

Another New Year

Barry Mannilo sang a song one time about the new year, saying that it was not all that big a deal. "It's just another New Year's Eve, another nite like all the rest, let's make it the best." It was kind of a sad song because it was comfort for those who don't get to enjoy the parties or who are lonely or who have memories that make them sad at this time of the year.

I think I like what Paul said about the new year best.

Philippians 3:12-14 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but [this] one thing [I do], forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (KJV)

Maybe that wasn't about the new year, but it makes for a good lesson about the new year, don't you think? In those verses he talks about past, present and future. He talks about what has been and what we do with it now and what plans we need to have for the future.

This can be a sad time, but it can also be a time of challenge a time to refresh, to restart and go at life another time from a different direction. Our past isn't perfect, so why not learn from that and make our future better, individually and congregationally.

So, this morning, I want to give you some information on how we can do that.

#1 First, Leave the past where it is. Keep it there whatever it is.

A. Our mistakes--

1. Paul's, my own.

2. Repent, if need be, like Simon the sorcerer in Acts 8

3. Forget it like God has done for us

a. **Acts 22:16** And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and **wash away thy sins**, calling on the name of the Lord. (KJV)

b. **Luke 24:47** And that repentance and **remission of sins** should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. (KJV)

REMISSION---Letting them go, as if they had never happened.

B. Others' mistakes--

1. Help them repent--Matthew 18

2. Forget it--NIV--1 Corinthians 13:5--keeps no record of wrongs

C. Our accomplishments--

Use them, but don't relish in them, don't rub peoples noses in them. Use them to be successful now and in the future. Remember the past is over. It's history. A past success doesn't do us any good unless we do it again. Afraid you'll fail this time?

But also remember what Paul said about his accomplishments:

Philippians 3:7-8 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things [but] loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them [but] dung, that I may win Christ, (KJV)

#2 Second, Keep making plans now for the future.

A. Counting costs

1. **Luke 14:25-33** And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, 26 If any [man] come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. 27 And whosoever doth

not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have [sufficient] to finish [it]? 29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish [it], all that behold [it] begin to mock him, 30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. 31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. 33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. (KJV)

2. What is your future worth? financially, spiritually?

3. Can you afford to just let things go as they are? What will it cost you if you don't make a change?

B. Setting goals

1. What are you doing to become purer in heart?

2. What are you doing to become closer to God or his family?

3. What are you doing to bring someone else to God?

C. Being prepared

1. You know what it means to be unprepared. All of us have had that experience a time or two in our lives and we know it's not something good.

2. Unprepared when you have a flat, when you blow a fuse, when you get in the shower.

3. What about being unprepared when someone asks for a reason for the hope that is in you?

4. What about being unprepared when you face God?

5. Many of us know the stories in **Matthew 25** where 10 virgins waited for the bridegroom. Five were prepared, five were not and were left outside of the gate. Who wants to be left outside the gate? Or like the one talent man, or like the goats on the left hand of God?

We need to be prepared. We need to consider whether it is worth being unprepared before God.

#3 Third, Keep on plugging (why?).

A. Because we made promises

1. To God, To ourselves, To others: Marriages--too many marriages break up because one or the other or both were not willing to keep their promise--"to love for better or for worse." As Christians we have that same promise to love others for better for worse.

2. This is plainly and simply being dependable, responsible, reliable, trustworthy: Jesus made it clear that when we say we will do something, it must be done. **Matthew 5:37** "let your yes be yes and your no be no."

B. Because God made promises to us

James 1:12 Blessed [is] the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. (KJV)

C. Because it won't be as long as you think.

1. We tell our children that. "Are we there yet?" is the famous car riding child's statement.

2. So Peter tells us:

2 Peter 3:8-15 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day [is] with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11 [Seeing] then [that] all these things shall be dissolved, what manner [of persons] ought ye to be in [all] holy conversation and godliness, 12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. 15 **And account [that] the long-suffering of our Lord [is] salvation;** even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; (KJV)