

Howards Corner

Windshields or Rear-view mirrors?

I guess the question I am asking is where are your thoughts. Are you being captured by what has happened in your life or have you laid that aside and begun to focus on the present and what opportunities lie ahead. Almost all of us have had problems and difficulties somewhere in our lives and the older you are you have had more opportunities to have had depressing and paralyzing times in life.

Some people have had very difficult environments with family disasters or financial difficulties or lack of support. Maybe even betrayal by husbands and wives or parents. Maybe even evil environments. Maybe health issues with very little hope of recovery. Maybe you have been stuck in drugs or alcohol or sexual bondage of yourself or others close to you. The whole world around you has turned ugly and there is nothing solid to lean on. These are just a few of life's challenges and pitfalls so this is not an exhaustive list.

We have been told by God that this is a broken world and man's heart has been corrupted from the beginning and all these things are the result of the sinful heart.

We must look at the driver of this car first. Who is driving? If we are driving, then since we have an imperfect heart and imperfect knowledge and imperfect abilities, I think the place to start is to look at ourselves first. As I have written to you before, I came to a point in my life when the Lord disciplined me and showed me that I was bankrupt in myself even though I was going to church every week and I was not doing any major thing wrong but had no spiritual life in me. I was drifting into the pattern of the world, and you would have had a hard time telling me from everyone else.

I had a choice to ignore the spirit of the Lord on me or admit that I was on the wrong road. Thank the Lord that His spirit did not let me continue the wrong road. After seeking the Lord seriously for a while, He baptized me in His Holy Spirit, and I then was completely changed. So, from then on, the Lord became the driver of my life. That is now almost 50 years ago. For you I pray that you find the power of the Holy Spirit in your life. Surrender completely to Him and let Him drive.

Even if we find the spirit of the Lord in our life then there is still a need for us to do an assessment of our lives. To do this assessment you must diligently read the scriptures to understand the words of Jesus and what He says is the right way to live. Without the word of Christ as our guide we do not have road signs to lead us to the place He wants us to be.

It is imperative for all of us to clean out our closets and throw away those things that are not proper in our lives. Sometimes they are in a dark corner, and we don't want to look there but we must look there anyhow. He may allow a while for you to search but one day He will make you uncomfortable until you address those things in your dark corners. We are still not righteous until we look at those things we don't want to find. He will give you understanding and power if you seek.

Then there are the righteous things that need to be added to our lives. This is where the Lord will lead us by the wind of His spirit to be in the right places at the proper time and in the right circumstance to do His will. The gifts of the spirit are available to enable us to do His righteous works. Many have made the error of trying to do our works to work our way into God's kingdom. It does not work that way and that is why so many come up empty from doing charity work and volunteering in churches and worldly "good deeds". We have not received the Holy Spirit to lead us but are working in human understanding. Many churches and people have gotten the cart before the horse and have entered into dead works.

So, I pray that you have sought the word of God and have received the Holy Spirit into your heart, but I warn you do not fall for a false thinking that I have received the Holy Spirit. If you have received Him, for the Holy Spirit is a person of the triune God Head, you will be given assurance. It will not be by your willing it to be, but it will be a supernatural happening.

If you then are in Christ Jesus, you are His and then it requires that we begin to work on our righteousness which means we must mature in our faith and lay aside our old selves and take on the new self.

Now is the time to consider the rear-view mirror

Now we have adjusted our thinking and looked to following the driver of our life and have surrendered to Him as Lord of our lives. This requires that we look at where we are and all the circumstances of our lives which includes the environment we are in and the friends and our relationship with family and maybe churches and decide with the new spirit that is in us what part of that do we carry forward with us and what do we leave behind?

Are they with us or are they a hindrance? I know it is a hard decision but sometimes we must just leave them behind for we are on a new journey and may not finish the journey with the distractions and added weight for us to carry. If they are lost in their ways and have not listened to your witness for them to change then you may have no choice but to move on without them. You may not be able to change them and if you persist in trying then you may lose your place in the eternal kingdom of God. It is required that if you put your hand to the plow and turn back you are not worthy of the kingdom of Christ. He did not turn back even in the cruel death he received at the hands of His friends.

I know that the ties of family and friends and churches are very strong ties, but you must make a choice for eternity is at stake and if you choose to stay behind to help them then you may not escape yourselves. They may lead you astray. Remember that Lot's wife was told not to look back, but she did not listen and was turned into a pillar of salt.

I know you and many others do not want to hear these words because you love these people and churches, but love is not your feelings for them, but it is doing what's best for them and your walk with the Lord. If I am to obey the Lord, I must tell you the truth as the Lord has given me the words to tell you.

Howard