

## Past, Present, Future

We turn to a new year. As it is always good that we turn to God and His Word, we find this: “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith...” (Hebrews 12:1-2).

As Christians, we rest our faith on the facts of the life, death, and bodily Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Scriptures are always telling us of what Jesus has done and is doing and will do for those who trust in Him.

**1. We look to the Lord Jesus for dealing with and forgiving our PAST.** Many often have guilt feelings over words they have said, deeds they have done, and choices they would like to have made differently. Yet God says we are to “forget those things which are behind and reach forward to those things which are ahead,” (Philippians 3:13). We cannot change those things, good or bad, that we already have done. In Christ we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. So we are to claim Christ’s forgiveness and pardon, and go on and leave the past in the past.

**2. We look to Jesus for His comfort and strength for our PRESENT.** Many Christians are anxious about living right now. They mentally and emotionally are paralyzed in thinking about doing everything “just right.” Or they might think that our God is set to set them under judgment for every decision they make. Yet, God says that we have already entered into His rest. We rest in Christ. One day Jesus spoke to a group of people just like us, and He said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light,” (Matthew 11:28-30). He stands today with open arms and says the same thing to you. He will give you the comfort and peace and courage you need right now. The Believer is in Christ, and we have every spiritual blessing we need to face fear, overcome regret, and bless others in these days.

**3. We look to Jesus for His victory and hope for our FUTURE.** His victory over death through the Resurrection from the tomb. For He

Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So we may boldly say: “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” Beyond this life and place there is another life. The grave is not our goal or end. Christians look forward to a new home of joy and happiness which will be ours when we depart this earthly station. And you may have that confidence in knowing that, if you trust Jesus Christ as your Saviour, you shall see and know Jesus and our loved ones in Heaven. Heaven is a complete place, and we shall know even as we are known.

The key thing that really matters is your relationship to God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible contains both bad news and good news. The bad news is something about you and me. The bad news is *you and every other human being, apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, are sinners* (Romans 3:23—“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God”). We have missed the standard that God has set. We fall short of God's standard of perfection.

That bad news gets worse--for *the penalty for sin is death* (Romans 6:23—“The wages of sin is death.”) By sinning we have earned death. That means we deserve to die eternally and be separated from God’s mercy and grace forever. The Bible teaches very clearly that there is a place called hell, and that it lasts forever. We must keep this firmly in mind when thinking about spiritual matters.

The Bible says there is no way we can come to God--but it says that God came to us! The Good News--*Christ died for you* (Romans 5:8—“God demonstrates his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”) Christ took the penalty that we deserved for sin, placed it on Himself, and died in our place. Three days later, Christ came back to life to prove that sin and death had been conquered and that His claims to be God were true.

The Good News gets better--*you can be saved through faith in Christ*. (Ephesians 2:8-9—“For by *grace* you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, that no one should boast.”) The Philippian jailer asked in Acts 16 “What must I DO to be saved?” Paul didn’t answer his question. Instead, he declared, “*Believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.”

You must trust Jesus Christ to get you to Heaven through no effort of your own. You must trust in Jesus Christ alone, and God will give you eternal life as a gift. “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you

will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” .... For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved,” (Romans 10:9-13).

Friend, look to Christ, and Christ alone.

*Pastor Craig Alan Myers*