

HAIL AND FAREWELL (A New Years Sermon)

Text: Phil 3:13

I. Farewell to the Old Year: "Forgetting what is behind me"

1. Farewell to its Joys and gladness (The Backward Look)

A. Like saying farewell to a friend

B. As Byron wrote:

"Farewell! A word that must be, and hath been.-

A sound which makes us linger; yet, farewell!

For in that word, that fatal word --Howe'er

We promise, hope, believe,--there breathes despair!

C. Like David's elegy over the death of Jonathan.

D. Milton imagines that Adam, leaving Paradise, says:

"Farewell happy fields,

Where joy forever dwells; hail horrors."

2. Farewell to its Greatness and its Glories

A. As King Henry VIII said:

"Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness.

I have touched the highest point of all my greatness;

I haste now to my setting: I shall fall

Like a bright star in the evening

And no man shall see me more."

B. Past blessings do not suffice for the New Year.

3. Farewell to its Sorrows and Disappointments.

A. There are some things we are glad to say goodbye to.

B. For some people the old year may end like the fall of the curtain at the end of a tragic drama.

Farewell to them is not an irksome word.

C. We must not dwell on our disappointments nor linger long on our griefs and sorrows.

4. Farewell to its sins and mistakes

A. Sins of omissions

(1). Mighty words which Whittier gave Maud Muller:

"For of all sad words of tongue or pen,

The saddest are these: "It might have been."

(2). To which Bret Harte adds:

"More sad are these we daily see:

"It is, but hadn't ought to be."

(3). Opportunities missed: (Dante Gabriel Rossetti)

"Look in my face: my name is Might-have-been;

I am also called No-more, Too late, Farewell."

B. Sins of Commission

C. All sin sincerely confessed and repented and buried by faith under the blood of Jesus is forgiven and gone forever.

II. HAIL to the New Year! *"Reaching out for that which lies ahead"* (The Forward Look)

1. With its new opportunities
 - A. of service for Christ
 - B. of helping to build up your church
 - C. of lifting your family, friends and fellow men
 - D. The pages of the future are always clean.
2. With its limitless possibilities
 - A. Of a life completely surrendered to God.
 - B. Of trained talent occupying its proper place.
3. With its perpetual promises
 - A. Promises of God's presence
 - B. Promises of God's providence
 - C. Promises of God's power.

CONCLUSION: God is not behind us but in front of us and urging us to move on.

We will either grow in grace or stagnate in yesterday.

To continue to live in the past is to take the easy way because it is so familiar and comfortable and because it costs so little.

God has a purpose for each of us for this year 1979, but we are the responsible agents.

We need to take more seriously than we do that God is the God of promise.

A promise is about the future; it is about something we have not yet received. But our Christian faith commits us to God's future.

Because we have a hope for the future, this makes a real difference in the way we live our lives in the present.

It is this hope of God's future which should shape how we live today and how we react to the situations and problems created by today's world. So with strong faith in Jesus Christ we forget what lies behind and reach out for that which lies ahead. *Dec 81 Bay Pines*
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