

A Moment of Grace

April 22, 2018

I. Introduction

Ezra 9:8-9 “But now, for a brief moment, the Lord our God has been gracious in leaving us a remnant and giving us a firm place in his sanctuary, and so our God gives light to our eyes and a little relief in our bondage. Though we are slaves, our God has not forsaken us in our bondage. He has shown us kindness in the sight of the kings of Persia: He has granted us new life to rebuild the house of our God and repair its ruins, and he has given us a wall of protection in Judah and Jerusalem.

- *The moment you are in is shaped by your past and focused by your future.*

II. The Past Shapes Your Moment

- *The past is a reminder of what you did.*
- *The past is a reminder of what God has done.*

Nehemiah 9:31 But in your great mercy you did not put an end to them or abandon them, for you are a gracious and merciful God.

A. How do I respond to my past?

1. Respond with Humility
2. Respond with Gratitude

Jeremiah 24:4-7 Then the word of the Lord came to me: “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘Like these good figs, I regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I sent away from this place to the land of the Babylonians. My eyes will watch over them for their good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up and not tear them down; I will plant them and not uproot them. I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.’”

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Jeremiah 29:10-11 This is what the Lord says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

B. Don't live in your past. Launch from your past.

- What God saves is more important than what has been lost.

III. The Future Focuses Your Moment

- *The future is an opportunity for you to thrive.*
- *The future is an opportunity for God to be glorified.*

A. How do I approach my future?

1. Approach the future with Vision.

Proverbs 29:18 (KJV) Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint; but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom's instruction.

2. Approach the future with Wisdom.

Luke 12:28-30 "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.'

3. Approach the future with the Leading of the Holy Spirit.

Zechariah 4:6 So he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty.

B. Calvary's vision is LIFE CHANGE.

1. LIFE CHANGE happens when we CONNECT, GROW, and SERVE.
2. We want the church to grow both deep and wide.

"We stand at the threshold of unprecedented opportunity." ~ Rev. J. Donald McManness

IV. Conclusion

A. The moment you are in is shaped by your past and focused by your future.

1. You will miss this moment if you do not learn from your past.

1 Corinthians 10:11-12 These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

2. You will waste this moment if you are not focused by your future.

Philippians 3:13-14 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

3. You will be hindered by obstacles until you understand the power of moments.

Ezra 9:8 "But now, for a brief moment, the Lord our God has been gracious in leaving us a remnant and giving us a firm place in his sanctuary,

B. When we live in the past or obsess on the future, we miss out on God's grace in the present moment.

Lamentations 3:22-23 Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

1. *"If you aren't breaking them, you aren't making them."*
2. *"The value is in the process and not in the piece."*
3. Your focus is not just on this moment but on the God of this moment.
4. *"It is not about what you create. It is about what is created in you."*