THE CHALLENGE FOR A NEW YEAR

Text: Rev. 3:19-22

Intro: As we think of a new year approaching, we think of the challenges that we will face in the New Year. What do we want to do and accomplish? Most businesses take a look at the demands and lack of demands for products. As a church we should look at what we want to do. What do we want to accomplish this year for the Lord? The New Year is certainly a challenge that we should accept for the Lord. Jesus said He stood at the door and knocked. He will fellowship with those who open the door of opportunity.

I. THE OBLIGATION FOR A NEW YEAR

A. The presentation
1. We are called upon to present our bodies a living sacrifice for the Lord. Rom. 12:1 We are to sacrifice our will and way for His.
2. We are to make ourselves available to the Lord and His service. The Lord is more interested in our availability than our ability.
3. Certainly we are to glorify God in our body and spirit which are His. I Cor. 6:19,20 They belong to Him and He is deserving of our honor and respect.
4. We must realize that our time is running out. Our lives will soon be over and there is the fact our Lord is going to return very very soon to get His people.

B. The price
1. We have been bought and paid for by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. I Peter 1:18,19 As a redeemed and saved people we need to realize that we owe it all to the Lord and the great price He paid for us.
2. We are redeemed or bought back by the blood that Jesus shed on Calvary for our sins. I Peter 2:24 He was willing to give Himself for us.
3. He sacrificed His life for us that we might have life through Him. John 1:29 At the age of 33 and ½ years of age, He was willing to pay for our sin debt in full.
4. We cannot earn our way to heaven. We cannot merit our way to heaven. We are not saved by our works, but by His wonderful grace. Eph. 2:8,9; Titus 3:5

C. The power
1. The Holy Spirit enables us to make this kind of presentation to the Lord. Acts 1:8 In this passage Jesus told His very first New Testament church, she would receive power from on high. We can do a lot in the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. The Lord can make weak people strong. II Cor. 12:9 We cannot live this kind of life without the Lord's help. We must realize and confess our weakness and inability to do so.
4. When we realize how weak we are and how great His power is we will win a great victory in our lives. Jesus tells us that we can do nothing without Him. John 15:5

II. THE OBEDIENCE FOR A NEW YEAR

A. The Master

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1. Jesus Christ is Lord. We don't make Him Lord, He is Lord. Notice the question He asks in Luke 6:46. If we believe the Word, why don't we act like and live like we believe the Word?

2. As the Lord, He expects us to obey Him as a slave would obey his owner. He is our great and powerful Lord. May we call Him Master and may we act like He is our Master.

3. Paul referred to Himself as a servant and prisoner of Jesus Christ. Phil. 1:1; Phil. 1:1 The Lord had done so much for Paul, he was willing to be confined to His will and work.

B. The members

1. We are to present our bodies a living sacrifice unto the Lord which is our reasonable service. Rom. 12:1 This is not just for preachers. It is for every saved person.

2. We are to keep our bodies under subjection lest we become a castaway. I Cor. 9:27 The Devil will always be working on the flesh and the flesh will always be resisting the Holy Spirit of God in our lives.

3. We ought or we are OBLIGATED or OWE it to the Lord to obey Him. Acts 5:29 Because we are His by creation and redemption He is worthy of our obedience.

4. If every member of our church would obey the Lord and strive to obey the Lord how much greater a church we would be and how much work we could get done for the Lord.

C. The ministry

1. We are to seek His kingdom and righteousness first. Matt. 6:33 The context deals with the daily needs of the saved. If you put the Lord first, the Lord will take care of you.

2. As a saved person I was saved to serve the Lord and live for Him. This is the will of God for my life. If Cor. 5:14,15 If I want to fulfill the Lord's will for my life, I will serve Him.

3. We are to minister to this generation for the Lord. May we carry out His will for our lives. We are to follow the example of the Lord. Read and study Matthew 20:28.

4. The Lord has blessed you with talents and abilities and a mind to use in His service. We can minister to others if we are willing to.

5. The level of your maturity will show in your life. The immature must be ministered to. The mature will minister to others. Ministering to others will be blessed of the Lord.

III. THE OCCUPYING FOR A NEW YEAR

A. The Father

1. God is our Father. Gal. 3:26 He is our spiritual Father because we have received Jesus as our Saviour. As this passage teaches, we are all the children of God by faith.

2. We can address Him as OUR FATHER because He is our Father. Through the New Birth, God has become our Father because we are born of Him.

3. We owe obedience to Him because He is the Father and we are the children. He is the best Father you will ever know. He wants to do more for us than we will let Him do.

4. The Father has a plan for a saved person. He has a place of service. He has a job for us to do. He will give us the opportunity to be used in His service.

B. The faith

1. As a son of God, we are to occupy until the Lord returns for us. He has left us His business to take care of.

2. We are to go into all the world preaching the gospel, baptizing the saved, and teaching them all the commands of the Lord. Matt. 28:19-20

3. We are to depend upon or trust Him with our whole heart to do so. Prov. 3:5,6 It is not what we do. It is what we allow Him to do in your lives.

4. Hebrews 11 teaches us the importance of having faith in God. His plan will work. His provision is enough. His purpose is eternal. His peace is wonderful.

