A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Christmas Past

*We all stumble in many ways.* ***(James 3:2)***

* ***Losses can teach us things that victories don’t –*** *“It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of every man; the living should take this to heart…The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure.”* ***(Eccl. 7:2, 4)***

***Two responses when faced with the “sins of the past”…***

*Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.* ***(2 Cor. 7:10)***

* ***Fear: Judas ran from God’s presence –*** *“When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse...”* ***(Matt. 27:3)***

🔍***Worldly sorrow: I own my sin; I’m guilty –*** *“’I have sinned,’ he said, ‘for I have betrayed innocent blood.’ ‘What is that to us?’ they replied. ‘That’s your responsibility.’ So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.”* ***(Matt. 27:4-5)***

* ***Faith: Peter received God’s grace –*** *“Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: ‘Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.’ And he went outside and wept bitterly.”* ***(Luke 22:61b-62)***

*When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ he said, ‘you know that I love you.’ Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.’* ***(John 21:15)***

🔍***Godly sorrow: Jesus owned my sin; I’m forgiven –*** *“God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”* ***(2 Cor. 5:21)***

***With Jesus, our past won’t define us, it will refine us…***

*But Peter and John replied, “Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”*

***(Acts 4:19-20)***

*Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, 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. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things.* ***(Phil. 3:12-15)***