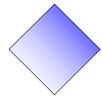


The Voice of Truth



December 31, 2017

BIBLICAL NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

BY JIMMY PETTIGREW

Another year passes and we make aware of our most precious, fragile gift: time. Benjamin Franklin wrote "Dost thou love life? Then waste not time, for that is the stuff that life is made of." Our use of time determines success or failure. Surely it is fitting that we make some Biblical new year's resolutions to direct us into the future. Let us look at the word "resolutions" for this article.

1. Let us resolve to stay in the (R) Race (Hebrews 12:1). In this race, we must be able to take it and not give up. Paul said, *"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run ..."* (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). We need to get rid of everything that would slow us down or hold us back, or detour us from running the race of our Christian life. Stay in the race!

2. Let us resolve to stop making (E) Excuses (Luke 14:16 ff). A common practice among men is that of excuse-making for their failure to do their duty. Many in the churches take lightly the command to come together for worshipping God. So they make plans as these three did in (Luke 14:16 ff), and use excuses why couldn't assemble with the saints (Matthew 6:33; Hebrews 10:25). The Master was angry with the three, and all who would lightly consider His generous offer. Stop making excuses, and do your best!

3. Let us resolve to be good (S) Soldiers for Christ (2 Timothy 2:3). This army is made up of all volunteers. Our enlistment began when by faith (Hebrews 11:6) we repented (Luke 13:3) of our sins, confessed (Matthew 10:32-33) the name of our Commander in Chief (Hebrews 2:10) and was buried into Him for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:1-4; Galatians 3:27). As a result, one is in subjection to God's will, a member of the spiritual army of God. As soldiers in the Lord's army we need to *"Fight the good fight of faith"* (1 Timothy 6:12). Brethren, God has a

right to expect godly living, cheerful giving, Bible reading, praying, loving and faithful attendance of worship services from His soldiers. After all we volunteered! We need to say as Paul, *"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith"* (2 Timothy 4:7).

4. Let us resolve to keep our (O) Obligations to God (Deuteronomy 6:5; 10:12; 11:1; Matthew 22:37). We, as God's children have the obligation, duty, we promised the Lord that we will ever be faithful in all His duties as a part of the bride, the church. We promise to love the Lord, the church, to keep the commandments of the Lord, to walk in all His ways and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart. May I implore you to live true to your word being a Christian!

5. Let us resolve to be united in (L) Love (Ephesians 5:1-2; John 13:34-35). John commands Christians to love one another (1 John 3:11; 4:7, 16). The lack of such love causes grievous harm to the growth and welfare of the body of Christ (Galatians 5:15). If there is one thing that all men know about the teaching of Christ, they know that He emphasized love (John 13:35). How do we know that we truly love the brethren? John says, *"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments"* (1 John 5:2).

6. Let us resolve to be (U) unselfish (2 Corinthians 5:15). Who had died for all, deserves all glory! Christians are bought or redeemed for the Lord's own possession (Ephesians 5:25-26; 1 Peter 1:18-19). One of the most difficult things in life is denying self, and living apart from selfish desires and ambitions, but to be a disciple of Christ it must be done (Matthew 16:24-25). We *"no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God"* (1 Peter 4:2). *"Let no man seek his own"* (1 Corinthians 10:24). The love of Christ constrains us to leave self!

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7. Let us resolve to use our (T) Talents (Matthew 25:14-30). God requires that we use our talents and not only use them, but to use them faithfully. Woe to the brother or sister that shirks their responsibility, for their eternal destiny hangs in the balance. Use them or lose them!

8. Let us resolve to keep our saving (I) Influence (Philippians 1:27). The conversation (manner of life) of the Christian be as cometh the Gospel. The manner of life of the Christian will be either a real asset or a significant liability to the cause of Christ. The conduct of the Christian should adorn the doctrine of God (**Titus 2:10**). Adorn means to beautify. The life of a faithful Christian reveals the beauty of God's will and way. There is nothing more impressive than the influence of a pure Christian life. Show the world what a Christian is (**Matthew 5:13-16**)!

9. Let us resolve to be (O) Orderly. Orderly means a soldier assigned to perform services. We are soldiers in the Lord's army, and we need to be doers, not hearers only (**James 1:22**). It is absolutely essential that we, being followers of Jesus, emulate His example in doing the will of our heavenly Father (**John 4:24**). God pronounces a blessing upon all those who both hear and do His will (**Revelation 22:14**).

