**Black Preacher Sermon.Com**

**Looking In Two Directions**

(Philippians 3:13-14 KJV)

*13Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

T

he party’s over, and the bills now have all in abundance become due. "But there is hope for your future," says the Lord—only with the possible exception of April 15 tax season bonanza, January 2 is probably everyone's most dreaded day of the oh-so-new year. Now amazingly from the fourth Thursday in November— through the first day of January, everyone in America partied. We’ve had a blast! We’ve stuff ourselves with turkey and dressing, homemade cookies and cakes, fresh bread and pumpkin pie. And a once-a-year delicacy appeared on New Year's Eve like smoked salmon, Caviar and Champagne (if your taste buds are grown up) and Sparkling Welch Wine (if your taste buds are still young). We stayed up late, partied constantly, spent lots of money, act nicer—and what do we get for it? January 2.

That’s correct January 2 has the 411 that we are now overweight, exhausted, in debt and the house is a mess, the Christmas tree is still up—closet needed cleaning out to make room for the gifts we received, and we suddenly wake up the day after and find its January 2—after all those football games and all those rotel dishes, we realize it's now time to go on a diet, get on a budget, go back to work or school and pack up all those ornaments. And again why is it that all the Christmas decorations that looked so lovely in the middle of December suddenly looking so tacky on January 2? If we are going to make it through this year and every year—January 2, is a day that needs a new perspective concerning this day.

The ancient Romans believed in a lot of gods, but among their gods they had a god of doorways. His name was Janus. Janus had two faces, one looking forward and the other looking back. He was the god of beginnings as well as endings. He was the god of transitions. He gives his name, of course, to this month, “January,” the beginning of the New Year and the end of the Old Year. And incidentally, Janus, the god of doorways, is also where “janitors,” get their names, as the keepers of doorways. January is a hinge time and a vantage point from which we can still see back into the past year and yet can also face forward and look expectantly at the year that lies ahead of each of us.

January 2 isn't just a day to sigh over "how far" we've got to go to lose that weight or pay those bills or see the spring flowers again. January 2 is also a vantage point from which we can plot the course of the New Year. Janus does look backward to the past, but he also looks forward to the future. January 2 must become the start of the hope month, not just the end of the party. Now part of the problem with this year's January 2 is that it still is carrying baggage saved from last year's January 2—without any definite idea about "where to," we tend to repeat each year in much the same way. There seem to be no sense of ownership about the future—about the year—we have been spendthrift and irresponsible.

All of us have made New Year’s resolutions, and all of us have broken them too. Many times our resolutions are abandoned before the sun goes down on January first. And I believe that very often we make New Year’s resolutions that have little to do with our spiritual well-being and our walk with God. So I have a few proposals for making this year a year of spiritual growth. Let’s not call them resolutions, because resolutions seem made to be broken.

In our text we see Paul looking in two directions. He looked backward and thought of all that he had suffered for Christ and all that he had accomplished for him, he was putting it all behind him. Then looking forward he dedicated himself to move forward to accomplish more for Christ. In like manner, it is important for us to put behind us this year, and move forward to greater things for Christ.