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Here's Hope
by Rev. Jerry Rea

Where You've Been

From time to time it helps to remember where you've been. Sometimes we are forced to consider where we've been, and sometimes we do it intentionally. A retreat is a time to stop and consider the pathway wherein we've walked. If changes are needed, we make them, realizing that we're not where we want to be (sometimes not even moving in the right direction). A problem is another chance to stop and look back. The junctures of our lives provide any number of problems or forced "rest stops" along the way. A sickness can serve as a time to look back. A time of recreation can become just that. It can become a time when we think about what we've done or not done. A change (voluntary or involuntary) can help to pause and reset... before we forage ahead. Many times as I ponder what to do, I'm forced to consider or reconsider what I've done. The past can serve as a wonderful rudder, to guide us forward into the future. It can also serve as a terrible anchor to drag us down. You may have made some big mistakes, and they haunt you now and possibly will in the near future. It is good to cut loose from these anchors. That "cutting loose" is best done with prayer and in a very intentional manner. Just how long will we drag that past anchor? Perhaps you were wrong and a decision set you on a terrible path. So, do you continue, or do you pause and choose a new road?

So, where have you been? Re-evaluate the path. Stop and look back. Because of a marvelous gift called "free will," human beings can change. It's a good practice to consider if you need to change. Some would say we'd do well to do this once a year. I'd say we'd do well to tweak our pathway every single day. Set some goals. Re-dream the dream. Rethink your vision. Look closely at... *you* and remember how you got there. The road you've traveled has not been all bad. The events and accomplishments didn't just happen. They came to pass because you took the time and spent the energy to make them come to be.

Where you've been can help you find the emotional and spiritual strength to set out again. From the mountain of your memory, re-gather and press on. We climb our mountains and build our lives one step at a time. We surely need to look back, but it's only to think about where we will go, not to sit down and stop. The past was in your hands. That's almost a depressing thought. Here's another thought. The future is in your hands as well. I have hope in your future, do you?

I have hope!
Jerry Rea