10. Let us resolve to be truly a (N) New person in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). We are new in Christ; the old sinful

self has been put to death (**Romans 6:6**). The old man is the sinful man, a servant of sin (**Romans 6:17**), but in Christ we are new people! The new man is "created in righteousness and true holiness" (**Ephesians 4:24**). A new man is indeed a Christ-like man (**Colossians 3:10**). Are we Christ like? Do people see a difference between the old you and the new you (**1 Peter 4:4**)?

11. Let us resolve to (S) Support this congregation! I love the church of our Lord! Have you ever wondered just what you could do to support, to help this congregation be what God desires for it? We can support, help this congregation by:

- A. Living pure lives.
- B. Giving the men of this congregation support.
- C. Promoting love and unity.
- D. Never bringing shame to this congregation.
- E. Giving as God as commanded.
- F. Doing the best you can for the cause of Christ.
- G. Attending every service.
- H. Putting God first.

What are you going to do with this new year God has given you? •

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Has:

- One Builder – Jesus Christ (**Matt. 16:18; Eph. 3:9-11**)
- One Purchaser – Jesus Christ (**Acts 20:28**)
- One Head – Jesus Christ (**Eph. 1:22-23**)
- One Savior – Jesus Christ (**Eph. 5:23**)
- One destiny – eternal salvation (**Eph. 5:23**)

IS:

- The spiritual body of Christ (**Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23**)
- The kingdom of Christ (**Matt. 16:18-19; Heb. 12:28**)
- The depository of those saved (**Acts 2:47**)
- One body, not many bodies (**Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23**)
- One way to be added to the church:
- One must believeth that Christ is the Son of God (**Jno. 8:24**)
- One must repent of sins (**Lk. 13:3**)
- One must confess that Christ is the Son of God (**Rom. 10:9-10**)
- One must be baptized into Christ (**Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:26-27**) •

“GOD’S POINTED QUESTION”

BY JARROD JACOBS

When studying the book of Jonah, we often focus upon the actions of Jonah as he runs away from God (chapter one), then runs toward God (chapter two), runs with God (chapter three), and finally runs ahead of God (chapter four). There are numerous sermons and articles that could be produced from this book, often called “the gospel of the Old Testament.” No doubt, a very important lesson we learn is the “type and antitype” Jesus taught when He compared His upcoming death, burial, and resurrection with Jonah’s being swallowed up and three days later, and released by the great fish (**Matt. 12:40**). In this article, however, I want us to focus upon **Jonah 4:11**, and make some applications to ourselves as we begin a new year.

God’s Pointed Question

The book of Jonah ends with God’s pointed question: *“And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?”* (**Jon. 4:11**). This question ends the book of Jonah rather abruptly. Remember that the fourth chapter of Jonah records Jonah running ahead of God as he becomes angry when he sees God showering His abundant mercy upon the penitent people of Nineveh (**Jon. 3:10-4:2**). Yet, this was what God intended the whole time! He wanted these folks to repent while there was still a chance for them (**II Pet. 3:9**)!

When we understand the historical background of Jonah, perhaps we can see why someone like Jonah would run away from God’s commands, and then be angry when the people repented. Yet, he should have been happy to see these people repenting and humbly turning to their creator (**Jon. 3:7-9**). Sadly, Jonah did not want this to happen. He said, *“O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarsish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil”* (**Jon. 4:2**). Therefore, God “prepared” a gourd, a worm, and an east wind (just as He “prepared a great fish,” **Jon. 1:17**) in order to teach Jonah a valuable lesson about true love. As well, this teaches us upon whom God bestows His highest honor (**Jon. 4:6-8, 11**).

Jonah’s Problem

The problem with Jonah was that he was focused upon the wrong things during this time! This is evident as we

read the book of Jonah and see that the only time in this entire book when it was recorded that he was “*exceeding glad*” was while sitting under the gourd (**Jon. 4:6**)! He was not happy with an important event like seeing the population of a city the size of Nineveh turn to the Lord (**Jon. 4:1**)! The only thing that pleased him was the gourd! Therefore, God asked him the question from **Jonah 4:11** that we cited above.

God let Jonah know that his mindset was wrong. In **Jonah 4:11**, God leaves Jonah sitting beside a wilted gourd in the hot sun, to ponder the love, grace, mercy, patience, and kindness of God for the lost. Jonah readily confessed that God was merciful and loving (**Jon. 4:2**). Yet, he was upset when God took the opportunity to exercise His love, kindness, mercy, and patience toward Nineveh. So, God let him “sit and stew” for a while on the eastern side of Nineveh (**Jon. 4:5, 9-11**)! In like manner, perhaps it would be good for each of us to sit under Jonah’s wilted gourd for a while and contemplate the truth of God and His character!