C. The family

1. The Lord gives instructions to the whole family. The wife is to submit to her husband as unto the Lord. Eph. 5:22 Many women will not accept this truth of the Bible, but it is still true.

2. The husband is to love his wife as himself. Eph. 5:22-6:4 We are to love our wives as the Lord loved the church and gave Himself for her.

3. The children are to honor the father and mother that it might be well with them and that they may live long on the earth. Eph. 6:1-3

4. The family unit is in trouble today. Even families that claim to know the Lord, God's plan will always work. We may not work His plan, but that isn't the Lord's fault.

5. The whole family unit needs to examine the Lord's will and way for them to live as a family. If the family unit would live according to the Lord's Word, families would not be in trouble.

IV. THE OPPOSITION FOR A NEW YEAR

A. The Satan

1. The Devil or Satan is our adversary. I Peter 5:8 He stands against us and opposes us. We do not understand how active he is in our lives.

2. He is evil and all of his activity will be evil. He is an enemy and all of his activity will show him to be an enemy. Rom. 5:8 He is in error and all of his activity will show him to be in error. He is always trying to get us to run on empty.

3. Study how Satan works in II Corinthians 11:13-15. He works on our ignorance and he is the master deceiver of all times.

4. Satan will always oppose God and His people and the work they seek to do for the Lord. His major tool is deception.

5. May we realize how powerful and active he is and
seek the Lord's help in resisting him. We have a promise in James 4:7. May we claim it.

B. The sin

1. Sin will be a major obstacle and opposition in the New Year. The Devil wants us to commit sin against God. He will tempt and allure us to do evil. James 1:14, 15

2. As people grow progressively worse, it will influence and affect us. II Tim. 3:13 Someone has said that the most dedicated servant today would have been considered a backslider 100 years ago.

3. We are not to let sin dominate us. We are not to allow it to reign in our mortal bodies. Romans 6:12, 14 Paul teaches us that we have part in not allowing sin to dominate or reign in our bodies.

4. We are to bring our bodies into subjection. I Cor. 9:27 We are to mortify or kill the desires of the flesh. Col. 3:5 We have a say in this matter of sin in our lives.

C. The self

1. As a saved person, we have two natures within us. We have a sinful nature and a sinless nature. The Lord implanted the sinless nature in us when we repented of sin and trusted Him as our Saviour.

2. There is a constant conflict between the two natures in our lives. II Gal. 5:17 Paul described this conflict in detail in Romans 7:14-25. It is real in our lives.

3. We are admonished to yield our members as instruments of righteousness. Rom. 6:13 We must resist the Devil and depend upon and yield to the Lord to do this. We can't do it in our own strength.

4. We are to seek God's kingdom and righteousness first. Matt. 6:33 This is not an easy thing to do. We must make our main business living for the Lord and doing the work in His kingdom.

5. We need the grace and help of the Lord to live the way He wants us to live. He will help us and make us strong as we look to Him. II Cor. 12:9

V. THE OPERATION FOR A NEW YEAR

A. The Saviour

1. Jesus came to give us life more abundant. John 10:10 This simply means He wants us to get more out of life than this world can give to us.

2. Jesus invites us to come to Him for rest and learn of Him for He is meek and lowly in heart. Matt. 11:28-30 The flesh will desire things that are not good for us. They only offer temporary pleasure and joy.

3. Our Saviour and Lord will try to operate on us. He will move on us to do His Work and obey His Word. His Holy Spirit will reprove us of sin, righteousness and judgment. John 16:7-11

4. Jesus will be calling on us and to us every day to live for Him and be His servant. He will remind us often of the blessings and joy of His service.

B. The Spirit

1. The Holy Spirit of God reproves or convicts of sin, judgment, and righteousness. John 16:7-11 We accept the Bible truth of the activity of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

2. The Spirit will be operating on us seeking to produce His fruit in our lives. Gal. 5:22, 23 There is a great difference between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

3. He will convict us of wrong doing and of right doing for the honor and glory of the Lord. This is why we will give an account unto the Lord. He moves us to stop doing wrong and start doing right.

4. His conviction is felt and experienced in our lives. May we yield to Him and His conviction.

C. The servant

1. The saved are called upon to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Look at II Cor. 5:14, 15. Study what Paul wrote in I Cor. 3:9. We were saved to serve the Lord.

2. There is something that you can do for the Lord. There is a job that you can do for Him. The Holy Spirit will implant the desire and longing in your heart to do so. Phil. 3:10

3. Present your body unto the Lord as a living sacrifice. Rom. 12:1 Most of us do not know what it means to sacrifice to the Lord. We think we do, but we do not.

4. Live unto the Lord who loved and died for you. II Cor. 5:14, 15 The Lord deserves your obedience and loyalty. He is worthy of your living for Him.

5. I saw a man in a Book Store and thought he was a preacher. I ask him if he was a preacher. He said, "No, but I am a servant of the Lord."

6. Would to God every saved person would realize and account himself a servant of the Lord.

7. A new year is often a good time to look at your life and determine to serve the Lord. You will start the New Year off right, if you will make this decision.

