

Not Going Back?

Joe Slater

As a rallying cry, “We’re not going back” isn’t new. It was used well over three decades ago but has recently made a comeback. As with most slogans, it needs context and explanation. Most obvious would be the question, “not going back to what?”

When the spies Moses had sent into Canaan returned, most Israelites concurred with the ten faithless ones and said, in effect, “we’re going back to Egypt!” That wrong-headed threat resulted in 39 additional years of trudging around in the wilderness. Too bad they didn’t say, “Onward to Canaan! We’re not going back!”

At other times God’s prophets had to call His people to come back to him. “*Stand in the way and see, and ask for the old paths where the good way is, and walk in it.*” Sad to say, the people answered, “*We will not walk in it*” (Jeremiah 6:16). They had left God’s way, but “We’re not going back!”

What is it to which “we’re not going back” today? Go back to segregated schools and lunch counters? May it never be! Go back to threatening citizens for trying to vote? No, no, a thousand times no!

But how about “going back” to a time when girls and women could use their restrooms and showers without the intrusion of men and boys? How about “going back” to the day when girls and women could compete in sports without being bludgeoned by physically stronger males? How about “going back” even further to a time when innocent human life in the womb was protected by law? To their everlasting shame, the secular progressives cry in unison, “We’re not going back!”

“Going back” to some things would be tragic indeed. But failing to “go back” to others will be equally disastrous. Before you join the chorus chanting “We’re not going back,” ask, “Going back to what?”

Kindness

Mark Twain describes kindness as “a language the deaf can hear and the blind can see.” Kindness is a disposition to be gracious, friendly, sympathetic, benevolent, and generous. In a world given to hatred and revenge, it is refreshing to experience kindness.

The kindness of God can change even the cold and callous heart. Some think of God as the Great Avenger – always looking for opportunities to stomp us into passive submission to His sovereign will. Others see Him as an overly permissive grandfather who “lovingly” indulges the wicked rebellion of His people. But, God is represented by neither extreme. He is the perfect blend of both love and righteousness. Paul mentioned both characteristics when he wrote: “*Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God’s kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off*” (Romans 11:22). We must avoid unbalanced perspectives of God. He possesses perfect justice and holiness; but, also, infinite love and kindness.

Jesus perfectly demonstrated these qualities in His life. If we would develop a kinder disposition, we must follow His example and “put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience...” (Colossians 3:12). A parallel thought is found in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians where he writes: “*And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you*” (Ephesians 4:32). Both of these passages highlight the tremendous love and mercy of God in sending His Son to die on the cross for us. When we struggle to show kindness to others, we should pause and reflect on how kindly we have been treated by our Father. This will help us show kindness to others in the things we do and say. In this way, the language of kindness will be heard by the deaf and seen by the blind.

--Glen Elliott (Greenbriar, AR)

God Will Visit You

In Genesis 50:24 Joseph tells his brethren that he is about to die and that “...*God will surely visit you*” (KJV – other versions have “*take care of you*”).

How would it be if God were to visit you? Would you have to make any changes in your dress, the books you read or the movies you watch? Would you have to speak differently to each other? Would your house reflect love and devotion or hatred and bitterness?

God is not literally going to come bodily to our houses, but He is there spiritually. He knows what we are inside our house when others may not know. He will hold each of us accountable for the way we act and what we do in our family relationships.

This word “visit” means “*to exercise oversight over a subordinate either in the form of inspection or acting to change the circumstances of a subordinate whether for better or worse*” (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance #6485). When Joseph spoke those words, his people were enjoying the blessings of Egypt. But there was coming a time when they would be enslaved. At that time, God was going to visit them and deliver them to the promised land.

We need to remember that God exercises oversight of us and wants to take care of us. Just as God visited the Jews when they had needs, so God will visit us when we have a need. But we must stay in an obedient relationship with him. Why do we think that we can live as we like all of our life and then, all of a sudden when we need help, all we have to do is holler and God will deliver us? God does want to visit us – that is to assist us. But he is only going to assist those who are his faithful servants.

Let each of us live so that God can visit us when we need the help.

--Author Unknown (via Mt. Carmel CoC, Athens, AL)