

Where Are You Looking?

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Study Given by W. D. Frazee—September 27,

Where shall we look?

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" Luke 21:28.

These things Jesus is speaking of are the signs of His coming. "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" verses 25-27.

Where is it we are looking? Up. Only thus will we see the glorious vision. The reason the world is full of fear is because they are looking in certain directions.

There are several directions we can look besides up. One way is to look back. Paul considered that, but he decided not to do it.

"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" Philippians 3:13.

Are there things in your past life that would be discouraging? Yes, everyone of us has things that are discouraging and disappointing in the past. I like Paul's statement, "Forgetting those things which are behind." Has God made arrangements that they shall be forgotten? Yes, thank God. The precious blood of Jesus is to cover the past and blot it out.

We can leave under the blood of Jesus everything discouraging and disappointing that is in the past. The past need not be a ghost, a specter to haunt us. It need not be something to be afraid of. I like the way Ellen White puts it: "Whatever the failures of the past we may, through the grace of Christ, rise above them." That takes in a lot of territory.

Whither our mistakes are many, little or big, we leave them with Jesus under the blood. We don't look back

Some people get more fear out of the future than they would in looking at the past. Tomorrow is to some more perilous than anything that ever happened

yesterday. In fact, in our text that is suggested. "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth."

More than one man is afraid to open the morning newspaper or hear the morning newscast. He is afraid of what he is going to hear. More than one man jumps when the telephone rings. He is waiting with fear for some news. And he is almost certain it will be the news he doesn't want to hear.

As we leave the past with God, we can also leave the future with Him. The words of Jesus are clear:

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" Matthew 6:34.

Do not worry about what is coming. Do not look up the road with apprehension.

Someone says, But I have to.

No you don't.

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness" Isaiah 41:10.

Leave the future with Me, He says.

We see another direction people are looking. The results are not good.

"And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness" Isaiah 8:22.

"And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof" Isaiah 5:30.

Isn't that the way it is around us? Yes. Looking around us is disappointment. I thank the Lord I don't have very much time to keep up with the news these days. But when I look at the headlines from time to time, I am struck with the fact that nearly every headline is dealing with some trouble, some problem, some dissatisfaction, some tragedy. There is very little good news. So if we look around us we will be driven to sorrow and darkness. If we look where the world looks, we will feel the way the world feels.

There are some people who have solved this problem. They don't look around them. They look inside. I say they have solved the problem. They have just

gotten a bigger one in a smaller space. If there is anyplace that is a disappointment to look it is inside your own heart. There is nothing in the newspaper that can bother you as much as yourself. I was struck with this statement:

"We are not to look within for the evidence of our acceptance with God. We shall find there nothing but that which will discourage us" *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, page 199.

If we are not going to look to the past nor to the future, if we are not going to ponder over yesterday or tomorrow, if we are not to gaze at the world around us and fill up with their fears, if we are not to look within and meditate upon our own degenerated soul, where shall we look?

Look up.

That is about the only place left to look. That is all we need.

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" Hebrews 12:2.

Stephen looked up when they were throwing the stones at him. Thank God. Even those rocks hurled at him could not keep him from looking up. What did he see?

"But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" Acts 7:55,56.

Stephen saw Jesus. Yes, he did. God is going to have a remnant that will learn this lesson so well that in the darkest hour of human history they are going to look up, and God is going to open the heavens for them just as He did for Stephen. Looking up through that place of settled glory they are going to see Jesus at the right hand of God, and they are going to hear the prayer that has been on His heart all these ages:

"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" John 17:24.

That is our privilege.

Let me share with you the lines from Annie Johnson Flint:

"I don't look back; God knows the fruitless efforts,
the wasted hours, the sinning, the regret.
I leave them all with Him who blots the record
and mercifully forgives and then forgets.
I don't look forward; God sees all the future,
the road short or long will lead me home.
And He will face with me its every trial, and bear
for me the burdens that may come.
I don't look round me; then would fears assail me
so wild the tumult of earth's restless seas.
So dark the world, so filled with woe and evil,
so vain the hope of comfort or of ease.
I don't look in, for then I am most wretched.
My self has not on which to stay my trust.
Nothing I see save failures and shortcomings
and weak endeavors crumbling into dust.
But I look up into the face of Jesus,
for there my heart can rest, my fears are still.
And there is joy and love and light for darkness,
and perfect peace, and every hope fulfilled."

"Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth:
for I am God, and there is none else" Isaiah 45:22.

"They looked unto Him, and were lightened: and their
faces were not ashamed" Psalm 34:5.

"And unto them that look for him shall he appear the
second time without sin unto salvation" Hebrews 9:28.

Oh, what a privilege we have in looking unto Jesus. I am so glad that the Lord made us with flexible necks. I am glad that He arranged that we could change the direction of looking. We can look back. We can look around. We can look in. But thank God, we can look up. Every soul can look up. And it is almost trite to say it, but what we see is dependent entirely upon where we look.

So look up. Not with just some good natured slap on the back to your neighbor, meaning take it easy, be jolly, don't worry. No, nothing like that, friends. We are not just looking up into a blue sky. There may be a cloud up there. The sky might be overcast.

What we are talking about is not some foolish, positive thinking program. We are talking about the reality of looking unto Jesus. We are talking about looking beyond the sky, for faith lays hold upon the reality of heaven. And the Savior, who has gone through everything we could experience and has triumphed, reaches to us His dear hand. He says, Take My hand and I will take you through. Looking unto Jesus we are more than conquerors.

If God, in His great wisdom and tender love, sees fit to allow some circumstance around us to blast our hopes in the humanity of others or our own, what He accomplishes is to get us looking upward.

Job learned that lesson in his hour of sorrow. The world around him crumbled almost as if an atom bomb had hit. His friends came and didn't help any. His own companion said, Curse God and die. But when there was nothing in the past or future, or around him or inside him to comfort him, he looked up and said:

"But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" Job 23:10.

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" Job 13:15.

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth" Job 19:25.

God brought Job through and up. He will do it with us. If the world around us crumbles, and if our own humanity disappoints us, God's great purpose is to get us to look to Him and Him alone.

Peter learned that same lesson in Gethsemane. I wish he had learned it before midnight instead of after midnight. But thank God, he learned it. He learned that in humanity was nothing to depend upon. He learned that he couldn't depend upon his fellow disciples. He learned that he couldn't depend upon himself. Jesus had tried to teach him that lesson, but the lesson fell on deaf ears. Peter was so sure of the future and himself that he couldn't get the full import of Jesus' words, "Watch and pray."

But when the cock crowed for the third time, and the face of Jesus met the eyes of Peter, he began to look where he should have looked all the time. He began to look at the Savior. And while he spent some mournful hours in repentance, thank God, he arrived at the point where he could look into the face of Jesus and know that only there was keeping power.

A few weeks later he was able to meet those scribes and rulers with perfect confidence and holy boldness, He was able to look them right in their faces and witness to them that there was none other name under heaven given among men but name of Jesus.

Thank God this Book from Genesis to Revelation is full of precious examples and illustrations of this. I know that in your own hearts the lesson is being taught.

We have come to the holy hours. The Sabbath is here. God is here. In a special sense the Sabbath is to be a day when we turn our thoughts away from the world around us and focus on heavenly things.

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" Colossians 3:2.

Oh, that every one of these billions of brain cells shall be focused on glory. There we shall find hope and courage and joy and rejoicing.

If there is a soul who is tempted to tell us how weak you are, and what a failure you are, and how many mistakes you have made, and how often you have disappointed Christ and yourself, let me say it for you, and include myself with you. Let me say it for all of us and get it over with. And having confessed our failures, let's leave it under the blood, and let us rise to confess His faithfulness. Let us speak as Stephen did as we look where he looked. Let us, by faith, look into that open door of the most holy place and see the Son of God as He lifts His wounded hands and prays for us. And let us know that He is praying for each of us personally.

He says that if we will confess Him here He will confess us there. If we stand for Him here, He will stand for us there. If we speak for Him here, He will speak for us there.

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