**THREE WORDS (from Delton Porter, first preached on October 5, 1952)**

Three words: **retrospection, introspection, and prospection**. Describe them.

**1. Retrospection** – to look backward; contemplation of the past. ***Have you done your best?***

a. It is sometimes good to look back (**Deuteronomy 32:7; Job 8:8**).

(1) There are many good things in the past. Study of history and the Bible is looking back.

(2) God told Israel over and over to “remember.” Israel was to remember the Sabbath and Passover (**Deuteronomy 24:18, Exodus 12:4, 20:8**).

(3) In the New Testament we are to “remember” (**Ephesians 2:11, Revelation 2:5**); The Lord’s Supper (**1 Corinthians 11:25**); Peter (**2 Peter 1:12-15**).

(4) It is good to review the gospel; our lives.

**2. Introspection** – to look within; self-examination; appraising ourselves; taking stock.

a. We should estimate our strength and weakness: our mental abilities and mental weakness; our good habits and our bad habits. ***Do we see indifference or wrong doing?***

b. The gospel requires a looking within (**1 Corinthians 11:28, 2 Corinthians 13:5, 2 John 8**). Do not compare ourselves with others; rather compare ourselves with God’s Word.

c. Introspection is too rare a process.

(1) How would our souls look if we had a photograph? Would we be ashamed; would it make us blush for our friends to see it? Or would it look pleasing to God?

d. How is introspection accomplished?

(1) We look into the mirror to see our faces; we look into the gospel to see our heart (**James 1:23-25**). ***Have we been doing all that we could do?***

(2) Our hearts may not be right (**Acts 8:21**).

**3. Prospection** – looking ahead; looking forward.

a. We must not linger too long on the past. We might be tempted to go back or we might become overwhelmed with what we have done and have been forgiven of.

(1) Israel and the flesh pots (**Exodus 16:3**); Lot’s wife (**Luke 17:32**).

(2) Judas (**Matthew 27:3-5**); the sinner (**2 Corinthians 2:6-7**).

(3) We are to look forward (**Luke 9:62, Philippians 3:13-14**).

b. It carries the idea of purpose and planning.

(1) I should try to see myself 10, 20, 50 years from now. Determine what I want to be then.

(2) Planning is necessary in order to be successful; the builder (**Luke 14:28**), farmer (**James 5:7**), etc.

(3) It is good for individuals and our congregation to have plans for the future; some objectives. Spreading the gospel, home studies, encouraging brethren we support, encouraging brethren by visiting gospel meetings, inviting neighbors, friends, colleagues, classmates to our assemblies or to a Bible study; having brethren and friends in our homes. ***Will you and I do our part?***

**CONCLUSION**

1. Look away from the world like Moses (**Hebrews 11:24-27**).

2. The Hebrew writer (**Hebrews 12:1-2**); Paul looked to the crown (**2 Corinthians 4:18, 2 Timothy 4:8**).

Something that occurred to me as I was preparing for this sermon is how we are so blessed that the Gospel of Jesus Christ never ever changes! I have just preached a sermon that is based on a sermon my father-in-law preached 67 years ago and it still applies today. We need to be thankful for the unchangeable nature of God and His Word. Just look around at religious groups today that change every year, let alone every 50 years!

**How about you this morning?**