

Clouded by the Past

Too often we feel our past following us like a dirty cloud. I recall the days of watching Charlie Brown where his friend had a cloud following him as he carried his dirty blanket. Somehow it seems that our dirty past never disappears, and it clouds the vision of where we are to go. We often try to fit into society, communities, and even churches, yet we never feel like we belong. We never feel like we can connect with anyone or anything. Careers seem to evade us and opportunities never seem to come knocking at our doors, so we wonder, "Why am I here? Why doesn't things work out for me?"

But I must tell you that when your life is committed to Jesus Christ, His cloud makes your cloud clean. His glory cloud way is bigger, and more powerful, than the dirty cloud of your past. In fact, He actually enjoys making your past as though it had never happened! The Bible says that we are justified by the shedding of Jesus' blood. Our acceptance of Jesus justifies us meaning, "Just-as-if-I'd, never sinned".

When Jesus talked to Nickodemus, he told him that his sinned could be washed away. And what was once dirty, could now be cleansed. Your past is still your past, that will never change – but now it is only history. Your past doesn't have to control your present, nor your future. When we are saved by faith in Christ Jesus, we are made free indeed. Free from what? Free from the bondage of sin, its effects, and any kind of hold that it has on you. You do not have to be in bondage to your dirty past. In fact, God says that He remembers it no more (Hebrews 10:17). The reality is that the devil doesn't want you to believe that you have been made free, so he keeps reminding you of your past. But you have the authority to speak to the devil and tell him that you no longer believe that the dirt and its cloud can remain. It's been washed away. Galatians talks about how we are no longer in bondage to our past sins so why do we keep looking behind us? Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" which means that we all have the dirt of sinful ways in our past. But now we are redeemed. We are no longer slaves to Satan so don't let your past be your focal point.

So how do you get beyond the dirt of the past? First, remind the devil that you are no longer his but are a new creature in Christ. Second, know that God plans to make your past a blessing. God fully intends to get the glory for what He has done *in* you and *through* you. So be encouraged to step into what He has called you to do because God has chosen to overshadow you and bless you with His presence for His glory!

Dear Jesus,

I am aware that Satan always reminds them of their dirty past, but he no longer has authority over them. They now know that your glory cloud will wipe away the shame of their past. Jesus, you plan is to do mighty exploits with them! And you will take glory in turning around their past into the glory cloud of your presence. I pray that they will remain connected with you for you *will* do the impossible. I pray that they have the courage to step out and connect with the people you have sent and to step into their calling. They feel you cannot use them because of their dirty past, but God you used a killer, Saul, and called him to be apostle Paul. You turned a cheater and liar, Jacob, into Israel and blessed him. You turned Moses, a murderer into a Deliverer of your people, so God I know that you can and will use them for your glory!

I pray Jesus that they feel good about themselves for where they have come from. They are no longer the same person because you are in them. May they praise themselves for every small accomplishment they make that brings them closer to where you want them. God you are in the little things so let them not be discouraged. I pray that their joy is full, and their heart is overwhelmed by your love! Yes, and Amen!

(John 15:11) These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

(1 John 4:4) Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

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