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PRESENTS

# *My Personal Notes . . .*

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Ed Smithson, Editor

## **GOING BACK**

Last month I decided I would make a trip to Missouri and Oklahoma to visit supporters and friends of the radio work that I do. I had not done that in a long time and I am not getting any younger.

I decided to “take it easy” on the trip so I spent the night at McAlester, Oklahoma on the way. Now McAlester is a familiar place to me in some ways. I was raised on a farm 15 miles west of there and built at least three church buildings in the area when I was in the building business.

I arrived there shortly after noon so I had time and decided to drive out to the old place. The first fourteen years of my life were spent there. I had taken the kids by there in the mid 60’s and had been there in the mid 70’s but not since then.

Things change! Man O man do they change! The house in which our closest neighbor lived, the nicest one in the neighborhood, was gone. Just the old fence around the yard, grown up in weeds was all that was left. The last time I saw our old house it was being used for a hay barn. Not now! It is completely gone. Not far from where it stood there was a nice, large brick home. The old farm has been cut up into acreages and houses of various kinds and mobile homes placed on them.

I decided to go by the old school house, just a mile and a half from where we lived and the community well, about 200 yards from the school house. I was surprised to find not even a hint of the schoolhouse or where it was and the same with the community well. There was no evidence it had ever existed.

Well, to be blunt, it was a disappointing trip. Nothing was the same. Landmarks had changed, and although I knew where I was, nothing was like it was when I left there sixty some years ago.

All my life I have heard the statement made, "YOU CAN'T GO BACK." Of course most rules of such nature do not apply 100 percent of the time. But there is wisdom in the statement.

When the apostle Paul wrote, "... but one thing I do, **forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before. I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.**" (Philippians 3:13-14) he was talking about divided attention. We need to keep our goal in mind and not waste time on the past.

But there is another lesson that must be learned, "YOU CANNOT CHANGE THE PAST AND YOU CANNOT LIVE IT OVER." I have known folks who tried. They made some great mistake in judgment in the past and they are forever trying to change it. IT SIMPLY CANNOT BE DONE.

While occasionally it might be desirable to live some things of the past in our memories, NOTHING CAN BE CHANGED.

That is one of the reason forgiveness is such a great thing. When we obey Christ, we do not have to be concerned with the past, for its mistakes, its wrongs, its sins are obliterated. "**For I will be merciful to their iniquities, And their sins will I remember no more.**" (Hebrews 8:12)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Smithson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

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