

TIME PAST IS SUFFICIENT

1 Peter 4:1-4 [V. 3 (TCNT)]

INTRODUCTION:

- A. What would you do if you had the opportunity to do something fun and pleasurable, but sinful?
- B. Would you be discreet? Make careful preparations, take precautions. Make sure it stays secret.
- C. God's word says there are NO secret sins Num 32:23
- D. Driving down the highway you see a sign: "Dangerous Curve Ahead." you must either observe sign and slow down, maintain speed, or defy warning and speed up. Whatever choice you make will not change truth of sign. The curve remains dangerous, whether you acknowledge it or not.
- E. We make spiritual choices, which have consequences, whether we acknowledge them or not. We can't mock, challenge or dare God by willfully sinning, and expect no consequences. Gal 6:7-8
- F. Sometimes Christians set their sights too low and their affections on things that don't last. 1Jhn 2:17; Col 3:1-4

DISCUSSION:

I. KEEP PAST THINGS IN THE PAST

- A. Note where Christians once were Eph 2:1-3
 - 1. Selfishness in former lives: "lusts of the flesh, indulging desires of flesh and mind"
 - 2. The apostle paints same picture later in the letter Eph 4:17-19
 - 3. What a portrayal! Sinful people chasing after sin thinking they're "enlightened" when all the while being in ignorance! Not a very rosy picture but we are all there and many more still are.
 - 4. Pollster George Gallup Jr. has long referred to America as a "nation of biblical illiterates." Only 4 in 10 Americans know Jesus delivered Sermon on Mount. Majority of citizens can't name four Gospels of New Testament. 2/3 of Americans believe there are few, if any, absolute principles to direct human behavior. Only 1/2 of Lutherans, Methodists, and Presbyterians believe in devil, but 56 percent of Lutherans and 49 percent of Methodists believe in UFOs. 1/3 of Methodists & Presbyterians have faith in astrology. While nearly 3/4 of all Americans believe in hell, hardly any believe it to be their likely destination in eternity.
 - 5. These people are "enlightened?"
- B. But there was a change for some Eph 2:4-7, 4:20-24
 - 1. Laying aside the old self is laying it aside for good!
 - 2. Have heard "Let sleeping dogs lie." Let dead sins stay dead! 2Cor 5:17
 - 3. Reason this can be so is because some have finally discovered a REAL reason for living.

II. ARM YOURSELF WITH A NEW PURPOSE

- A. People make changes because they see value in the change.
- B. Christians must realize - more to life than living for self 1Pet 4:1-2

- 1. Through our baptism we make a commitment to God to change our thinking and our habits. 1Pet 3:21
- 2. The "good conscience" ONLY comes from one that has God's will as its aim.
- C. Why would anybody make such a drastic change?
 - 1. Comes a time when one must say "Enough is enough!" 1Pet 4:3
 - 2. No one will ever change without recognizing the futility of their lifestyle. That's why Peter itemizes: Sensuality - Catering only to self pleasures; Lusts - The longing for all forbidden things; Drunkenness - Not only drunkenness itself, but things that lowered inhibition lead to; Carousing - Letting loose, no restraint; Drinking parties - Social activity with really only one thought in mind; Abominable idolatries - Putting anything in place of God.
 - 3. Idolatry is the most common and the idolatry can be anything from a spouse to religious error.
 - 4. The list is comprised of everything people still do!
- D. When you decide to finally make a break from this, they'll think you're nuts! 1Pet 4:4-5; Rom 12:2
- E. What will be YOUR influence - Word or World?

III. DON'T LOOK BACK

- A. Once the decision is made, look ahead - That's where your future lies! Luke 9:62
 - 1. Graphically illustrated in the story of Lot & his wife! Gen 19:15-26
 - 2. It's the age-old story of one's heart not being in it.
- B. When Cortez landed at Vera Cruz in 1519 to begin his conquest of Mexico with a small force of 700 men, he purposely set fire to his fleet of eleven ships. His men on the shore watched their only means of retreat sinking to the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico. With no means of retreat, there was only one direction in which to move, forward into the Mexican interior to meet whatever might come their way.
- C. To be a disciple of Jesus Christ, we must purposely destroy all avenues of retreat. We must resolve that whatever price is required for being His follower, we will gladly pay. We have become citizens of the kingdom of God, and we will not retreat to the world.
 - 1. We too must "burn our ships" in resolve to move ever forward to the prize. Phil 3:13
 - 2. Whatever your talents, we can ALL do that one thing!

CONCLUSION:

- A. Changing one's life is never easy but anything that's worth having is worth the sacrifice to obtain it. Rom 12:1-2
- B. Whatever keeps you from making the change that leads to life - abandon it and turn to Jesus
 - 1. Faulty lifestyle, religious error, reservations about Christian life, etc
 - 2. God's grace is sufficient and will help as will brethren. 2Cor 12:7-9

By Zeke Flores revised by JLH