

5-11- Jan 9 - 77 Am -
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THESE THINGS REMAIN

I Cor. 13:13

INTRODUCTION:

Count your many blessings - name them one by one. And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.) More than ever, we know that we live in a world of permanent change. There was a musical on Broadway with a line - "one thing to be sure of, there is nothing to be sure of." In many ways, this is a painful realization that so much of what we were sure of has been swept away by the winds of change.

This is a tremendous theme for the New Year.

Two ideas will be sufficient this morning. First, things that are changing - that are passing. Second, things that remain - that are established.

I. THINGS THAT ARE CHANGING

We look about us and we discover that there are many things that are changing. There are some people who feel that the celebration of (Thanksgiving) is about the only Holiday that has not been ruined on our calendar. Someone spoke in reference to this saying in the national observance, we'd better strip the names of all the others, and just give them numbers. And say what are you going to do on number so and so. The same thing as number 4. Or wasn't that a great time we had in 1970 over number 8.

Christmas - obviously is ruined. People dread it. People complain about it. Many people spend too much money on it. Commercialization killed it.

And the national department store had their big part in it.

Election Day is no fun anymore because the politicians have taken all of that fun away. People don't believe any of the politicians anymore. So that is changed. And that is passing.

Columbus Day has received a black eye because people of intellect say that Columbus really didn't discover this land. That he went off somewhere else.

Veteran's Day has been done in by Vietnam. And that has been changed from November until October. How in the world can you trust a Holiday that even changes months.

Independence Day has always been special - and now it has taken a nose-dive because you can't have fireworks anymore. Because of the mob scenes at fireworks displays.

Halloween - vandalism has killed that. And now cities are going about outlawing that little bit of Holiday that is enjoyed by children.

Lincoln's Birthday - all the states can't agree whether to celebrate Lincoln's Birthday or not.

New Year's Day - what an awful day by the definition. Many old characters are still hanging around after New Year's Eve.

T.V. Prof. Ruf. Perkins - University of Alabama "Principal Purpose A.T. centric
Dinner for profit." Violence - Mrs. Catharine Allen W.M.W., Public Relations Director, Birmingham
"Not over T.V. set - keep a candle burning for Morality."

One thing to be sure of - there is nothing to be sure of.

hint
A Lt. Com. this week took all of his medals to a grave in Roosevelt Park. In protest of one of the policies that is going to be set by the new president of the United States. What the young Lt. Com. was saying, there is nothing you can be sure of. The things that he thought were worth standing for, are no longer essential.

There is the passing on of so many and so much in the institution, in person, even in truth, in dreams that have gone by the way.

And what we thought we were sure of is being swept away. Heb. 12:27 - God shaking the foundation of the earth indicating the removal of what is shaking. As of what has been made in order that what cannot be shaken, may remain.

The problem we have is of seeing all of these things go. We are frustrated in every direction. It is difficult for us to even see that anything is going to remain.

Like the old proverb - we say we often throw out the baby with the bath water. We fail to discern between the two. People don't know whether to throw out the stale water or whether to get rid of the baby.

On the other hand, some people deceive themselves by trying to hold on to something long after it is gone. Now it is ridiculous to try and hang on to something that you don't have anymore. Too many, too often cling desperately to that which is already gone.

1976 is gone. And there is no need to hang on to that. We may have thought we were secure in it - but those events are gone.

Paul in the Scripture here says we see through a glass darkly. We look into a mirror dimly. Or however you wish to translate it - the point is, that all the days are not so clear. Paul was saying you can't see forever here. All the realities are not so obvious. That you can't miss them. We see through a glass darkly. We know so much. And yet on the other hand, we know so little. Our knowledge is so imperfect and our prophesy is so imperfect in the 9th verse.

We know so much and yet so little. We know our children - they are marked by us. And in some cases, they are less than we would hope for. And in some cases, they are far more than we would wish for. We can anticipate their requests, their words, and their actions. And yet we know so little of what they will do. We can hope, we can pray, we can trust. But we do not know. We know one thing, that they will make a choice.

Nor do we know what we will be or what shape we will be in 10 years from now, 5 years, 1 year. Could you have predicted the things in your life today - say, 10 years ago. 1966. or 1967. If so, don't count on it the next time. You see through a glass darkly. Which things are changing.