From Myanmar

I just like to thank you for the Grace Missionary Baptist Church and it's many ministries to me and others. The Sounding Out the Word Ministry is such a part of my life now. I am overjoyed at the extent of your ministry and the fruit you received in letters of people around the world who are helped and dependent on the help you are able to give. I appreciate your books like THE FAMILY---MORALS, THE MASTER, AND ME---THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST and other booklets.

We are very very much impressed by your books here, and also interested about your ministries and your literatures.

Since I have 45 students here please send me some books that we may be benefited by your ministry here.

From Ohio

A preacher friend of mind gave me a copy of your book about ministerial burnout. I have read and re-read it. I found myself all through the book and am now trying to work my way through this problem.

Please send me twenty copies of the book. I want to give them to church families and friends. Send them to the address at the end of this letter. Enclosed is my check to help cover the cost.

Thank you for writing this important book.
THE NEW YEAR
Text: Philippians 3:10-14

Introduction: The New Year stands before each of us as a clean slate or a clean piece of paper. Each of us will make some kind of mark on that slate. Many New Year’s resolutions will be made, but we as Christians should want to be better servants of the Lord in the coming year. Following are some things we might want to purport in our hearts to do in the New Year.

I. BE PARTAKERS Matthew 6:33
   A. In worship of the Lord
   B. In work for the Lord
   C. In witness of the Lord

II. BE PRAYERFUL James 5:16
   A. About our condition
   B. About our commitment
   C. About our choices

III. BE PERSISTENT II Corinthians 9:6-8
   A. In our giving
   B. In our going
   C. In our glory

IV. BE PROFITABLE Romans 12:1,2
   A. To Christ
   B. To the church
   C. To the cause

V. BE POSITIVE Psalms 100:1,2
   A. In serving the Lord
   B. In singing to the Lord
   C. In sharing the Lord

Conclusion: As we enter the New Year, may each of us enter it with a godly determination to serve Him.

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NEW YEAR’S GOALS

A New Year lies ahead.
What will the days bring?
I know our God will guide us,
This knowledge makes me sing.

Shortcomings must be put behind us
And set goals to advance ahead.
Ask God for our sins forgiveness,
Take His word for our daily bread.

May this year, I reach one family,
Just reach their souls for God.
I pray God, this goal to reach,
As through this New Year I trod.

Oh Father, give me wisdom,
May life a witness to be.
That I never miss an opportunity
To tell lost souls about Thee.

Dovie Brown 1619 Sinclair St., Pasadena, TX 77503

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OVERFLOWING NEW YEAR BLESSINGS

Here’s wishing you a Happy New Year
May the blessing cup just over flow
May there be souls for your labor
As down life’s twisting road you go.

May God’s grace be so abundant
Crown each moment of the day
May his love carefully enfold you
So your feet could never stray.
May you find victorious living
For that's how God would have it be
Because he wants you happy
As you travel toward eternity!

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WHY DOESN'T GOD DO SOMETHING?
Text: Hebrews 1:1-3; Isaiah 5:4

Intro: Many today, in the light of how things are going in this world,
are asking this question. Why is it He does not step in and stop all
the bad things about us? Some are even asking, "Is there a God in
heaven?"

But stop! God has done many things and the multitudes have
refused to believe Him. If we do not accept what He has already
done, why should we ask Him to do more?

Note the question in Isaiah 5:4, "What could have been done
more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?"

Note the things He has done in Hebrews 1:1-3.
If we would accept what He has already done, we would see the
loving God has made all necessary provisions, both for this life and
the life that is to come.

WHAT HAS GOD DONE?

I. HE HAS CREATED THE UNIVERSE. Gen. 1:1
   A. Even a child's mind accepts this fact.
   B. Only two ways it could have come into existence.
      1. It could have made its self (unthinkable).
      2. A Divine power fashioned it.
   C. Behind every skyscraper there is an architect.
      1. Where there is design there is proof of a designer.
      2. Very few great things happen by accident.

II. GOD MADE MAN. Genesis 1:27
   A. No discovery of man has ever weakened this fact.
   B. Man was created in the image of God (In the likeness
      of Jesus when He came into the world).
   C. To the man He created, God gave many gifts. Gift of
      memory; of giving attention; Ability to think; to plan;
      The ability to use all his facilities to honor God.
   D. God gave man the freedom of choice. (Apart from this
      God would be wholly responsible for all man's actions.)
      1. God said, “Obey and live; Disobey and die.”
      2. Adam and Eve used their freedom to do wrong.

III. GOD GAVE TO MANKIND A BOOK; THE BIBLE.
   A. For thousands of years it has proven to be the
      inspired Word of God.
   B. Whatever man makes, he can destroy, but he cannot
      destroy the Word of God. Why? Because God gave it.
   C. The harmony of the Book proves it came from God.
      Matthew 24:35
   D. Yes God has done some things.

