Be an overcomer, and
- A restoration is coming.

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Altar Call:

If anyone here needs help in achieving any part of these three, come on down to this altar right now so we can pray for you! God is just waiting to help you with your needs. God wants to help you with your needs. He just wants you to tell Him what they are. **It says in:**

Matthew 18:19-20 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. **20** For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Let us all come together as a church and ask God that He would help each and every one of us with every need that we have. God is not too small that he cannot take care of our every need. God is not so great that He will not help our smallest problem! So please, come on down to this altar that we may pray together and ask God to help us with our needs!