Applications We Can Make To Ourselves In 2016.

God’s love, grace, mercy, kindness, and patience have not wavered in the passing years since Jonah was alive. All of these wonderful attributes of God continue to this good day! In the Bible, we read, *“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever”* (**Heb. 13:8**). Jesus is consistent and constant, and ever-faithful to us. This is true for the Father as well! In fact, the sentiment of **Jonah 4:2**, *“...thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.”* is expressed in the greatest degree when we read of the love God expressed for this world in sending His Son to die upon the cross for our salvation (**Jn. 3:16**). Truly, no greater sacrifice was given, no greater gift was offered, and no greater degree of love was expressed than when the Son of God was sent to Calvary (**Rom. 5:8**).

Knowing that Christ died to save sinners (**Lk. 19:10; I Tim. 1:15**), and that *“all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”* (**Rom. 3:23**), it is apparent that those of us who are saved from our sins need to now go out and look for other lost souls so that they can be saved, too (**Mk. 16:15-16; Heb. 5:12-14; II Tim. 2:2**)!

It is a fine thing to appreciate and thank God for His

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many spiritual blessings, those "gourds" that have come from God and provide us with comfort and hope in this life (**Eph. 1:3**). Yet, let us not lose focus as Christians to the point that we become complacent, or become lazy toward the lost souls who need saving! Let us not be like Jonah, and display an attitude where we decide who is and is not worthy of salvation.

If we follow in the footsteps of Christ in 2016 (**I Pet. 2:21**), we will be looking out for lost souls (**Lk. 19:10**), and

show true love for their souls. This is the love that motivates us to teach them the truth, just as someone showed proper love toward our souls and taught us the truth (**Matt. 7:13-14**).

God spared Nineveh for a reason. In like manner, He spares us for a reason, today (**Rom. 2:4; II Pet. 3:9**). Let us therefore, thank God for the love, grace, mercy, kindness, and patience He shows to us on a daily basis, allowing us to be saved today. Let us also be ready to show others the way to salvation in 2016. *Credit: The Old Paths - 1/3/16 ♦*

HAPPY 2016!

BY JARROD JACOBS

We have now entered a new year. 2016 has arrived, and with it come the possibilities and potential that belong to the new year. Just as the Lord began a new year with the Israelites (**Ex. 12:1-2**), so we now have a new year to use to the glory of God. I wish to take this time to wish all of our dear readers a great year in 2016. No, we don't know what the future holds (**Prov. 27:1; Jer. 10:23**), but we can know the One who holds the future (**Isa. 46:9-10, 48:3, 5; Acts 15:18**). Let us spend 2016 in God's word (**Eph. 3:4**). Let us learn God's truth (**Jn. 17:17**) and become a Christian if you're not one (**Mk. 16:16**). For those who are Christians, determine now to make 2016 the year you bring someone else to Christ (**Matt. 28:20; II Tim. 2:2**).

So far as this church is concerned, we have a lot of things planned for 2016. Are our members here excited for the new year? I am! One thing coming up this year is that we will have another preacher-trainee in our ranks! Brother Joel Raulerson has agreed to come to Caneyville and begin training with us in 2016! We are excited at this opportunity.

ville in all the years I have known this group is that this church is very interested in evangelism. We want to follow the New Testament example and spread the gospel to the world in every avenue we can (**I Thess. 1:8; Rom. 1:8, 16:19; I Tim. 3:15**)! This includes training men to become preachers and sending them out to preach the gospel in a "full-time" capacity.

Certainly, we are thankful to God for this open door. Let us remember to keep this and our other evangelistic works in our daily prayers (**Jas. 5:16; II Thess. 3:1; Col. 4:3**)!

I am thankful to God and to many friends and brethren for getting us through 2015! There have been many blessings this past year and many tears, but through it all, God is, and He shows us what is most important (**Matt 6:19-21**).

God bless you and may those reading this have a blessed 2016! *Credit: The Old Paths - 1/3/16 ♦*

One thing that has stood out in my mind about Caney-

What sort of church would the
Lord's church be, if every member
Were just like me? ♦

ABOUT THE HILLCREST CHURCH OF CHRIST

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SCHEDULE OF ASSEMBLY

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com