IV. GOD GAVE HIS SON. John 3:16
   A. Before asking God to do something else, answer one
      question, "What have I done with Jesus?"
   B. Rejection of Christ is the great sin which will damn
      your soul in hell.
   C. The death of Jesus leaves all without an excuse for
      living sin.
   D. Somewhere on the road of life you must face up to
      the fact that in spite of your sins, God loves you.
      Romans 5:8

V. GOD HAS GIVEN US THE HOLY SPIRIT. John 16:7-11
   A. He convicts the sinner. John 16:7-11
VI. GOD GAVE US HIS CHURCHES. Matthew 16:18
A. Made them the pillar and ground of truth. I Timothy 3:15
B. Entrusted them with the two ordinances. I Corinthians 11:2
C. Gave to them a world-wide commission. Matthew 28:18-20
D. Each true church is a sign board pointing to Heaven.
E. Offer a place of service whereby we can glorify the Lord. Ephesians 3:21

VII. HE LET HIS SON DIE FOR YOU. YES FOR YOU! Titus 2:11; Hebrews 2:9
A. Yes His death was personal for you.
B. This is a fact no one can afford to ignore.
Conclusion: Again note the question of Isaiah 54:4. If you had the privilege to ask God to do more, what would you ask Him to do? Would you want a different plan of salvation? If so, what would it be? His promise is still to save all who will come to Him in trusting faith. WHAT WILL YOU DO?

L. Chester Guinn 1410 Palm Ave., Van Buren, Arkansas 72956

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TIES THAT BIND
Text: Colossians 3:12-17

Intro: Key verse-14: “And above all these things put on charity (AGAPE), WHICH IS THE bond of perfectness.”

A. A pastoral epistle or LETTER OF INSTRUCTION for Christian living To SAINTS AND FAITHFUL BRETHREN IN CHRIST AT COLOSSI:
B. Practical admonitions in verses 12,13:
1. Things Christians are to PUT ON:
   a. Mercy, Kindness, Humility, Meekness, Patience, Forbearance, and Forgiveness.
2. There is one SUPERLATIVE CHARACTERISTIC OR ATTRIBUTE of a saved person! Text: “And ABOVE ALL these things...”
   a. Love fulfills all The law. Romans 13:8,10
   b. Love is the EVIDENCE that one is saved. Romans 13:35
3. The text speaks of love as ONE OF MANY THINGS THAT BIND CHILDREN OF GOD TOGETHER. (Heart, Head, and Hands)
4. The Bible mentions CHILDREN OF GOD:
   a. Sitting together in heavenly places: Eph. 2:6
   b. Dwelling together: Psalm 133:1
   c. Working together: I Cor. 3:9
5. Suffering together: I Cor. 12:26
6. Suffering together in prayer: Romans 15:30

I. ALL SAVED PEOPLE HAVE THE SAME DIVINE LIFE!
A. From the point of personal faith in Jesus. Eph. 1:13
B. He that doesn’t have this Spirit does not belong to Jesus and is no child of God.
   1. It is by the Spirit that one is born again into the family of God. John 3:3,5,6,7
   2. This takes place at the point of RECEIVING JESUS BY FAITH. John 1:12,13

C. Jesus said He would be IN US to:
   1. To Comfort: John 14:16,17
   2. To Teach: John 14:26
   3. To Empower for Performance: Acts 1:11
   4. Paul adds to Lead: Romans 8:14

III. ALL SAVED PEOPLE HAVE THE SAME DIVINE NATURE!
A. Before one is saved one is said to be “by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” Eph. 2:3
B. The saved have been born again with a new nature! A spiritual nature!
   1. I John 5:1
   2. John 1:12,13
   3. II Peter 1:4
   4. Called in the Bible THE INWARD MAN. II Cor. 4:16
   5. Which delights to do the things taught by the Lord. Romans 7:22

IV. ALL SAVED PEOPLE HAVE THE SAME DIVINE MARCHING ORDERS! AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING.
A. We have the same promises to encourage us. I Cor. 15:58
B. We enjoy the same assurance.
   1. II Timothy 2:19
   2. Hebrews 13:5,6
3. Philippians 4:19
4. 1 Corinthians 10:13

C. We enjoy the same instructions. II Tim. 3:16,17
D. We have been given the SAME RESTRICTIONS. Romans 13:10; I Cor. 13:4,5

V. ALL SAVED PEOPLE HAVE THE SAME DIVINE MOTIVES.
A. Fear and holy reverence for God and His Word. Eccl. 12:13; I Peter 2:17

B. Love
1. II Corinthians 5:14; John 14:21,23
2. Saving FAITH and LOVE always go together. Colossians 1:4

C. Every saved person POSSESS THIS LOVE IN HIS HEART. Romans 5:5
1. For God, our Father:
2. For Jesus, our Saviour:
3. For the Church, the House of God and Body of Christ:
4. For others who are children in the family of God.
5. For a lost humanity everywhere:

VI. EVERY SAVED PERSON IS HERE FOR THE SAME PURPOSE.
A. To glorify God: Col. 3:23; I Cor. 10:31
B. To bear the image of Christ: Romans 8:29
C. All church members are to EDIFY THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. Eph. 4:12; I Cor. 14:12
D. The Children of God are to STRENGTHEN ONE ANOTHER. Luke 22:32; Hebrews 10:24; 12:12; Phil. 1:14
E. To witness to Jesus and share His gospel to all the world. Luke 24:46-48; Mark 16:15; I Cor. 9:22

D.B. Wright with the Lord in glory!!!

