

New Year Resolution

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:17

Matthew 3:1 - 12

We always seem to start every New Year with the act of making New Year Resolution. Do you do this? We often jot down a few goals for ourselves. We make a promise to ourselves to do these things in the coming New Year. We swear that these resolutions will be our goals in the New Year. Oh, we write down things like this – raise your hand if any of these are part of your New Year resolutions:

- *You will exercise more
 - *You will lose weight
 - *You will eat more vegetables
 - *You will serve others more
 - *You will pray more
 - *You will go to church more
- (Add you own resolution)

Let us imagine what it would be like to accomplish these goals or resolutions. How happy we would be when we just changed a few things. Oh, we would be healthier, slimmer, have a better diet, be better servants of Christ, our knees would be worn from praying, and our church attendance would be up 50%! Wouldn't it be great?

Then that New Year comes to an end and we often find ourselves having met none of our New Year resolutions! We have made no lasting improvements in our lives. Then we often feel like a failure. We feel guilty and disappointed in ourselves. We vow that this New Year will finally be the one in which we do follow our New Year resolutions. We say to ourselves – I will stick to my goals and resolutions this year!

The problem is we do not have enough will power. We prefer immediate pleasures instead of long term investments. And we fail again!

As Christians, we do not have to rely on our own power. We have access to a God who is all powerful. We have access to a God who can do the impossible. We have access to a God who works in us to bring about change.

I have printed in your bulletin, 2 Corinthians 5:17, let us read it together.

Now let us look at our second scripture reading from the Gospel of Matthew 3:1 – 12.

There is a new phenomenon for marketing upcoming movies that is called the ‘teaser trailer’. A ‘teaser trailer’ does not say anything about the plot of the movie or about the cast of the movie. It does not even show clips from the movie. All a ‘teaser trailer’ does is present a short title sequence with the date of the movie’s release. The ‘teaser trailer’ has nothing to do with the subject of the movie; it just shows the title and date of release. It sounds cheap but it works! Teaser trailer motivate us to find out more about the movie.

Jesus had a teaser trailer named John the Baptist. John’s message was simple – Christ is coming; Get ready! John’s message each day he preached was a simple message with only one theme – Repent, Repent, and Repent! John’s message was so effective some people assumed he was the Christ. In fact many of those on the bank of the Jordan River the day Jesus showed up thought John the Baptist was the Christ and Messiah. Because of John’s preaching, Jesus’ ministry found hearts ready and interested in his message. Because of John’s preparation, Jesus had people ready for the heavens to open up and a dove to settle upon Jesus and a voice from heaven was heard to say this – *This is my Son, I am well pleased with him!*

God has given us opportunities to serve. How much legwork has gone ahead of us? Before the world began, God's plan was set in motion. When we face obstacles in our lives, remember there is no way to see how we have been helped by those before us and there is no telling the ways we will help those coming after us.

In this New Year of 2023, instead of trying to get better on our own, let us commit our plans to God. In this New Year of 2023, instead of trying to rely on our own power, let us rely on God's almighty power. In this New Year of 2023, instead of trying the impossible on our own, let us allow our God to do the impossible. In this New Year of 2023, instead of trying to change on our own, let us allow God to change us.

Are we ready, like the day at the Jordan River, when Christ came to be baptized? Are we just a 'Teaser Trailer' for Christ, or have we committed ourselves to serve him as our Lord and Savior?

We will be doing a stewardship campaign in Jan 2023 and on Feb. 12th, 2023 we will have a commitment service during which we will ask you to make a pledge of an offering in 2023.

It has been some time since the church has done a stewardship campaign and we hope you will make a possible New Year Resolution in 2023. May God guide your heart to consider this New Year's Resolution to be a good steward of our church in the New Year. You will hear more about the Stewardship Campaign in the next few weeks. Next week after our worship service, I would like to meet with our Stewardship Team of Pam McRaney, Al Rae, Mark Strauss, Bill Johnston, and anyone else interested in stewardship.

Let us pray:

O God, help us to rely on your power. Help us do the impossible and to help us change in service to Jesus Christ. We are willing to do our part and pray to you O God. If we do, we will watch the changes happen to us and we will watch our purposed changes to change into your purpose!

God, how do you want us to grow? Lord, how do you want us to change? Please show us what areas of our lives need attention. It may be our physical health, our emotional health, or our spiritual health, but help us to change so that we may become better servants of your Most Holy Son, Jesus Christ. Give us the strength and power to change for your glory.

May our legwork for Christ bring more into our church and may we find new and exciting ways to serve Christ better.

AMEN.

Several years ago, at the last church I served as Pastor, I sang a song solo. After singing, the congregation clapped and shouted AMEN. When I got home at our dinner table, I told my boys how wonderful it was that the church applauded my singing. After a short pause, my oldest son said – ‘Well Dad, I am glad that you feel that way, but we thought they were applauding because you finished singing!’

On Thursday when I was practicing my message and I sang this song alone in the church. I envisioned the congregation clapping loudly when I finished. But today I will be sharing this song in a duet with Bill Johnston. We will sing together the first verse, then we will ask you to sing the first verse again with us.

This traditional New Year’s song is song ‘Auld Lang Syne’. Those words ‘Auld Lang Syne’ mean ‘Time gone by’ or ‘Old time’s sake’ or in some context ‘Once Upon a Time’.

*Should auld acquaintance be forgot, and never brought to
mind?*

Should auld acquaintance be forgot, and days o'lang syne!

For auld lang syne my dear, for auld lang syne,

We'll take a cup of kindness yet, for auld lang syne.