V. 8 - Prophecies come to an end. Tongues comes to an end. Knowledge comes to an end. All that is partial comes to an end.

"Hubby, Dear," said a loving wife - "I do wish you would stay home tonight. I am afraid to stop alone. I always imagine there is somebody in the house, but when you are here, I know there isn't."

II. THINGS THAT REMAIN - V. 13

The Scripture says, so these remain. So these abide. What then do we affirm in the face of all the changes that we have noted. Paul says, there remains

This is Super-Bowl Scripture! - Super Truth!

faith, hope, and love. In spite of all the change, and because of all the change - we affirm that the abiding realities. Why are these things abiding because they are bound up in the nature of the eternal one. And this group of things summarizes all the things that are going to be famous for making you strong in the new year.

First, faith remains. There is really nothing, as one great theologian said which is true or beautiful or good - makes complete sense. "In any context of history, therefore, we must be saved by faith."

Faith is trust. That holds when all other things are fading. Faith is the eternal purpose in that you have confidence that one day you will know what you do not know today.

Faith means living with confidence - claiming that which is good. Praising the Saviour.

Faith meets all the realities of life. The discouraging moments, the disappointing moments, etc.

Thomas Kempis expressed one of the fundamental principles of victorious living when he said - "if thou bear the cross, it will soon bear you." And that has been proved again and again in life. That really is the big secret of life. When a man goes through life with the hard task he has - he learns to practice the truth of faith. And the cross bears those who bear the cross.

On one occasion, Paul simply said - Tim. 4:7, I have kept the faith. Those words came near to the end probably at the last letter he ever wrote. As he was

led to his prison cell and executed. He was writing to his young friend Timothy telling him to stand firm always. Hold true to the course. Endure the afflictions. Now as an old man, Paul can look back and see many times when he is tempted to give up. Day by day, the hard experiences - he kept the faith. He mentioned that Demus hath forsaken me. Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil. No man stood with me but in spite of everything, he is not afraid. He says, "the Lord stood with me." Chapter 4:17. And at the end of the way, when the going is roughest, we see that the faith he kept - kept him. Now every person who attains greatness has had to fight temptation. Many, maybe most of us - the temptations have been extreme. From time to time we are tempted to give up and quit. In fact, most of us have given up at times. Not many can look back over all the experiences of life and say with St. Paul, I have kept the faith. There have been times when we have not been at our best. Of those times we are ashamed. But thank God, we can also look back upon times when we did keep the faith. Those times we are very proud of. The faith we kept - is keeping us. The cross we bore is now bearing us. But sometimes it seems impossible to keep the faith. Remember the past victories we have won. But a new crisis keeps coming up. Life may hurt us. Strong forces try to hold us down. Scientists say that the great Sequoia trees in California was a small seedling 271 years before Christ was born. And 516 years later, it was severely damaged in a forest fire. But nature began to repair the damage. Though it was hurt, the tree kept living and growing. And a 100 years later, the scar caused by the fire was completely covered. In later years, two other fires damaged the tree. But nature worked to heal those also. And they studied one of those giant trees that they cut down.

Life has power to heal. The hurts that are deep. Temptations that are powerful. When you keep the faith. One of the great expressions of faith is seen in the story of the woman who touched the hem of his garment. Twelve years she had been sick - wanting to be well. Instead of resigning herself to sickness -

she wanted to do all she could to get well. She spent everything she had. But she would not give up. But she heard about Jesus, and she could but touch his clothes - I shall be whole. She did touch the hem of his garment and was made well. And what did Jesus say to her. "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole."

In our conflicts, and in our superstitions and in our world that things are passing away - we need to know that here is one thing that remains. And that is faith. On one occasion, Jesus said that he could do no mighty works because of the unbelief of the people in his own hometown.

Fascism said, fear imprisons, faith liberates
Fear paralyzes, faith empowers
Fear disheartens, faith encourages
And most of all, fear puts hopelessness in the heart of life
While faith rejoices in its God.

The poet said, when we have exhausted our store of endurance, when our strength has failed. Era the day is half done, when we have reached the end of our horded resources - our father's full giving, has only begun."