SERIES: BUILDING FOR GOD!
Focus: PATTERN FOR WORSHIP
Text: Nehemiah 8

Introduction:
A. The SUMMERY
1. Of Chapter 7 - This chapter deals with the further organizations which Nehemiah implemented, a register of genealogy and a recognition of the contributors.
2. Of the book.
   a. CHS 1-7 - Rebuilding - building the structure under the leadership of Nehemiah.
   b. CHS 8-13 - Reviving - building the spiritual.
B. The SERIOUS need - A pattern for public Bible worship. A pattern for real revival from God.
C. The SCOPE of this chapter reveals the essential ingredients in a real worship service.

I. THE PREACHER V1
A. The FACT - one vital ingredient for a worship service is that there must be a man sent from God.
   1. One who is called and anointed to preach.
   2. Study the scriptures and you'll see the importance of the preacher.

B. The FOCUS - Consider Ezra
1. A SCRIPTURAL preacher V1
   a. He preached from the Book - Probably the first five books.
   b. Note the cry of the people - BRING THE BOOK.
   c. Note the pinnacles today.
      (1) Emphasis on psychology.
      (2) Emphasis on success.
   d. Note the PATTERN given in this book - V8.
      (1) Read distinctly.
      (2) Gave the sense (meaning)
      (3) Caused them to understand the reading.

2. A STEADFAST preacher - V4
   a. Took his stand on a pulpit of wood for God.
   b. Here - you see the origin of the pulpit
   c. Steadfast men who will take a stand for God.

3. A SPIRITUAL preacher V6
   a. He blessed the Lord
   b. He was not only delivering a sermon to the people - he was involved in worship.
   c. Preaching ought to...
      (1) Bless the Lord!
      (2) Point to the Lord!
      (3) Call attention to the Lord.
   d. He leads them in adoration.

II. THE PEOPLE
A. The FACT - You don't have a worship service without people.

B. The FOCUS -
1. They were an ASSEMBLED people. V1
   a. You can't have a worship unless the people come.
   b. One of the great needs of God's people is to learn the lesson of faithfulness to the service.
   c. The most detrimental thing in the life of any church is unfaithfulness.
   d. Hebrews 10:25: “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is: but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”
   e. Proverbs 25:19: “Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.”
   f. God expects us to be dependable.
   g. Came together as one man - united in purpose.
2. They were ATTENTIVE. V3
   a. Stood for approximately 6 hours and listened.
b. When people are really right with Jesus, they have a hunger for the Word, and the Spirit is in control - the time doesn't mean much.

III. THE PARTICIPATION
   A. The ADMIRATION V6
   B. The AFTERMATH
      1. CONVICTION V6 - on their faces getting right with God.
      2. CONTRITION V9 - They wept when they heard the words of the law.
      3. CONCERN V10
         a. The result of truly hearing the Word and worshipping will be a concern for others.
         b. When they obeyed and complied with the Word of God there was much gladness. VS 11-18
         c. Note specifically verses 10 & 17b

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COUNTRIES THAT WE ARE MAILING INTO NOW ARE:
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ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE: Please prayerfully considering paying for the printing of a book!! In 1995, we had two churches pay for books and two individuals pay for books. This enables us to do more books. You might want to honor or remember a loved one in a special way. We can get 5,000 copies of a 50 page book printed for $1,500.00 to $1,800.00. We will be happy to include a page to remember or honor a loved one for you. What a way to remember a loved one and to invest in eternal things. We are mailing material into 49 states and 69 countries. Your gift could help thousands of people come to know the truth of God's Word. We have many preachers who have gone on to glory that have outlines that may not be used again. How sad that is! If God gives His man a sermon, it should live on. It can if more of God's people and churches would seriously consider this challenge. If your church can't pay for the book, ask other churches to help you. The printed Word is leaving tracks all over this old world to God's honor and glory.

A READY DEFENSE
Text: I Peter 3:15

I. WE NEED TO BE READY To DEFEND WHAT WE BELIEVE.
   A. It is ironic that Peter is the one who teaches us this. (Text verse) He knew what it was to deny Christ. But he tells us it is BETTER to be on the Lord's side, to make a stand for Him, no matter what the consequences might be.
   B. Note some other verses showing the need for DEFENSE of our FAITH.
      1. "The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the DEFENSE of the gospel." Phil. 1:16,17
      2. "At my first DEFENSE no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and (that) all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." II Tim. 4:16,17
      3. "Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to CONTEND earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." Jude 1:3

