

*O LORD. We join together in asking that truth would be free to make her sorties upon us all, which way You please. Guide our minds for your designs. We ask that, nothing smothers truth's golden beams. (Spurgeon)*

☞ We began this journey with a sobering look at our condition before life. The Holy Spirit then hovered over our death and caused life. We saw too that when God's Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, dwells among us, things happen. Being now fitted for the journey, ere long and the instinct of thirst gnaws at our throats. It is a faithful friend, even going so far as to cause pain if it is not satisfied. It is the timepiece that tells us when it's time to drink. Without it we perish. Without it the desert elephants would not be driven to find water's source. Life, as we know it today, would have gone extinct not long after creation. *Spiritual instinct* nourished by the Holy Spirit has lead us to *Living Waters*. We are at peace though the flames of the searing sands of life's journey attempt to singe our rest.

☞ **YET!** Because we are not watchful in the reposes of our temporary desert, a new enemy, more fearful than Dark Pharaoh sets its teeth against us. While we are barring the door, we discover too late that somehow it found our back door ajar, setting up its battle headquarters within. We don't have a clue as to how it that could have happened. Its name is *Mortal Nostalgia*.

☞ As life marches on, and one generation follows another, every generation, when the color of their hair changes to grey, more often than not, looks back on a "better" time. People talk about it, restaurants attempt to bring it back with a retro design, and ghost towns are preserved. The general perception of being nostalgic is not something to be avoided, but rather something warm and fuzzy. I must confess I've been nostalgic at times.

☞ In order to give good progression to this message first let's define *Nostalgia*. *It is pleasure and sadness that is caused by remembering something from the past and wishing that you could experience it again.* I would add to this that there are three types of nostalgia. 1) a longing for some earthly good ol' days. 2) a longing for some spiritual good ol days. 3) an envy of the wicked. *Nostalgia is something quite harmless until it takes up residence in the heart.*

☞ Many things can prime to pump of *Mortal Nostalgia*, but perhaps none

more so than the steep grades and the deep valleys of the Christian journey. To name a few; the world's blatant shedding of all things Divine, a wayward child, poor health, spiritual and mental fatigue, or age. But what seems to be most successful in priming the pump of *Mortal Nostalgia* are the incessant breakers of personal besetting sins. Have you ever secretly muttered in your heart, *Oh for a return to the time that every day was bliss; the time when I had no consciousness of spiritual right and wrong! My life was so uncluttered then!*

☞ David was bitten by the bug of nostalgia. *For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For they have no pangs until death; their bodies are fat and sleek. They are not in trouble as others are; they are not stricken like the rest of mankind. (Psa 73.3-5).* And again in vv. 12 and 13. *Behold, these are the wicked; always at ease, they increase in riches.*  
13 *All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence.*

☞ Jeremiah too was bitten by the bug. *Righteous are you, O LORD, when I complain to you; yet I would plead my case before you. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all who are treacherous thrive (Jer 12.1)?*

☞ The Jews too, showed symptoms of this disease when a desire to be like the nations around them caused them to ask for a king. The Jewish nation has never been the same since.

☞ And of course we're familiar with Job in chapter 21, where he was envious of the wicked. In v. 7 he laments, *Why do the wicked live, reach old age, and grow mighty in power?*

☞ *Mortal Nostalgia* was so important to Stephen that he spoke of it in his last sermon here on earth. He preached, *Our fathers refused to obey him [Moses], but thrust him aside, and in their hearts they turned to Egypt ... (Acts 7.39).*

☞ Even Satan gets involved in incubating *Mortal Nostalgia*. With Pharaoh he says, *"I will let you go to sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you must not go very far away (Exo 8.28)."*

I The Internal Enemy of *Mortal Nostalgia* Spawns *Nimble Grumbling Within*

*Exo 16.1-3: They set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt.*

2 *And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness,*

☞ God's people had only been in the wilderness for about 6 weeks, and already they were complaining; our typically human nature is quickly discontented and rebellious even in the best of circumstances.

