



LENEXA EDIFIER

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2017

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

Jim Stauffer

It is time for our annual visit to the New Year's resolution concept. As one comic put it recently, "I have several ideas for my New Year's resolutions, but it really doesn't matter because I won't keep them anyway."

Maybe we should consider some really important resolutions. Some that will matter in a most significant way. Something more substantial than the typical choices.

I am somewhat overweight and that is because I eat too much. Naturally when I think of resolutions, it revolves around eating and my weight. I have been overweight for several years. It clearly is not working. Therefore, I am not going to make that resolution this year.

I don't get enough exercise. That contributes to being overweight. Again, this has existed for several years so I will not resolve to get more exercise even though I continue to hope, in the interest of my health that I will.

Notice how all of these thoughts and any others like them center around myself and my life in the here and now. There must be some things I can commit myself to that would have a broader, more far reaching effect than these.

We have a song we sing in worship titled, "I Am Resolved". The verses speak of things of a greater, broader value than just those things that pertain to our personal health or vanity.

The first verse reminds us to resist the charms of the world and look to things that are of a more noble value. The second verse says we will go to the Savior. We do so in recognition that He is the just One and in

turning to him we must leave the paths of sin. After all, He is the One Who has the words of true life in the hereafter.

The third verse (notice the progression in demand for commitment) speaks of following the Savior, faithful and true each day. Now here comes the part that demands both attention and a sacrificial commitment. It says we must heed what He says and do what He wills. Jesus demands this of His disciples (**Mat. 16:24,25**).

Moving on to verse 4 we now must commit to entering the kingdom as we leave our sinful lives behind. In the process we now must accept the likelihood of having friends opposing us just like our foes do.

But verse 5 shows the complete transformation that must take place in our lives when we have forsaken the world and its charms in favor of serving in the Lord's kingdom. We have accepted the fact that faithful service to the Lord means we must sacrifice our lives to allow Him to live in us and in the process will lose some friendships here on earth. But we are now ready, so we look around us and cheerfully ask the question, "Who will go with me?"

How many will come and be taught by the Bible rather than some theologian with a smooth voice and pleasant ideas? Who is willing to be led by the Spirit, the revealed word of God and walk the heavenly way instead of the earthly?

How many will hasten to Him glad and free? How many of us who claim to be children of God will in reality recognize Jesus as greatest and highest?

Resolutions, anyone?

Holding On To My Seat

It was a most inconvenient time for the air-conditioning to fail. The evening was warm and without being able to open the windows, Bible class was going to be a hot hour. The only help available was found in three box fans placed on the pulpit area in the front facing the audience. They worked hard to circulate the air and bring some level of cool to those gathered.

If you sat on the first four or five rows, you could enjoy the slight breeze created by the fans. Anyone sitting beyond that point would have to strain to even know the fans were working. Now here is the punch line: as hot as it was and uncomfortable for those having to endure the hour without the benefit of air-conditioned cooling, nobody moved out of their seats. Hand fans were working tirelessly and sweat was pouring down the brows of many but "leave my seat" was not in the plans.

The best place to sit in the house was in the first few rows and it was most pleasant. The irony was found in how hard it is to give up something we are accustomed too. Regardless of how hot it may be, we hold on to our seats. There should be a few lessons in this story.

Many people are not interested in the truth as they are satisfied with where they are. A better covenant is offered from a better sacrifice but they are content to remain as they are. They stay because it is familiar or part of their family for generations. "If this religion was good enough for mom and dad, it is good enough for me," they say. The idea of satisfied religion keeps many people from changing their lives and finding the truth.

Our faith is not based upon what the religion of our parents or grandparents believed. *"Faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of God."* (Romans 10:17) The system of belief we follow is the Lord's will and not the pattern of our family. Remaining in the same seat because "this is my seat," will bring little consolation in the day of judgment when we find that it mattered more what Jesus said than our parents.

A second lesson learned is the danger of traditions. A tradition is an established pattern of thought or action. Some traditions are based upon God's will. Paul used this word in **2 Thessalonians 3:6** when he said, *"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walks disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."* Paul also used this word to describe the teaching that is not in harmony with Christ - *"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."* (Colossians 2:8) Jesus condemned the Pharisees and Jews for their traditions. (Matthew 15 and Mark 7)

Tradition can make us sit in the same seat and we will not move - even if it is cooler up front. We seek to establish authority based upon tradition and not upon

the word of God. "This is the way we have always done it," is our plea. There is nothing wrong with doing something the same way for years. A tradition can be healthy but when it becomes law, we have transgressed the commandment of God.

Jesus warned against making the law of man the law of God: *"These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."* (Matthew 15:8,9) Tradition will become our doctrine and we can easily make it to be the law of God when the word of God says nothing about our tradition.

This enters into why we are Christians. Do we believe what we believe because we have always been members of the church of Christ? Is our faith based more upon the faith of our fathers and tradition than the solid foundation of a personal faith? It is easy to be accustomed to our faith and take it for granted with little conviction. Our faith should be based upon a personal conviction of truth and God's will alone.

What I believe is rooted upon the principles of God's word as it is alive in my heart. The faith I possess is mine because of a personal examination of truth. I will not be satisfied with the status-quo in religion but examine every aspect of why I believe what I believe. I will seek change based upon God's will and never remain tied down to the same seat for convenience sake.