C. If our faith cannot be defended then it is not worthy having.

II. OUR FAITH IS BASED ON EVIDENCE.
   A. Many accuse Christians of having a "blind faith", but that is NOT true. Our faith is based on EVIDENCE, it is an "intelligent faith." Our hearts could not rejoice in something our minds rejects.
   B. Remember this verse? "And you shall KNOW the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32 We must have a knowledge of the truth before it can set us free.
   C. In the Old Testament Isaiah invites us to reason it out in our minds. "Come now, and let us REASON together" says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah 1:18
   D. Our faith rests on the FACTS of the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.
      1. If anyone could prove to us that Christ was not risen, then we would not have the right to have a Christian faith. Paul tells us this in I Cor. 15:14
         "And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith (is) also empty."
      2. One Moslem leader said, "I know many Moslems who have greater faith in Mohammed than most Christians do in Jesus." But it doesn't matter how much faith you have, what matters is WHO you have your faith in. Mohammed is dead. Paul says about Jesus, "For this reason I also suffer these
things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I KNOW whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.” II Tim. 1:12

E. Our faith is NOT a “leap in the dark”, it is a “step into the light.” When we weigh the facts and the scale falls in Jesus’ favor we are enlightened. Then we will all make a choice based on all that truth before us...to BELIEVE or NOT TO BELIEVE.

F. This does not mean that you have to be a seminary professor to defend your faith. William Tyndale put it this way, “A plough boy with the Bible would know more of God than the most learned ecclesiastic who ignored it.”

III. OUR FAITH IS BASED ON EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS.
A. “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were EYEWITNESSES of His majesty.” II Peter 1:16

B. And again in I Peter 5:1, “The elders who are among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder and a WITNESS of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed.”

C. Listen to the way John puts it, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life; the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear WITNESS, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us; that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship (is) with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” I John 1:1-3

D. In the book of Acts, Luke writes, “And we are WITNESSES of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but to WITNESSES chosen before by God, (even) to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God (to be) Judge of the living and the dead.” Acts 10:39-42

E. There are so many witnesses. There is no doubt that Jesus is a man of HISTORY. History is a knowledge of the past BASED ON TESTIMONY.
1. Do you believe that Lincoln lived? Sure, he was one of our presidents.
2. But do you know anyone who has personally met him or who has seen him? No, of course not, he has been dead along time.
3. The only way that we know about Lincoln lived is by the testimony of others.
4. The same rule then applies to Jesus. We know He lived, died, and is risen, because of the many testimonial accounts.

F. This is the difference between Jesus and the many Greek mythology gods. The events in the life of Jesus are applied to a real flesh and blood individual, not some mythological character. Jesus is assigned an actual time and place in history. He is a person whom the writers knew PERSONALLY. “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law.” Gal. 4:4

IV. THEN WHY DO PEOPLE REJECT HIM?
A. IGNORANCE - They simply do not have a knowledge of Jesus and may not care to learn.
Romans 1:18-23

B. PRIDE - It is humbling to acknowledge our sin and repent. Jesus said we must deny self if we are to follow Him.
John 5:40-44

C. IMMORAL LIFESTYLES - The well known atheist Aldous Huxley admits,..."...the philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in pure metaphysics, he is also concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to do..." Those who do not want to change their wicked lifestyle must reject Jesus to avoid His condemnation of their sin.

Conclusion: Those who are willing to do what Jesus tells them will know that He is the Son of God. “If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or (whether) I speak on My own (authority).” John 7:17

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DEVELOPING A PROPER APPROACH TO OUR COMPREHENSION

Text: Philippians 2:13, “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”

I. OUR LESSON TEXT MAKES THREE THINGS VERY CLEAR TO US.
A. God can derive great “pleasure” from your life.
B. God will work in you to reveal what gives Him pleasure.
C. God will work in you to help you do what gives Him pleasure.

II. IF IT IS YOUR DESIRE THAT GOD DERIVE GREAT “PLEASURE” FROM YOUR LIFE, AS PAUL INDICATED HE CAN, YOU MUST DEVELOP A PROPER APPROACH TO YOUR COMPREHENSION.
A. Following are three options.
1. There’s no need for me to discover the things of God on my own because when my pastor or teacher comprehends they can explain it to me.
2. Statistics reveal: (1) You only remember up to 10% of what you hear, (2) You only remember up to 50% of what you see and hear, (3) You remember up to 90% of what you discover on your own!
3. I can’t understand the things of God. Therefore, I won’t even try to comprehend!
4. Based on what we’re told in John 7:17, when you
make a statement like that you’re revealing something about yourself—you’re not “doing” God’s will.

5. I believe God’s Spirit can help me comprehend the things of God so I will dedicate myself to faithful Bible study and prayer.

6. If you settle on this final approach, you have just activated the promise of Philippians 4:13.

II. THEN, AFTER YOU HAVE DEVELOPED A PROPER APPROACH, YOU MUST COMPREHEND WHAT GIVES GOD PLEASURE.

A. The Bible suggests many things that will please God when He observes them in a believer’s life.

1. One very important thing is found in the theme verse for our series which is found in Daniel 12:3.

2. According to this verse, God is very pleased with His people when He is able to use them to “turn many to righteousness.”

3. In fact, God is so pleased with those people that He will cause them to “shine.”

III. ONCE YOU HAVE LEARNED WHAT GIVES GOD PLEASURE, YOU MUST COMPREHEND HOW IT IS ACCOMPLISHED.

A. “Turn(ing) many to righteousness” is a very commendable thing and it pleases God but what is the most effective way to get it done?

