

# LIVING WATER

The Official Newsletter of Southside Church of Christ

## THE REFLECTIVE CHRISTIAN

by Trent Hogland

***“The unreflected life is not worth living”***

***Aristotle***

The function of the Old Testament books in the life of a Christian is one of guidance and instruction.

***“For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction” (Romans 15:4)***

***“These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us”  
(1 Corinthians 10:11)***

Reading through this abundantly rich collection of historic, poetic, and prophetic writings, one comes away with many lessons learned. Lessons mostly being found through examining the relationship between God and the Israelites. Indeed, their walk with God was a foreshadowing of our walk with Him. Therefore it would be wise to learn from their example, specifically mistakes, when we can. Life is too short to learn the hard way.

A central theme that underscores their relationship with God is their repetitive forgetfulness of what He has done for them, and consequently their doubt for what He will do. In fact, this habit almost creates a circular pattern that the Jews found themselves in.

A rough outline of this pattern looks something like this: The Israelites find themselves in a predicament where they need God. But because of their lack of faith, they doubt God. God saves the day by supplying them what they need and more. He then reprimands them for their doubt, unfaithfulness, and forgetfulness. Soon after, they start to forget God and what he had done. Repeat.

This pattern is so strong and prevalent that it becomes almost unbearable to watch as it starts unfolding. You want to tell these Israelites, “Guys! Go back to chapter 10!” Or, “Look at verse 5!” Unfortunately, we cannot do this. The Israelites, like us today, were experiencing their walk with God in real time. They could not go back to the text to remember God’s working in their lives. In order to foster their faith, they needed to remember these things. They needed to reflect on these things.

Moses told them to take care, ***“... lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God” (Deut 8:12-14).***

***“And the people of Israel did not remember the Lord their God, who had delivered them from the hand of all their enemies on every side”***

**(Judges 8:32)**

Our relationship with God can suffer from this same mistake. And it is a mistake. An unreflected and forgetful walk with God is handicapped, it is immature and finds trouble moving forward toward growth. It will continue to be bound by the same fears, anxieties, and doubts that plagued it months and years ago.

A reflective Christian keeps close their history with God, and learns from it. Whether that history be an answered prayer, peace supplied by God's word, providential circumstances, etc. Reflecting on these things slowly brings clarity and confidence. It strengthens our trust in God. A parallel would be our earthly relationships. For example, I don't doubt my brother will be there when needed because of an established history I have with him. A history that I can go back to and draw from. All relationships find this similarity, our experiences inform our understanding of it. However, that process is even more powerful with us and God. His Word informs our understanding, but His word also informs our experiences. In turn reflecting on our experiences, in light of his Word, will bring us understanding.

***“You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you”***

***(Isaiah 26:3)***

Reflections on God's nature and power gave us many beloved Psalms we have today. Consider Psalms 77:

***“I said, ‘Let me remember my song in the night; let me meditate in my heart.’***

***Then my spirit made a diligent search:***

***‘Will the Lord spurn forever,  
and never again be favorable?***

***Has his steadfast love forever ceased?***

***Are his promises at an end for all time?***

***Has God forgotten to be gracious?***

***Has he in anger shut up his compassion?’***

***Then I said, ‘I will appeal to this,  
to the years of the right hand of the Most High.’***

***I will remember the deeds of the Lord;  
yes, I will remember your wonders of old.***

***I will ponder all your work,  
and meditate on your mighty deeds.***

***Your way, O God, is holy.***

***What god is great like our God?”***

***(Psalm 77:6-13)***

A little reflection will no doubt show our God's greatness!

**Southside**  
CHURCH OF CHRIST • BLUE SPRINGS