Changing our seat spiritually is seeking growth. The Hebrew writer challenges his readers for their lack of growth: *"For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."* (Hebrews 5:12-14)

Be willing to change seats with the spiritual diet given by God in His word. Do not remain the same - grow! We cannot remain where we are through tradition or neglect. Changed people change their lives. And next time it gets hot, come closer - it is always cooler nearer the front.

By Kent Heaton

In The Midst Of A Crooked And Perverse Generation

"Do all things without murmurings and questions; that ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:14, 15).

The Philippine Christians had to serve God in the midst

of a crooked and perverse generation. They were neither the first nor the last to find themselves under such circumstances. In fact, every person who ever served God did so *"in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation,"* and so must we.

Surely no-one would question the perverseness of the generation in which we live. We are surrounded by indecency. Moral filth lines the shelves of the neighborhood store and video shop. Drug scandals rock the sports and entertainment worlds. Christians working in factories are exposed to bad language, filthy stories, and rumors of immorality among their fellow employees. Our children attend schools that are filled with wickedness. We are not overstating the case - this is the world as it really is, a crooked and perverse generation indeed.

We face two possible choices as Christians: **(1)** try to clean up the society in which we live, so that we and our children can serve God without the pressures and evil influences that presently exist. We would not discourage reasonable effort on the part of individual Christians along these lines, but success in any such efforts will be on a small scale. It matters not how hard we work at it, by and large, the world will still be a corrupt world when we die: evil will still exist on TV and in the movies; pornography will still be a problem; corruption will still exist in government; and schools will still have their ungodly influences. Our purpose as Christians is to call people out of darkness through the gospel and into light. We can do that, but efforts to eradicate darkness will for the most part be futile. Fortunately, we have another choice: **(2)** make up our minds to serve God faithfully in whatever environment we find ourselves. This is the only viable choice for the Christian.

It can be done. Consider Noah's generation when *"every imagination of the thoughts of (man's) heart was only evil continually"* (**Gen. 6:5**); or Lot's generation when ten righteous souls could not be found in all of Sodom; or Elijah's generation when wicked Ahab served as king in the wicked nation of Israel; or Daniel's generation when as a young man he found himself in a foreign land facing pressures to eat the king's meats and drink his wines (**Dan. 1:8**); or the apostles' generation when Rome ruled the world and the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees dominated the religious scene. What were these men doing in such crooked and perverse circumstances? They were serving God! That's what they were doing! The point is this: if these could serve God in the midst of the crooked and perverse circumstances in which they found themselves, and if the Philippians could shine *"as lights in the world"* in the midst of their crooked and perverse generation, so can we. Our eternal destiny is not determined by the environment in which we live, but by our own determination to be what we ought to be in whatever environment we find ourselves. We must lay aside our excuses, both for ourselves and our children, and make up our minds to say with Joshua, *"As for me*

and my house, we will serve the Lord" (**Josh. 24:15**).

This we shall do, and with God's help we shall overcome.

by **Bill Hall**

Excuses We Give

Cleveland Reddinger

The dictionary says that an excuse is "a pretended reason, pretext or alibi". When I was in school one teacher defined excuses in this manner: "An excuse is the skin of a reason filled with a lie." I like to use the visualization of a balloon. "It looks solid but when you prick it with the sharp point of truth all you have left is a bunch of someone's hot air." Of course, however you define them or visualize them we all know what they are, because we've all used them at one time or another. And we are not the first to do so. Adam, when confronted by God for his sin blamed the woman, and then ultimately God for the sin he had committed; *"The woman YOU GAVE to be with me gave me of the tree and I did eat."* He was, in effect saying, "See, God, It's ultimately all YOUR fault since if YOU hadn't given me this woman none of this would have happened." (**Genesis 3:12ff**) He blamed her, she blamed the snake and the snake didn't have a leg to stand on.

We give excuses for all sorts of things. We give them for not doing the right thing. We give them for doing the wrong thing. One of our favorite reasons for excuses is for not changing our life when we know that we really SHOULD. "It's just for a little while, not forever." "I've got to get some other things in order first." "The kids take up so much of my time now." Excuse after excuse and life slips by. James tells us, *"What is your life?" For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a time and then vanisheth away."* (**James 4:14**) Don't let excuses rob you of your heavenly reward.

Distinctive Preaching

I cannot conceive of their having ever been a time in all of the history of the church that distinctive preaching was not needed. Perhaps there have been periods of that history in which such preaching was more sorely needed than at other times; but if so, the failure of some to preach a distinctive gospel was responsible for the increase of the need for it. And it may be that there was never a time when the need for distinctive preaching was more imperative than now. We have entirely too much preaching that means nothing, and the need of the hour is for men who have the courage to preach a distinctive message.

by **W. Curtis Porter, Beacon Electronic Edition 8/30/16**

2 Tim. 4:1 *I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.*

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1 Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

Elders Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer

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NEWS AND NOTES: REMEMBER THE SICK IN PRAYERS AND VISITS. JAN PATRICK, L.A. STAUFFER AND STEPHEN KIMKER.

THE FUNERAL SERVICES FOR J R DANIEL WERE CONDUCTED YESTERDAY IN PATTONSBURG, MO.

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS:
CHRISTIAN PARENTING - RON PECK

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS: THE BOOK OF ROMANS - J STAUFFER

SUNDAY SERMON: I DEMAND YOU PROVE THAT!



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10