1. There are two ways to be used by God to “turn many to righteousness”: “lip evangelism” and “lifestyle evangelism.”

2. Opportunities for “lip evangelism” may be few and far between but opportunities for “life evangelism” are present every moment of the day.

3. Therefore, we must conclude that “lifestyle evangelism” is the most effective way to “turn many to righteousness.”

4. Write a brief paper on the one person in your past whom God has used as a “lifestyle evangelist” to either bring you to Christ in salvation or draw you closer to Him in service and surrender.

5. Throughout the course of this study, I will have only one goal to achieve: to be used of God to present material that will help you DEVELOP A PROPER APPROACH TO LIVING THAT PRODUCES A POWERFUL WITNESS.

REVIEW

A. If you are a child of God, it is possible for God to derive great pleasure from your life.

B. God will reveal what gives Him pleasure and He will enable you to do what gives Him pleasure.

C. One thing that gives God pleasure is to be able to use you to “turn many to righteousness.”

D. The most productive way to do that is to surrender yourself to the work of LIFESTYLE EVANGELISM and allow God to develop within you a proper approach to living that produces a powerful witness.

This is one of the lessons from the book LIFESTYLE EVANGELISM by Muncy Harris. This book covers vital information on LIFESTYLE EVANGELISM. You can write to the address below or call 501-778-1538 to find out the cost and how to obtain the book.

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THE KIND OF REVIVAL WE MUST HAVE

Text: Psalm 85:6

Intro:

A. To revive means to bring back to life.

B. When Israel was revived, the Lord blessed them, but when they sank back into apostasy, the blessings were withheld; so with us.

I. WE NEED A REVIVAL OF PRAYER. II Chron. 7:14

A. One cannot stress prayer enough.

B. When we pray, the blessings are restored.

C. When we pray, the interest in the Lord’s work is increased in us.

II. WE NEED A REVIVAL OF FAITHFULNESS. Rom. 12:1,2

A. Faithful in church attendance. Hebs. 10:25

B. Faithful in promotional work for the church.

C. Faithful in giving to the church.

D. Faithful in our obligations to one another.

III. WE NEED A REVIVAL OF LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER. John 13:15

A. He who says he loves God and loves not his brother is a liar.

B. Love for one another will promote fellowship.

IV. WE NEED A REVIVAL OF CO-OPERATION. I Cor. 3:9

A. Where there is not full co-operation, things drag.

B. We are laborers together with God.

V. WE NEED A PERSONAL REVIVAL.

A. Are we too proud to realize our personal needs and our personal faults?

B. Self-justification is the work of a proud man.

VI. RESULTS

A. If we have a personal revival and a church revival we will see our offerings pick up and our fellowship strengthened.

B. If we do not, we will GO UNDER AS A CHURCH. We must get rid of that which keeps us from having a revival.

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THE UNEXPECTED STORMS OF LIFE

Text: Matthew 8:23-27

Intro: This event took place as the disciples were obeying the voice and command of Jesus to “depart unto the other side.” We do not expect the storms of life when we are obeying the direct will of the Master. However, sometimes they come anyhow.

I. THE STORM OF SURPRISE

A. It came when they were in the presence of Christ. “And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him...” V23
B. It came when they were doing His bidding. "...he gave commandment to depart to the other side..." V18
C. It came in violent measure. "...there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves." V24
D. It appeared that Jesus wasn't concerned. "...but he was asleep." V24

II. THE SAILORS OF UNBELIEF
A. The reason for their fear "...We perish. V25 They were afraid for their lives even though the Master of the Sea was with them.
B. The degree of their faith "And his disciples awoke him, saying, Lord save us, we perish." V25
C. How often do we doubt the Master even when we have his promises?

III. THE SAVIOUR OF REBUKE
A. He rebuked the disciples. V26
   1. He rebuked them for their fear.
   2. He rebuked them for their faith.
B. He rebuked the storm. V26
   1. He arose.
   2. He rebuked the winds.
   3. He rebuked the sea.
C. He is able to control the circumstances in our lives which we have little or no power over.

IV. THE SUBMISSION OF REBELLION
A. On the part of the storm - "...and there was a great calm." V26
B. On the part of the disciples - "...what manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!" V27
Conclusion: In the sea of life we are subject to many storms, but He who is the Master of men is also the Master of the circumstances of life. He has the power to calm the storm or give us grace to endure it.

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PEOPLE BRINGING PEOPLE
Text: Mark 2:1-12; Luke 14:23

Intro: Among the places we visited on our recent tour of the Holy Land was the ancient city of Capernaum. The Lord Jesus made His headquarters in Capernaum during His ministry in Galilee.

Capernaum is located on the north western shore of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus performed many mighty miracles in Capernaum, among them the healing of the centurion's palsied servant Matthew 8:13, the healing of a nobleman's son John 4:46-54, and the man sick of the palsy borne by four Mark 2:1-13.

The discourse on the Bread of life, which followed the feeding of the 5,000, took place in Capernaum. In spite of the preaching of Jesus, the people did not repent. Jesus prophesied of the complete ruin of the place of Capernaum. Matthew 11:23,24 Capernaum is a city of ruins; the words of Jesus are true and trustworthy.

