
Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

June 21, 2015

“Watch yourself!

Don’t forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”

Deuteronomy 6:12 (Common English Bible)

Temple University of Philadelphia is currently promoting their educational opportunities with the moniker, *Always Charging Forward*. I imagine that it is effective – tapping into our natural propensity to look at the life that stretches out ahead of us. With an education from Temple University we are empowered to charge – with considerable power – into what lies ahead rather than merely stumbling into it. Obsessed with the future as we are today, many are prepared to invest considerable resources to take advantage of every opportunity that presents a better quality of life. Temple University wants us to believe that it all starts with an education that they can provide.

Confidence in an unknown future requires considerable planning, preparation and faith. For the Christian, faith usually means that our future is in the hands of an almighty God and that God can be trusted to see us into that future and through it. That point of view is sound in our Christian understanding of God’s activity. But the writer of Deuteronomy wants us to know that it is inadequate. Faith is deeper and richer than our confidence in what God will do. Faith is also looking over our shoulder at what God has done. “Watch yourself! Don’t forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”

Some today ask, “Why go to church and listen to all that stuff about the distant past; about ancient Israel and Egypt?” “What do the characters of Abraham and Moses have to do with us?” What they are really declaring is that they seek a faith that is up-to-date, a faith for the future. Yet, those same people will acknowledge that they have faith in America primarily because of our nation’s history. It is because we believe that certain things have happened that we have confidence in what can happen. Confidence – or faith – doesn’t simply leap from nowhere.

So the writer of Deuteronomy asks that we look back in faith before we look forward. There are moments in our past that are quite decisive for us, moments that provide a foundation of confidence for that forward-looking faith that we so desperately seek. To look back in faith is how we refresh our memory of God’s power and faithfulness. That is what provides the sturdy base for trust and hope today. This is why the people of God gather, week after week, to worship – to recall the old, old story of God’s faithfulness that empowers our charging forward into the future.

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