

Two Ways

by J.R. Miller

The sermon encourages believers to learn from the past while focusing on the hope and opportunities of the future.

Scripture: Philippians 3:13

Topics: "Hope", "Moving Forward"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the importance of not being trapped by the past, urging believers to focus on the future and the hope it brings. He warns against living in nostalgia, as it can lead to a life devoid of joy and progress. However, he also acknowledges that the past can be a source of wisdom and lessons that enrich our present and future. By integrating the valuable experiences of our past, we can cultivate a fruitful life that embraces both memories and aspirations. Ultimately, Miller encourages a balanced perspective that honors the past while eagerly anticipating the blessings of tomorrow.

Transcript

We ought not to live in the past. We ought to forget the things that are behind -- and reach forward to the things that are ahead. "Forward, and not back," is the motto of Christian hope. The best days are not any days we have lived already -- but days that are yet to come.

Yet some people live altogether in their past. They love to recite the deeds they have done in former years. They believe in their old ways, and talk deprecatingly of the new ways -- the innovations, the changes, of modern days. The past holds all their life's hopes and treasures. They sit uncomforted by their graves. They mourn over its vanished pleasures as if never more would a rose bloom, or a violet pour its perfume on the air. They live as if the future had nothing for them -- no joys, no hopes, nothing to be achieved, no love, no beauty. They seem like men who have been caught in a great sea of ice, and frozen fast in it, so that they cannot extricate themselves from its grip. The past holds them in a captivity, from whose meshes they cannot escape.

This is not a good use of the past. However happy we may have been in the days that are gone, that happiness will not satisfy our hearts in their present cravings. We cannot live today on yesterday's bread. Last winter's fires will not warm our house next winter. Last summer's sunshine will not woo out the foliage nor paint the flowers of this summer. The past, however rich it may have been in its blessings, cannot be a storehouse from which we can draw supplies for the needs of the passing days. We cannot live on memories.

Yet there is a right use of the past. There are ways in which it may be made to yield blessing, help, and good, for us in the life of today. It should be to us a seed plot, in which grow beautiful things planted there in the life of bygone days. Our today is always the harvest of all our yesterdays. The deeds we have done and the words we have spoken -- are not dropped, left behind, as things with which we shall never have anything more to do. They are part of ourselves, and we never can shake them off.

We should carry forward the lessons and the gains of the past. We do not live well, if we fail to learn many things as we pass through our years. We leave childhood behind us when we go forward to manhood -- but all that is lovely and good in childhood, all its impressions and visions -- we should keep in our mature years. Not to do so, is to lose much that is richest and best in living. It is always sad if we fail to assimilate the results of the experiences of the various stages of life through which we move. There is a true forgetting of things past, which is not mere oblivion -- but it is the incorporating of whatever is permanent in them, with the new phases of life into which they lead. We put away childish things when we become men, because we require them no longer. Starlight fades when morning comes, because in the new glory it is not needed. We leave school days behind when duty calls us afield -- but we carry from our school days lessons by which to live more wisely in the midst of toil and struggle. All through our years, we should reap the harvests of which we sowed the seeds, in days which are behind.

We never can get away from our past. We carry it all with us. We carry its memories. The children used to be told that the strange music they heard when they held a sea-shell to their ears, was the memory of the sea's moanings and surgings, treasured away in the recesses of the shell while it lay on the shore. It is only a story -- but the story illustrates the way in which memory treasures up the records of the past, to become the soul's music along the years.

We talk much of living by the day. We say we should fence off the days, so that neither yesterday's shadows, nor tomorrow's cares, may come into today's life. But there is a sense in which we cannot sever any day from time past or time to come. The days are all woven together as parts of one web -- and we cannot tear them apart. The threads of yesterday, run through today, and then extend into tomorrow. One day's life alone, if that were all, would have no meaning for us; it would have neither memory nor hope in it. There could be no friendship, for friendship draws much of its sweetness out of the past, from memories of faithfulness, constancy, strength, and helpfulness -- which give assurance of unflinchingness in the stress of today. We need our past, for it is there the roots of our lives grow; we need the future, for we live for its hopes. In our darkest days, we are comforted by the remembrance of the stars which shone down upon us out of the bright skies of the past, and by the hope that the stars will again come out, that there are better days waiting for us on before.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jr-miller/two-ways/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net