Dead branches

But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:13,14

The chief worries of life arise from the foolish habit of looking before or after. As a patient with double vision from some transient unequal action of the muscles of the eye finds magical relief from well-adjusted glasses, so, returning to the clear bin ocular vision of to-day, the over anxious student finds peace when he looks neither back ward to the past nor forward to the future. William Osler – A way of Life

Just outside my office, there is a lovely climber that produces tufts of pink blossoms. During the season of flowers, the plant is a favourite haunt for scores of honey bees, butterflies and other insects of various shapes and sizes looking for nectar. Watching the flowers and the bees was a favourite pastime of mine – a pretty scene of beauty and harmony.

The rains were pretty heavy this year, and one day, I was dismayed when I looked outside the balcony only to see that the climber had fallen down. This had never happened before. The reason was not hard to fathom. There was a huge mass of dead leaves and branches that had soaked in the rain and had become heavy. Finally, the burden became too much to bear and the whole mass just collapsed from its support. The dead leaves and branches had been hidden from view by the fresh leaves until now – I had never noticed them before.

What an apt metaphor for our lives. Beware of holding on to the dead things of our life. Hurtful experiences, unforgiven people, regrets, bitterness and painful memories in the past – these are things we hold on to and brood over from time to time. The past is dead and gone, but if we hold on to it, things accumulate slowly. Similarly the future does not exist except in our minds and anxiety concerning the future is also a dead accumulation. Everything will appear to be fine in fair weather, when things are going well, when the sun is shining. But when the season turns gloomy and difficult, the dead things of our life can become burdensome and can be so overwhelming that they pull you down from what supports you. It is high time we did a good spring-cleaning of our lives and do it regularly, daily even. Get rid of the past – the hurts and regrets, forgive and let go, do not hold on to bitterness and vengeance. The only things from the past that we need to hold on to are good memories and what we have learnt from unpleasant and difficult circumstances – these are the only life-giving things worth keeping. The rest simply need to go.

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you¹. Do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will worry about itself ². ¹1 Peter 5:7, ²Mathew 6:34

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