N.R.S. - Chicago (Health Worker) - 49 State, Toll Free Number - National Runaway Switchboard -

II. HOPE - Last year "National Runaways" bordered on one million - $\frac{1}{2}$ girls!
Teen Age Run's from Self - feeling Hopelessness - SCARED INSIDE - Add to This
We live by hope. As one great man has said, nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in a lifetime. "Paul said, hope is going to remain. Our patience or rather, our impatience gives us away. If we achieve what we are living for, then it wasn't worthy in the first place. The only reality worthy of being our

The Throw-Away - Always? Parents kick but do not want.

life's purpose, are those we cannot achieve. We can experience them, taste them, live in their light.

We live by hope because it gives us a large enough and a lasting enough challenge and enough purpose. Only when we spend our lives for something that outlasts them is it worthwhile to fulfill it.

Hope is faith toward the future. It is believing that tomorrow will be different from today. And that is good. It is believing that God has an unfolding purpose for my life. That we have yet to see.

Hope is not wishing that things would stay as they are. But hope means putting your life in the mainstream of things. For the use of God in his purpose.

For a good illustration of this, you might turn to Acts 27 and read the account of Paul and the shipwreck. In that 20th verse it said, "when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us - all hope that we should be saved was then taken away." What a predicament for men to be in. The dangers of the quick-sand, of the ship breaking up, and Paul said all hope had been taken from those men.

Now, he knew what he was talking about when he said - faith and hope remain.

In that same experience--Paul stood forth in the midst and said sirs, "if you will harken unto me. Not one man will lose his life. But the ship was going to be lost. There stood by me this night an angel of God. I serve. Saying fear not to Paul. God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. For I believe God, that it will be even as it was told me." That is hope. That is real hope.

And the closing part of the chapter says, and so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land. Even in the darkest hour, Paul says, there remains hope.

III. LOVE ABIDES AND REMAINS

There is nothing we do, however virtuous we may be. But we can really accomplish in our own power and in our own strength. I think in the words of the Apostle Paul - the greatest of these is love. Now love is embodied in Jesus Christ. And this is embodied in God who loved us.

Love is God in Christ coming down to be with us. Taking part in our lives. That one who lays down his life for another. And Paul says the greatest of these is love.

Now there have been some people who have tried to live their lives along other lines. They go their own way. And their own way leads to a dead end.

✓ Change and decay all around I see
Oh, thou, who changeest not, abide with me.

What a marvelous line.

✓ Lord, thou who has been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, For thou has formed the earth and the world, From everlasting to everlasting - thou art God. Psalm 90:2.)

In view of change and decay, these things remain.

I remember again the story of that Indian who was converted. About the love of God that was irresistible in his life. Sadhu Sundar Singh was converted. To Christianity. His parents could not get him to give it up. They finally forced him to leave the house. The first night in the wilderness he writes, I had nothing but the clothes on my back and a New Testament. I spent that night under a tree shivering and hungry. But I remember the wonderful joy and peace in my heart. The presence of my saviour. I held my New Testament in my hand - it was my first night in Heaven.

Once that great man was traveling with a guide in the Himalayas. And was caught in a blizzard. He stumbled over a man almost dead, covered with snow. The guide encouraged Singh to leave the man and to try to rescue him would endanger their own safety. The guide felt they must head for shelter with all haste.

The guide hurried ahead. Singh stayed behind in an effort to rescue the dying man. He lifted him on his shoulder and battled the storm. With the extra burden. Just before darkness, Singh saw the mouth of a cave ahead. A place for shelter. Suddenly Singh stumbled over a frozen body and it was the guide. Singh's body had been kept warm by his (extra burden). And therefore his life was saved. But his (unfailing love for others) would not let him pass by a dying man, without making an effort to save him.

You remember after the resurrection, Jesus asked Peter three times. Lovest thou me. And each time, Peter responded. Jesus said, feed my lambs. Feed my sheep.

I like to think that Jesus was saying to Peter, if you really love me, act as if you do.

One positive proof of our devotion is seen in our Christian service. If we really have the love of God in our hearts, it will be reflected, in our service.

Gary Corder - wid - Grand 3030 Bullitt
Thank God, happened, change my way life -
Holding back wife, baby - from the -
Different now -