

PULPIT NOTES

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AFTER ANOTHER REVOLUTION

Spanning cultures, the length of a year is determined by the time it takes for the earth to revolve around the sun. The sun is the dominate body in our solar system comprising more the 99 percent of the solar system's mass. The sun is 330,000 times the mass of Earth. The sun's absolute magnitude (the brightness it would appear to have at a standard distance of 10 parsecs – 32.6 light-years) is only 4.6, which is near the limit of naked-eye visibility. The sun appears bright to us because it is the closest star to us lying at an average distance of 92,957,000 miles. Roughly, there are 365.2422 days in one year.

That time has passed; another year has come and gone. In that year we made mistakes. In that year we made some steps forward. We wept and we laughed. Once more we have gone around the sun and a new year is upon us. There is much to consider with this fresh beginning. **Let us face the new year considering reflection, relationships, resolve, restorations, and responding.**

- I. **REFLECTION.** Psalms 119:59 “I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.”
 - A. **IS LIFE OFF CENTER?** The life that runs smoothly must be centered around spiritual values, as the hub is to the wheel. If anxieties seem to crowd in from all sides, stop and think. Around what is your life revolving? Around self? If so, it is off center and frustration will naturally follow.
 - B. **IS TOO MUCH EMPHASIS BEING PUT ON MATERIAL THINGS?** If so, then fretful moments are sure to come. In our day when material blessings are almost a curse, some have been led to believe that happiness will come packaged and delivered in certain material or “social status” boxes. What a relief it is when one fully learns the lesson taught by Christ: “A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15). The real crises in life are not over material things.
 - C. **CHECK THE CONSCIENCE DEPARTMENT.** No person is happy when he is living below what he knows to be right.
- II. **RELATIONSHIPS ARE IMPORTANT.**
 - A. The epistles of the New Testament not only give us sound words on great theological themes (omnipotence of God, grace, mercy, judgment, etc.), but also profound instruction on normal day-to-day living. It is not enough to know of the glory of God and his great sacrificial love if I remain at odds with my brother. We find the great theologian, Paul, emphasizing that even miraculous powers of speaking in tongues, prophecy, and understanding all mysteries is but nothing if one does not have love (1 Corinthians 13). Even in the “Sermon on The Mount,” Jesus stresses that we should not be angry with our brother without cause (Matthew 5:22) and that reconciliation with our brother is more important than bringing a gift to the altar (Matthew 5:24).
 - B. Why is it that most people go through life being able count on only one hand the number of real friends that they have? You cannot afford to lose one friend.
 - C. To make a relationship work one:
 1. Needs to be forward looking.
 2. Needs to be backward forgiving.
 3. Needs to be presently supporting.

- D. One secret to a lasting relationship is to love the complete person. You have to take their good and their bad. I did not say, “agree with,” but “take.” Realize that the bad is a part of the total package. I have heard some say, “If you knew me better, you would not have such high praise of me.” I think more highly of people than they think of themselves. I cannot love part of a person. I can love part of what they do and not another part, but I cannot love part of the person. I must take the person as a whole. Therefore, if one is a friend, the “badness” does not jeopardize what really matters. I, also, am not perfect.
- E. **CHOOSE NOT TO REMEMBER.** If we are to get along, we must actively choose not to remember. Remembering is good in a court of law, but holding a grudge:
1. Colors present relationships - like wearing pink glasses.
 2. Embitters the soul.
 3. Prevents honest friendship/love.
 4. Festers and grows more rancid.
 5. Effects others outside the immediate relationship.
 6. Contaminates the soil into which the new seed is sown. It is like entering a relationship with old baggage.
- III. **RESOLVE.** (Vow, pledge, promise, affirmation, conviction, decision, purpose, determination). This I will do.
- A. Not only is it right, it is **profitable to make vows**. Vows, however, must be kept.
1. Numbers 30:2 “If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.”
 2. Deuteronomy 23:21-23 “When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. 22 But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. 23 That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform; even a freewill offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the LORD thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.”
 3. 1 Samuel 1:11 “And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.”
 4. Ecclesiastes 5:4-5 “When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. 5 Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.”
 5. Jonah 2:9 “But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.”
- B. Esther is a perfect example of making a decision to do that which is right and **sticking to that decision**. Esther 4:16 “Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.”
- C. **TRAITS OF A DETERMINED PERSON.**
1. **Goal-oriented** (Philippians 3:13-14). You can hear the resolve in the Apostle Paul’s voice when he says “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, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”
 2. **Sacrificial** – will give up anything to achieve the goal – Phil 3:8 (KJV) “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.”
 3. **Unrelenting in the pursuit** – tireless. Heb 3:14 (KJV) “For we are made partakers of

Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;" Gal 6:9 (KJV) "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

4. **Perseveres through hardships.** 2 Tim 2:3 (KJV) "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." James 5:10 (KJV) "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience."

IV. RESTORATION. Often there is mending that must be done.

- A. Abigail saw the **need of mending** when she came to King David with her gifts (1 Samuel 25:18-19).
- B. We might need to **mend broken relationships**: parent and child; husband and wife; brother with brother and sister with sister.
- C. The Prodigal Son is perhaps the clearest example of one seeing the **need of being restored** to his father (Luke 15:17).
- D. It cannot be successfully denied that Christians who were once faithful can lose their right standing with God and are in need of being restored.
 1. Matthew 13:18-23 Some seed fell on stony ground. The interpretation is that the seed began to grow but the plant was soon choked out.
 2. Hebrews 6:4-6 Some crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh.
 3. Hebrews 12:14,15 A root of bitterness may spring up.
 4. Acts 8:18-20 Simon the sorcerer soon fell away.
 5. Galatians 5:1-7 We can fall from grace. Remember, one can not fall from something that he did not have to begin with.
 6. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 We can believe in vain.
- E. Some need to be restored because of their **hearts**.
 1. The prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) set his affection on things in a far country.
 2. James says (4:4) that friendship of the world is enmity with God.
 3. Demas was guilty of this. "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed. . ." (2 Timothy 4:10).
 4. Some have coveted after money which Paul says "is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Timothy 6:10).
- F. Some need to be restored because of their **open practice of sin**.
 1. Hebrews 10:24-31 tells of a rejection of the blood of Jesus and his sacrifice by Christians. And remember, it is only through His blood that we can be saved.
 2. Rather than trodding under foot the son of God and insulting the Holy Spirit of grace, we should, "walk in the light, as he is in the light." It is then that we will "have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son" will cleanse "us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).
- G. Some need to be restored because of their **neglect**.
 1. The church at Sardis was guilty of this (Revelation 3:1-2).
 2. "And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Hebrews 6:11-12).

V. RESPOND.

- A. He who hesitates is lost (Acts 26:28).
- B. You must respond to the invitation (Matthew 22:5-9).
- C. The response can be quick, reflective, decisive, timid, hesitant, with assurance or with fear, but the response must be made (Proverbs 21:25; Ecclesiastes 10:18; Matthew 25:26-27).
- D. Consider the response of Peter, Andrew, James, John, Matthew, Saul of Tarsus and others (Matthew 4:18-22; 9:9; Acts 9:6).