A SUCCESSFUL PAST

**DATE: 7/23/2014 Wed.**

**TEXT: Hebrews 10:32-34**

**INTRODUCTION**

Do you remember when you first got saved?

How exciting it was to know we had eternal life

To think that you no longer needed to carry around the burden and quilt of your past

Did you face any opposition from family and friends?

In **vs. 26-31** Paul Warned the believers

Now … He Commends them

Paul takes his readers back to when they were first saved

***“But call to remembrance the former days...”***

He reminds them of their endurance and faithfulness in spite of affliction and persecution

Let’s pray and look at these Hebrew Christian’s …

***“SUCCESSFUL PAST”***

***~~~Prayer~~~***

First, let’s look at -

**I. THEIR “CONVERSION” - v.32a**

***“But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated…”***

Affliction and Problems have a way of clouding our minds and causing us to forget the Grace and Mercy of God

Paul calls on these Hebrews Christians to remember the former days after they were illuminated

This refers to their salvation experience when they first got saved

Illumination is part of getting saved

Illumination is the work of the Holy Spirit in giving us understanding of salvation

The Word of God brings understanding

**Acts 26:18 – *“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me”*** (Paul recounting his salvation experience)

**Old Gospel Song:** “I Saw The Light”

**II Corinthians 4:6 – *“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”***

**Ephesians 1:18 – *“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened;***

***…that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,”***

Illumination refers to that moment when the sinner comprehends the Truth of the Gospel and passes from darkness to light / death unto life

These were delightful days for the saved sinner

Having just realized the Saviour's love and the wonder of salvation …

Our hearts were thrilled and the Lord Jesus Christ was the new found love of our life

-- We couldn't wait to read the Bible

-- With great anticipation we attended Church to hear the message God had given the Pastor

-- We were excited about Jesus Christ and were telling others about Him

It is the honeymoon love of the newlywed

Jeremiah calls it the love of the espousal in …

**Jeremiah 2:2 – *“Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown”***

Israel is seen as a loving bride who clings to her beloved bridegroom

Honeymoon love describes the most intimate and cherished loved between the bride and groom

It is a time of absolute devotion of one to another

Paul wants these Hebrew Christians to remember their spiritual honeymoon;

Those early days when they were deeply in love with Christ and nothing could sidetrack them

Sometimes our biggest problem is that we forget what God has done for us

This is what Christ is talking about in …

**Revelation 2:4 – *“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love”***

In this case, the Church at Ephesus, had forgotten the experience of their early salvation

**Psalms 77:11 – *“I will remember the works of the Lord surely I will remember Thy wonders of old”***

God help us to remember …

**OUR “CONVERSION”!**

**II. THEIR “COURAGE” – vs.32b, 33**

***“… ye endured a great fight of afflictions;” “Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used”***

Paul reminds them how they faithfully persevered even in the face of great opposition

The early days of their church are characterized as ***“a great fight of afflictions”***

The word ***“fight”*** comes from the word from which we get our word *athlete*

Immediately upon being saved they found themselves in *a spiritual contest* with the forces of evil

The Christian life is likened to an athlete struggling to run his race against his opponents

**v. 33a - *“Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions”***

The word ***“gazingstock”*** is used only here in the New Testament

It is the word from which the word *theater* is derived and means *to place on stage*; to *expose as a spectacle*

The word ***“reproaches”*** means *scorn, ridicule* and *mockery*

These believers had been put on stage as it were

They were publically ridiculed and reproached for their relationship with Christ

The word ***“afflictions”*** means *aguish, persecution, trouble*

It wasn't easy, but they endured

The word ***“endured”*** points out that they not only suffered but they endured it

The word means *to stay under; to remain; to undergo*

It carries the idea of perseverance

It is staying by the stuff no matter what comes your way

**v.33b –** ***“and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used”***

They became indirectly involved in the persecutions of others when they willingly associated themselves with other suffering saints

They became ***“companions”***, sharing in the fellowship of the suffering for Christ

**Philippians 3:10 *– “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death;”***

**OUR “CONVERSION”**

**OUR “COURAGE”**

**III. THEIR “COMPASSION” – v.34a**

***“For ye had compassion of me in my bonds …”***

Paul reminds them of the compassion they showed towards him when he was in prison

They were like Onesiphorus who ministered to Paul while he was in prison at Rome

**II Timothy 1:16 – *“The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:”***

Having compassion on Paul was not a particularly safe business to undertake

Identifying with a condemned man was looked upon with suspicion by the authorities

However, these Hebrew Christians were compassionate and caring toward others

Such compassion is a mark of genuine Christianity

**I Peter 4:8 – *“And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins”***

**OUR “CONVERSION”**

**OUR “COURAGE”**

**OUR “COMPASSION”**

**IV. THEIR “CONVICTION” – v.34b**

***“and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance”***

These early believers had their earthly goods taken away from them

***“the spoiling of your goods”***

In other words it cost them something to be a Christian

Identifying with Christ would often cost people their jobs, their homes, and their families

They were scattered around the country with little more than the clothes on their back

**Acts 8:1 *– “…And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles”***

But they also took it ***“joyfully”***

Why did these early Christians suffered the plundering of their possessions,

Because they stood with conviction knowing that they had

*“****in heaven a better and an enduring substance”***

Today we guard our processions to the last item!

Eternal things are more important than temporal things

Their earthly goods could be taken, but what they had in Heaven was reserved by God

The believers inheritance is described as *“...* ***incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you”* – I Peter 1:4**

The word *“****reserved”*** is a military term that speaks of something being *watched over and guarded*

No wonder Jesus said in **Matthew 6:19, 20 –** *“****Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:” “But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal”***

There is no plundering in Heaven

They may take what we have here, but they can't lay a finger on what we have stored up there

(The sad part is most believers don’t have anything waiting in heaven for them)

And with that conviction these Hebrew Christians stood unwaveringly for Jesus Christ

**CONCLUSION**

**OUR “CONVERSION”**

**OUR “COURAGE”**

**OUR “COMPASSION”**

**OUR “CONVICTIONS”**