



THE SUNDAY MESSAGE

OUR HISTORY

sunday 1 august

Talking through the message during the week helps you turn what God is saying to you into action steps. These notes provide some ideas to reflect upon about what we are to achieve in this life.

Looking backwards is often thought of like people who remember the good old days and wished they were living back in that time rather than now. Or it is thought of like the people who remember words said in the past which they wish were never uttered or they recall a decision they only wish they hadn't made. Both types of people live with regrets and in effect the past rules their life now. There is one other group of people. They look back and rejoice at the victories won in the past and they see the fruit in their life today. They take lessons from the past and apply them to make great decisions now or to say wise words. They use the past positively so it shapes their future. *This is the power of looking backwards.* It's no surprise that it is Biblical i.e. it's God's idea.

When I look backwards what do I see? How do I feel?

 **Joshua 4:1-9**

God encouraged the nation of Israel to look backwards and remember the wonderful things He had done for them. He encouraged them to remember victories and hard lessons. He knew that this was important to them if they were to have faith and courage to change the world around them. When we look backwards we should start by looking at how God has changed us and what He has achieved through trusting us and working with us. Only when we have listed all this work should we pause to think about the hard lessons – things that went wrong. Sadly most people start by remembering the hard lessons and never look at anything else.

How have I changed since I was saved?

 **Ephesians 4:17-24**

The single biggest victory in our life will be the time we admitted we couldn't get through life on our own strength. It is when we realised how much God loved us and how destructive our sin was. It was when we born again. Look at how much we changed soon afterwards. Look at how we are a much better person today than we would have been. Now that's worth looking backwards to encourage us to grow that much more once again. So, you might have slipped backwards from your highest peak following salvation. Well then, you know that you were capable of reaching that peak once so you can do it again and probably you can keep climbing towards an even higher peak. You do not have to stay in the valley just because you are there at the moment.

What were your fears years ago? Did they happen? Are they fears today?

 **Numbers 13:26 - 14:4 and Judges 6:20**

I heard two women, who are recent Christians, sharing how they met at a Replenish Conference soon after being saved. They were at a table with others and had share with someone else what their concerns were. These two strangers decided to share their deep and personal fears (brave women) of what could happen in this new life called Christianity. Now they look back and laugh because these fears didn't eventuate and are no longer feared. When we look back at our life or to the start of the church in each of the three campuses any fears about what might happen are no different than those the women experienced. They didn't happen. So it will be for most of the fears we are considering today.

NEXT STEPS

List in your mind all the good things which have happened to you since Jesus came into your life. It is essential to store this in your active memory, writing it down helps but it is your mind which is the battlefield so it must be strongest in your mind.

Do what God says: repeat it, often. It can be to someone else or can be to yourself out loud when walking alone or in the car. God said repeat it and create memorials (see the word memory in there!).

Then watch this bear fruit in your life in years to come.

That's about as simple as it gets.

Can you go over this once again for me

You and 10 mates plus some hangers-on are to start a faith movement to go all over the world so that centuries in the future it is the single most significant influence on society. Your followers will number in the billions (*what's a billion*). Of course you will not see all this happen but build on the basis it will. By the way, your leader has been killed by the ruling officials but on the plus side He has risen from the dead (*yeah still trying to understand that bit*) and then gone to Heaven leaving you and the guys on planet Earth. Oh and help from someone called Holy Spirit is coming but you didn't catch the date and don't really understand what Holy Spirit will do.

Look backwards again, they did it didn't they? They and Holy Spirit, God the Father's will, Jesus and the power of His blood and the Word. So it has been for each of the campuses we are part of. At one stage it also seemed impossible, but it happened.