

Remnant Life Church
Sunday, December 29, 2024
Resolutions Made in Wisdom
Zephaniah 3:12-17

The birth of the calendar

- Once the movement of the sun and moon were understood to be constant, they became the first ways that time was measured
 - Then, on a broader scale, it was the seasons of the year
 - Hot, cold, snow, changing colors of the leaves
 - Much of that having to do with planting and harvesting
- The earliest written calendars were thought to be in use 2 to 3,000 years before the birth of Jesus in the Bronze Age by the Egyptians and Sumerians
- In the Iron Age that followed, the Babylonians used a variation of those earlier models
- But it was then the Roman calendar that became the standard as finalized by Julius Caesar

The Julian Calendar, established in 45 BC, and would be used for the next 1600 years

- Then, in 1582, Pope Gregory XII decreed that the method of tracking the months and dates would be changed to what would become known as the Gregorian Calendar, which is what we use today
- The primary reason for the change was that the length of the year was inaccurate in relation to the tropical year or seasons (specifically the spring equinox)
 - And since the church relied on those dates for the celebration of Easter and other fixed holy days, they could not have a calendar where the date changed from year to year
- Interestingly, when the final year the Julian calendar was used in 46 BC, just before the Gregorian calendar was implemented, that last year was made 445 days long to “make up” the days needed to be to align it with the seasons better

To the Hebrew people of the Bible, there were two critical components above all others that were used when considering the calendar

- The first was the annual feasts as established by God through Moses
- The second was the seasons for planting and harvesting crops

We are now on the cusp of turning the calendar year over yet again as we prepare to enter 2025.

- Most people are hoping that the new year will be different (read that better) than the old in various areas of their lives
- And as individuals, it provides us with a starting point to consider changes in our own lives

Most people engage in 2 activities this time of year – reflection and resolution

- First, a caution about spending too much time in reflection
 - You can do nothing about what was done, outside of learning from those things, good and bad, to either incorporate more of the good or remove the bad from your life

- But you cannot and should not allow your past to become the focus of your mind and heart
 - satan wants nothing more than for you to dwell on your past failures or difficulties in order to rob you of your peace, your joy, and your trust in God
- Resolutions, however, need to be born out of wisdom, not made on a whim or out of desperation
 - So, to begin, do not make them overly aggressive
 - For instance, you should never make a resolution that requires an immediate, drastic change
 - Why? Two primary reasons
 - First, maintaining drastic immediate change is unrealistic
 - Second, because, as stated before, satan will be working very hard to make sure every Christian fails in order to bring discouragement
 - This is the time of year when the gyms become packed with people determined to completely overhaul their bodies
 - For the next several weeks, it will be hard to move from one side of the room to the other because there will be so many people who will all be gone in just a few weeks – some sooner
 - One other very important thing, when considering what you should change in the year to come, do not try and determine all of those on your own
 - What you think should be changed is most likely not really the most important thing or of the highest priority
 - It is almost certain that you do not know what those important things are
 - They are called blind spots for a reason
 - Ask one or two people you trust to help you identify things that need to be dealt with
 - Give them (and yourself) permission to be honest without repercussion
 - And then, pray about what God would have you focusing on in the year to come

Whatever is determined to be the areas you need to focus on, how can resolutions be made in wisdom?

READ - Zephaniah 3:12-17

Zephaniah was a prophet in the time of King Josiah, the last godly king to rule Judah

- In these words of the last chapter, Zephaniah is sharing with the people God's plan to redeem the nations after they have been purified of their unrighteousness
 - IOW – changes that are going to be made
- But this also provides for us a wonderful blueprint in the 12th and 13th verses of components needed for resolutions that will position us to not only glorify God, but also receive His blessings through changes made in wisdom.

1. **3:12** – Meek and humble – humility instead of pride

- a. The Bible speaks of humility nearly 90 times but warns against the spirit of pride twice as much
 - b. **Prov. 18:12** - *Before his downfall, a man's heart is proud, but humility comes before honor*
 - i. If you are proud, if you are unteachable, if you have a stubbornness in your behavior because you will not humble yourself – you will fail!
 - c. The root cause of virtually all failures in our lives is pride
 - i. As you consider this coming year and what needs to change, are you willing to let someone else tell you what they see?
 - 1. Only in humility will you be able to accept that
 - 2. Most responses that are in pride begin something like this... “I don’t think that’s a problem for me” - “I don’t do that!” - “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”
 - ii. Or we make excuses with justifications
 - 1. “Well, if that is true it is only because...”
 - 2. And then they fill in the reason
 - 3. And if you are sitting here thinking, “I don’t ever do that!” then you need to consider what I am saying carefully
 - iii. Being humble and meek is the starting position for positive and lasting change
2. **3:12** – Trust in the name of the Lord
- a. This fits in with what we just said because trust is only seen in its fullest within the freedom of humility
 - b. **Prov. 3:5** - *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;*
 - c. Why is my own understanding so untrustworthy
 - d. Because it is the flesh nature, and that is what separates us from God
3. **3:13** – Speak no lies
- a. Truth is not only in what you say but what you think
 - b. Jesus said in **Matt 15:18** - *But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart,*
 - c. We spent several months a few years ago in a series of sermons talking about servanthood and how that begins in the heart
 - d. Not in the mind, but the heart
 - i. And that heart must be an honest one that speaks and believes in truth
 - ii. Not the truth of the world but the truth of God and His Word
4. **3:13** – Eat and lie down
- a. This is a different element but it simply means that God will take care of you
 - b. **Phil. 4:19** - *And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.*
 - c. This is an assurance that comes from trusting God
 - d. Satan wants you to doubt – just as he has tried to do since the beginning with Adam and Eve (**Gen 3:1**)

- i. He asked them, did God really tell you not to eat of the tree?
 - ii. He tried to get Jesus to doubt in the wilderness temptation
 - iii. If you are the Son of God...
 - e. This is why we trust in God and God alone
- 5. **3:13** – Do not be afraid
 - a. **Psalm 27:1-3** *The LORD is my light and my salvation--whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life--of whom shall I be afraid? When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident.*
 - b. Dealing with fear is a common theme woven in what we talk about each week here at RLC
 - i. Do not be afraid!
 - ii. The Psalmist asks the right questions when he writes...
 - iii. *The LORD is my light and my salvation--whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life--of whom shall I be afraid?*
 - c. In 1933, FDR spoke a line in his first inaugural address that served as an encouragement to the people of the United States in a very difficult time nationally when he said...
 - i. *The only thing we have to fear, is fear itself*
 - d. For you and for me in the year 2025, some 92 years later, it is not fear that we should fear, but any moment in our lives without the presence of Almighty God

Six fundamental blessings promised to us as the remnant who refuse to compromise, refuses to buckle to the pressure of a godless culture, and refuses to deviate from the perfect Word of God:

1. Blessing of Humility - the meek and humble; exalted by God
2. Blessing of Refuge – when we trust in the name of the Lord
3. Blessing of Integrity – speak no lies; without deceit
4. Blessing of Provision – you will eat
5. Blessing of Peaceful Rest – and lie down
6. Blessing of Security – no one will make you afraid

Are you planning on making resolutions this coming new year?

- You should consider those things in your life that need to change
- Remaining the same in areas of your life that are not healthy or continually fail is foolishness
- But it is not just hopeful that something you do is going to make your life better
- It is those things that are led by the Spirit to bring you more into God’s plan for your life

Reflection – is only for a short time to see what can be learned and refusing to dwell on the negative

Resolutions – are those things embraced through a heart of humility, in wisdom, to the glory of God