## II The Internal Enemy of Mortal Nostalgia Spawns Three poisons of *Asps Under Their Lips*

3 *and the people of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt<sup>1</sup>, when we sat by the flesh pots and ate bread to the full<sup>2</sup>, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger<sup>3</sup>."*

1<sup>st</sup> Poison *Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt*

☞ It Causes blindness to a former condition when they were slaves in Egypt.

☞ It causes memory loss that they had been as good as dead anyway.

2<sup>nd</sup> Poison *... when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full*

☞ It masks death in the pot with and invitation to Egypt's gluttonous banquets.

☞ It is such a potent poison that, scarcely had the scabs on their wrists and ankles, bearing witness to their past slavery, healed, before they were drunk with a lust to once again slide their knees under Egypt's table, and have just one more meal of bondage.

Q Do we persist in our nostalgic appetite for the bread of men? Christ, speaking through the Apostle John writes: *For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.*

☞ We should be looking skyward instead of downward.

3<sup>rd</sup> Poison *You have brought us out into this wilderness to kill.*

☞ It causes one to lose their reason. The poison of *Mortal Nostalgia* works so effectively that they had lost their reason, no longer able to recall the 9 plagues and the 10<sup>th</sup> of deliverance.

☞ A poignant parallel: Christian too has already had the blood of the Passover Lamb applied to his heart. With full supplies for the journey. A long 430 years in Egypt are a slowly fading

memory, and now only a small dot on the horizon of his back trail. Yet, after a mere "6 weeks out", when Christian's life becomes a burden, in the guise of assassinating the character of God's servants, Christian begins assassinating God's character and His Saving Intention.

*Exo/出エジプト記 16.8:* ... the LORD has heard your grumbling that you grumble against him—what are we? Your grumbling is not against us but against the LORD."

☞ At first, complacency takes up that portion of Christian's heart, unswept by prayer. Then soon he is making his world view more palatable to the Egyptians. Christian joins them at their feasts, if not in body, in mind.

! The enemy, that wily one, who mixes up the potion of *mortal nostalgia*, that great deceiver, is daily at work, planting the seeds of doubt of God's character and motive. He would have us believe that God is a killer rather than the Giver of Life.

! Our prayer should ever be, *LORD, let not the deceptively calm tide of lukewarmness stealthily build into icy swells of coldness of heart.*

! The Spirit of Christ asks us, *And now what do you gain by going to Egypt to drink the muddy waters of the Nile (Jer 2.18)?*

## III Pushing Ourselves Away from the Flesh Pots of Egypt

☞ If due to a momentary lapse in judgment, or because of some darling sin, we find ourselves with our knees under the table of the flesh pots of the world, and the Holy Spirit has graciously awakened us to our condition, before we dip our spoons into the broth, it's the perfect time to push ourselves away from the table...the time to reject *mortal nostalgia*.

☞ Pushing ourselves away from the table is not, though, the antidote to *mortal nostalgia*. It is just the beginning. So what is this "pushing away?"

☞ Let's look at the four antidotes for *mortal nostalgia*. They have to do with a *taking ourselves in hand*, perhaps best expressed in the two verses of the following Psalm.

*Psa/詩篇 73.25-26: Whom have I in heaven but you<sup>1</sup>? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you<sup>2</sup>.*

1 Taking myself in hand by asking myself a question.

☞ *Whom have I in heaven but You Lord?*

2 Taking myself in hand by, in the stead of **LISTENING TO** myself, **TALKING TO** myself with the following words:

☞ *And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.*

26 *My flesh and my heart may fail<sup>3</sup>, but God is the strength of my heart<sup>4</sup> and my portion forever<sup>5</sup>.*

3 Acknowledging and confessing my utter insufficiency.

☞ *My flesh and my heart may fail*

4 Reminding myself of Who Christ is to me

☞ *but God is the strength of my heart forever*

5 *and my portion forever*

☞ *All the bright lights and food of Egypt and, even all the blessings designed for me by Thy Sovereign hand pale in their luster next the my Christ, my Portion below, and which forever He shall be Above.*

! Now that we have graciously received the antidote for *Mortal Nostalgia*, instead of sneaking backward glances at Sodom, a new and faithful companion joins us on our journey. Lord willing, tomorrow morning, we'll explore and come to know this new companion, **Enduring Faith**.