

NOSTALGIA

Definition: A yearning for the past or return to times like the past. Usually an unrealistic view of times gone by.

Synonyms: Wistful, Sentimental, Memories

Since my weekly email goes out on Tuesdays, this devotion begins on Tuesdays and ends on Mondays.

DAY 1 - Tuesday

But Lot's wife looked back as she was following behind him, and she turned into a pillar of salt" (Genesis 19:26 NLT)



Genesis 19: 1-26, tells the story of the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. We get the impression that Lot and his wife enjoyed the lifestyle of "big city" living. However, the night the angels arrived surely gave Lot a different view of the place he lived. The citizens of the city wanted to rape his guests.

Lot is told by the angels to gather his family and leave before the destruction begins. He is hesitant and tries to stay in control by bargaining with the angels and telling them where he wants to go. Eventually, he realizes that he must leave and his family runs for their lives. However, his wife obviously was still struggling, not wanting to leave her decadent life behind. She looks back and is turned into a pillar of salt.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Don't long for "the good old days" This is not wise (Ecclesiastes 7:10).

DAY 2 – Wednesday

“It is better to be a slave in Egypt than a corpse in the wilderness” (Exodus 14:12b)!

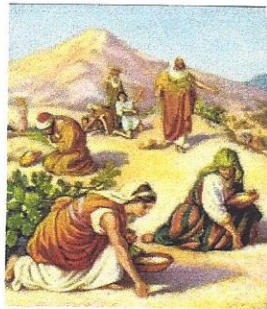
This is what the Israelites said to Moses when they first escaped from slavery. They saw the Egyptian army approaching and immediately turned on Moses and God. After all slavery wasn't so bad – it was certainly better than this!

These people had groaned under oppression for years, crying out to God for help. He provides rescue through some miraculous events, but they don't trust Him to finish the job. The old days were better.

So God parts the Red Sea to get them out of this mess. Oh, surely now they know God is with them and they will continue to look forward to the future! Not so much:

“If only the LORD had killed us back in Egypt,” they moaned, “There we sat around pots filled with meat and ate all the bread we wanted. But now you have brought us into this wilderness to starve us all to death” (Exodus 16:3).

I would be tempted to let these ungrateful people die, but instead, God provides manna.



They had the Promised Land in their future, along with the freedom to raise their children in the knowledge of their God. Instead of looking ahead to a glorious life they continued to see the past as a better time.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

“But forget all that - it is nothing compared to what I am going to do” (Isaiah 43:18).

DAY 3 - Thursday

"Has the LORD spoken only through Moses? Hasn't He spoken through us, too" (Numbers 12:2a)?

Miriam and Aaron (Moses' brother and sister) were jealous of Moses' authority and close relationship with God. Miriam remembered the "good old days" when she was used by God as a prophetess and was held in esteem.

Now things had changed and her younger brother was more important and respected by the people. Her envy got in the way of clear thinking and she made God angry with her criticism. God gave her leprosy, but because Moses pled for a healing she was only separated from the people for seven days.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The righteous keep moving forward, and those with clean hands become stronger and stronger" (Job 17: 9).

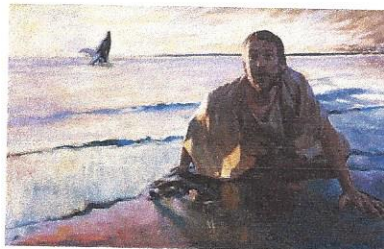
DAY 4 – Friday

"He bought a ticket and went on board, hoping to escape from the LORD by sailing to Tarshish" (Jonah 1:3c).

When God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and tell the people to repent or be destroyed, he didn't want to go. Nineveh was an enemy of Israel and Jonah didn't want the people to be saved. So he headed to Tarshish.

Jonah remembered the "good old days" when he was able to take satisfaction knowing that Nineveh would someday see God's wrath. He didn't like this new plan of offering God's love to these evil people.

Of course, Jonah ends up in a whale for three days and has time to think about the future. So he obeys God, albeit still reluctantly.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"You don't understand what I am doing, but someday you will" (John 13:7).

DAYS 5 & 6 - WEEKEND REFLECTIONS (Saturday and Sunday)

So, even in Old Testament times people longed for “the good old days.” Solomon wisely warns us that we shouldn’t long for the past, but instead focus on the future. (Ecclesiastes 7:10)

When we long for the past, especially in an unrealistic way, our focus is taken off the present. When we look backwards we don’t see what is in front of us and we can walk right into a brick wall or fall off a cliff.

Each day is a gift and we must not demean God’s “gift” treating it as less in value than past times. We must take each day as it comes, read God’s word, pray for His will, and work towards solutions.

We must follow God yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Day 7 – Monday

Take this day to focus on your Sunday sermon, spending additional time in prayer to prepare for your week. Tomorrow print off the next “word of the week” devotional.