In this message entitled, "People Bringing People", let us consider: The Consecration, The Compassion, and the Cooperation.

I. THE CONSECRATION.
As Jesus preached the Word to a great host of people, four people brought this man sick of the palsy to the Saviour. The Bible says in Mark 2:4.

These 4 people were people of consecration. The word "consecration" means to set apart. They had set themselves apart to bring this man to Jesus!

People of consecration are people of dedication. It takes dedication to bring people to Jesus. To bring people to Jesus requires prayer and work! If souls are saved, we must pay the price in toil and tears.

The Biblical meaning of dedication is explicitly and emphatically described and denoted in Romans 12:1,2 Dedicated people present their bodies to God to do His great and glorious work.

Determination is "the quality of being firm in purpose of action." These 4 men were determined to bring this man to Jesus and they did! We need a holy determination to win souls to Christ.

Determined people do not quit! The Bible says in Galatians 6:7, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Determined people are positive, not negative! Negative people do not win souls. Phil. 4:13

Determined people pay the price. These 4 men were willing to do whatever was necessary to bring this man to Jesus! Determined people do not make excuses. Luke 14:16-24

II. THE COMPASSION
The Bible says in Mark 2:3, "And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four." Compassion means to suffer with.

People with no compassion will not be soul winners. Compassion reaches out to the people and goes where they are. Surveys reveal that 84% of people who visit churches come because they were invited by their friends and relatives.

Remember the song BRING THEM IN?

III. COOPERATION
The Bible says in Mark 2:3,4.

Cooperation is the great need of the hour in the Church. Cooperation means to work together for a common objective. These 4 men worked together to bring this man to Jesus.

The Bible says in I Corinthians 3:9. It is the instruction of the Bible to the church to labor together.

CONCLUSION: May we strive with Consecration, Compassion, and Cooperation to bring people to Jesus Christ. Let us have a greater burden and concern for the lost.

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WITHOUT MONEY
Text: Isaiah 55:1,2

Intro:
A. As strange as it may seem in this day when money is virtually the god of multitudes, the most valuable thing in life can be without money.
B. It may not be possible to secure food, raiment, shelter, education, and transportation without money, but that which is more important and more interesting than all these is absolutely free.
C. I am sure you will agree that the salvation of God is the most valuable thing in life and at a tremendous cost to God. Salvation has been provided as a free gift to man. Therefore:

I. SALVATION IS WITHOUT PRICE.
A. This was the message the apostle revealed to Simon. Acts 8:9
   1. Simon had bewitched the people with sorceries.
   2. Simon saw others receiving the gospel Philip preached and being baptized.
   3. Simon believed also and was baptized.
   4. When the apostles in Jerusalem heard of this they sent Peter and John to investigate.
   5. They laid their hands upon those that believed and they received the Holy Ghost.
   6. When Simon saw the Holy Ghost fall upon others, verse 18 declares he offered money thinking he might buy the gift of God.
B. We must readily admit that it is impossible to purchase God’s salvation with money.
   1. Some insist there is some sort of price to be paid for salvation.
   2. The Scriptures are plain that salvation is without price on man’s part. Rom. 3:24 “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Freely means graciously without cause for nothing. Grace means everything for one who deserves nothing but judgment.
C. The Lord Jesus Christ paid the price of salvation.
   1. He gave Himself for our sins. Gal. 1:4
   2. “The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me.” Gal. 2:20
   3. Because He paid the price -- His precious blood. I Peter 1:18
   4. There remains no price for us to pay.

II. SALVATION IS TO BE HAD WITHOUT WORKS.
A. Multitudes of people seem to be satisfied that they cannot purchase salvation.

1. They maintain they can work for it.
2. It really doesn’t change the facts, what we may believe, but rather let us see what God has said about it.
   a. Ephesians 2:9
   b. Romans 4:4,5
   c. II Timothy 1:9
   d. Titus 3:5
   e. Romans 3:28

B. In order for the sinner to possess salvation he must believe the Word of truth, the Bible.
   1. Then and then only will he be able to “be zealous of good works.” Titus 2:14
   2. At this point the child of God can maintain good works by obedience. Tims 3:8; Eph. 2:10
   3. But never be satisfied with the idea this is works of salvation for the soul.

III. SALVATION IS TO BE HAD WITHOUT WAITING.
A. Multitudes are laboring under an impression that it is necessary for them to wait.
   1. Wait for them to get better.
   2. Wait until the Holy Ghost comes upon them.
   3. Wait for a certain feeling.
   4. Wait for a more convenient season.
   5. Wait and see if our good works out weigh the bad.
B. It seems difficult for many to believe salvation is to be had without waiting.
C. What saith the Scriptures?
   1. “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation.” II Cor. 6:2
      a. It is not necessary to wait another moment.
      b. Because the moment is yours.
   2. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” Acts 16:31
   3. “Today if ye will hear His voice harden not your heart.” Hebrews 3:15

Conclusion:
A. Will you have God’s salvation without money, without price, without works and without wait?
B. “Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the water, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy, and eat; yea come buy wine and milk without money and without price.”

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