

An Undaunted Forward Look

Scriptures: Luke 2:36 – 38

Jan. 19th, 2025

I am a Green Bay packers fan and I long for the good old days of Bart Starr and Coach Vince Lombardi. I long for the old days when the Packers were winning World Championships and Super Bowls almost every year. Oh, how I miss those days!

If you are a Patriot fan, you know what I speak about because the Patriots have been in the Super Bowl now 9 out of the last 17 years! WOW! You do not need to long for days like Packer fans. But for others fans – like Buffalo Bill fans or Minnesota Viking fans who made it to the Super Bowl four times but did not win one or Cleveland Brown fans who have never been to the Super Bowl – You are still looking forward to a time when your team will win a Super Bowl!

Let us talk today about a woman who is looking forward to the future, an undaunted looking forward – Let us talk about Anna from the Gospel of Luke.

Do you ever find yourself reminiscing about the ‘good old days’? Anna was an elderly widow who did not live in the past, she was a forward looking woman and she was undaunted in looking forward. Anna was widowed early in life and she was childless. She may have felt purposeless and destitute with all that happened to her. But Anna’s life was dedicated to serving God.

One day while fasting and praying in the temple, Anna was privileged to see the infant Jesus. Anna encountered what she had longed for so long! Anna encountered the Savior. Anna encountered the Messiah. She immediately began to praise God and give thanks to God

for this blessed experience. Her undaunted forward looking was fulfilled.

Anna then passed along the good news of this child to those who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem. Anna did not pass a single person without telling them about her encounter with Jesus. (Re-enact)

When was the last time you shared the good news of Jesus? When was the last time you were like Anna and you did not let a single person pass by without telling them about Jesus? When was that?

One year at CYF Conference camp at Nordmont Christian Camp we did 'The Anna Experiment'. At Key Note each morning I would play on the boom box the song 'The Future Is So Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades'. I would then lead the youth in a discussion about evangelizing and I shared our plan that on Thursday of our week we were going to a local amusement park for our off-site trip to have a good time and do the experiment.

The experiment was this – each camper was given a cheap pair of sunglasses and sometime during their day at Knoebels Grove Amusement Park, each camper had to tell someone they did not know this – *The Son, Jesus Christ, is so bright in my life that I have to wear shades!* And they had to share at supper at the Park the reaction of the person they told this too.

At supper, over half of the campers said the person they talked to had a positive reaction; in fact some of the people thanked them and blessed them for sharing. A smaller group said the person they shared with had no reaction and seemed to ignore them. One camper said the person they shared with had a negative reaction and told them to keep their opinion to themselves!

This how sharing one's faith can be – many positive reactions, some neutral reactions, and maybe even a negative reaction.

I hope you would be honest with me and say that I have shared about Jesus each and every Sunday here at the church, but how about you? When was the last time you shared the good news of Jesus?

Anna set as good example for us to follow. We need to be future oriented as we seek to serve our God. We need to be undaunted in looking forward. While reminiscing can be meaningful, we cannot dwell on the past. The Bible is filled with many wonderful promises regarding the future. We should be motivated by the hope that Jesus' promises instill within us. We should be busy about God's business so that our future will look bright. We should be about worshipping, witnessing, and serving others with an undaunted forward look.

I have to be honest with you; I have been looking at the past a lot recently! I have reflected on my past of 30 years in pulpit ministry. I have been remembering our time together. We need to be forward looking!

This church needs to be future oriented as you seek to serve God. You need to be undaunted in looking forward. While reminiscing can be meaningful, you cannot dwell on the past. You should be motivated by the hope that Jesus' promises instill within you. This church should be busy about God's business so that your future will look bright. You should be about worshipping, witnessing, and serving others with an undaunted forward look.

So my friends, look to the future, be undaunted in looking forward because the future is truly bright for you and us!

Let me read to you the first verse of the song 'The Future is so Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades':

I study nuclear science I love my classes I got a crazy teacher
He wears dark glasses Things are goin' great
And they're only getting' better I'm doin' all right
Getting' good grades the future so bright!
I gotta wear shades I gotta wear shades!

Now let me share the first verse of the song 'The Future is so Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades' with some changes:

I study the Bible I love my prayer time
I got a glorious Savior My preacher wear's dark glasses
Things are goin' great and they're only getting' better
I'm doin' alright Gettin' stronger in faith
The future's so bright I gotta wear shades I gotta wear shades!

Let us pray:

Faithful God, keep this church's mind on your promises. Help this congregation be undaunted in looking forward to the bright future you have in store for them. AMEN.