

Remember

by Wayne Goff

“Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations. Ask your father, and he will show you; your elders, and they will tell you”

In the Old Testament, the Jewish people were admonished to remember “the good ol’ days.” The days when God created Israel as His own special people, when He delivered them from Egyptian bondage as a nation, and when He brought them to the land of Promise, a land flowing with milk and honey.

The stories of yesteryear in our nation are worth remembering. They tell the current generation how we got here today and what price was paid to get our freedom. If these lessons are forgotten, then a generation will grow up not appreciating what it takes to build a nation.

The same thing is true for the Lord’s people today. It is good to read and remember the sacrifices of the pioneer preachers in America. Many nearly starved to death as they valiantly preached the Gospel and debated their spiritual foes. Joe Blue had someone plant dynamite under the pulpit while he was preaching, and lit the fuse. Providentially, the fuse went out before it made it to the stick of dynamite! Other preachers rode horseback across swollen streams to get to their preaching appointments. Many walked to and from their engagements because they could not afford a car or money for a train ticket. Preachers today have it so much better than those who came before them and need to be reminded of the sacrifice paid to make it so!

In the past battle over institutionalism (unauthorized church support of man-made institutions) many preachers were told plainly that if they continued to preach against church-supported colleges, orphanages, etc., that they would soon have no place to preach! Courageously these men preached their convictions, saved a number of churches, and themselves -- but at great cost of friends and money. It didn’t matter to them, they were not hirelings!

Every local congregation has a story to tell about how it began and the sacrifice made by the first members to get it going. Usually it involves starting in a meager setting, with a few godly families, and great humility and unity. Once the church grows into a larger congregation with nice facilities, many want to be a part and many think how easy it is to start a new congregation!

In the first century, the Hebrew writer said “But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated” (10:32-33). Why were they to remember the early days when they first became Christians? Because it was important to remember from where they came, what price they paid, and how their convictions helped them. They had need of endurance so that they would continue on in the Faith, continuing to make whatever sacrifices necessary to be faithful to God until their lives were over.

Hebrews 11 recalls the faith of many ancient worthies as an encouragement and illustration of those of whom the world was not worthy. Recall, remember, and imitate -- and you will receive the same eternal reward!

Do not be like the rich man (Lk. 16:25) who recalled his life after he died, when it was too late to change.

254502