

Tuesday, April 24, 2018 - Assessing My 2018

"Do as I say, not as I do"

These are words we are all familiar with and they rang true with me this morning as I reflected on how long it has been since I have sat down to share thoughts with you in this forum: March 28th.

Have I really been so busy that I can't find time to fulfill the task for which this group was founded: Preaching the Gospel.

The answer is easy. No I haven't been too busy, I've been lazy. Laziness is a convenient tool supplied by Satan to help us justify our neglect of God's work. Shameful.

I began thinking about the article I shared with you December 29th regarding becoming more spiritually focused in 2018. How have you done on your journey with God?

I repost it today so you might judge your growth, or lack thereof, so far this year.

Friday, December 29, 2017 - Spiritually Resolved

As a New Year begins, we are reminded of the fact that we are one year closer to that great day when we shall stand before the Lord in judgment.

Paul reminds us in 2 Cor 5:10 that "...we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad ."

Christ shares with us we will either hear Him say, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34) or "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41).

This is reality, certain to occur. Given this fact what should be your Spiritual Resolutions for 2018?

First, resolve to draw nearer to God and Christ...

James 4:8 - Draw near to God and He will draw near to you...

God resists arrogant men and gives grace to humble men, so one should submit himself to God. That means giving up running one's own life to place oneself under God. Wise men will, but conceited men, thinking themselves above others, will not. In their foolish pride they do not submit to:

- the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:3)
- to one another in the fear of God (Eph. 5:21)
- unto their own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord (Col. 3:18)
- to those (elders) that have the rule over the local congregation (Heb. 13:17)
- to laws of civil government (1 Pet. 2:13)
- to those older than themselves (1 Pet. 5:5).
- God's Word rings out: "... be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Pet. 5:5).
- Christians must hate and actively oppose sin. Those who submit to God naturally, as a consequence of their submission, resist Satan.

Why? He is the enemy of God and His children, the father of lies, a murderer from the beginning, and the adversary of man who "... as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8).

Second, STUDY DAILY God's living and abiding word!

Heb. 4:12 - For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart...

The Word of God is just that -- the Word of God. It is not the word of a man or of several men, except as men were used as the mediums through which God revealed it. My father always reminded, "where God has spoken, that is it." God's word is truth not opinion. All truth resides in God!

The "living God" (Heb. 3:12) produces the "living Word" (Heb. 4:12). The present participle form ("living") means that God's Word perpetually, continually lives. Peter wrote concerning the life that the Word of God possesses:

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently: having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the Word of God, which liveth and abideth" (1 Pet. 1:22-23).

Jesus plainly pictured the Word as seed: "The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). essential quality of seed is the life that is in it. Only by this quality does it produce life.

God's Word is not only living, but "active" ("powerful" -- KJV). It is apparent that it carries the idea not only of being active and working, but capable or powerful enough to do what it is designed to do. Why can't we learn that the power and effectiveness is in the Word only when we faithfully, boldly and lovingly declare the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27)?

Third, be diligent in prayer.

Heb. 4:14-16 - Having then a great high priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need.

Christians have a great high priest in Jesus Christ. His greatness in this verse is seen in that he has entered into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. The Christians' high priest is Jesus the Son of God. Their high priest is able to understand their problems because he lived in the flesh and was tempted in all points like they are, yet without sin. Infirmities include not only sin, but also all of the frailties characteristic of human beings such as pain, suffering or stress. Temptation is not sin. It is the yielding of the will to temptation that becomes sin. Jesus had the capability to sin; however, he lived a perfect life. He did not sin. Since he was tempted, he understands the temptations which men must undergo. Under the new covenant every Christian is a priest with Christ as his great high priest. Christians have the privilege of going to the throne of grace. The throne of grace is the throne of God. Throne of grace is in contrast to throne of judgment. Christians can go to God and receive mercy and grace to help them in time of need because Jesus is their great high priest. One of the great blessings of Christianity is having Jesus as their high priest in heaven.

Last, be faithful in your church attendance.

Heb. 10:24-25 - Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh.

Christians are children of God and must consider the other children in the family of God. Christians are to provoke one another to love and good works. The proper provoking is to encourage fellow Christians to love and good works. One must be unselfish and help his brother along the road of life.

A vital part of Christianity is meeting together with fellow Christians to worship God together and study God's word. Faithful worship is essential to grow spiritually and remain faithful to the Lord. There is strength and encouragement that comes from worshipping God with fellow Christians, which comes in no other way. Some Christians forsake the assembly. A continuous forsaking of the assembly tempts one to backslide and perhaps turn away from Christ altogether. This teaching is expressed negatively in this verse. The positive way to state it would be, "Whatever you do, be sure to attend the assembly of the saints."

The exhorting one another is probably the exhorting one another and encouraging one another at the worship assembly. Worship of the entire church is vital to Christianity. Much of the encouragement and exhorting takes place when Christians are assembled together to worship God.

To sum up our spirituals priorities for 2018:

"But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33)

May God bless you in your walk for Him in 2018.