

How To Have a Happier New Year
John 13: 15 – 17
January 3, 2010

I believe Nancy and I have a simple New Years resolution for 2010: “We resolve to have a happier 2010 than we had in 2009.” Many Americans have experienced much difficulty last year. The recession has lingered far too long in many homes. Unemployment has reached levels unknown since the 1930s. Stimulus packages haven’t reached our street, unless you live on Wall Street.

Many of us have struggled with uncertain health issues. I marvel at the ever-growing prayer request list each week. I routinely encounter folks in my daily rounds, in Publix, or Walgreens, or Wal Mart, etc., and get updates on their family’s medical status. Yes, the universal need in this new year is “more happiness.”

In John Chapter 13, Verses 15 through 17, Jesus sought to instill some encouragement into His disciples (Read). He has just finished washing their feet – an act reserved for servants! Now, in order to reinforce the example of humility He had given them, Jesus told them that happiness is not found in merely knowing about these things but in doing them.

Let’s look at four things the child of God can do to ensure having a happier new year.

1. Believe (John 13: 15a)

A. A dynamic faith will enable us to defeat discouragement, and empower us to live victoriously in Jesus Christ.

B. Our faith in His power to supply every need we will have in the future will give us every reason to rejoice. Here are some evidences of His power to bless His children:

1. **Power to Save – Philippians 4: 13** – *“Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him,”*

2. **Power to Protect – Joshua 1: 9** – *“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”*

3. **Power to Provide – Philippians 4: 19** – *“But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”*

2. Behave (v. 15b)

A. To quote a wise person: “What we do speaks so loud that others cannot hear what we say.”

B. For this reason, the Word of God places great emphasis on the believer living a God-honoring life. Our behavior should exemplify Christ in the following areas:

1. **In our daily life – Matthew 5: 16a** – *“Let your light so shine...”*

2. **In our witness to the world – Matt. 5: 16b** – *“... that they may see...”*

3. **In our church fellowship – 1 Timothy 3: 15** – *“But if I tarry long, that you may know how you should behave yourself in the house of God,*

which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

3. Beware (v.16a)

A. To be fore-warned is to be fore-armed. The Word of God gives us ample warning to avoid specific, real dangers that confront us in our daily Christian life:

1. **The deception of men – Colossians 2: 8** – *“Beware lest any man ensnares you through philosophy and empty deception, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”*

2. **The snare of the devil – 1 Peter 5: 8** – *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour.”*

3. **Your own self – Luke 12: 15** – *“And He said to them, ‘Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of things of things which he possesses.’”*

4. Belong (v. 16b)

A. It is impossible for anyone to be genuinely happy without a sense of “belonging.”

B. Every child of God can rejoice in the blessings of belonging:

1. **To Christ – Mark 9: 41** – *“...because you belong to Christ..”*

Also, we are encouraged in 1 Corinthians 7: 23 – *“You are bought with a price; do not become servants of men.”*

2. **To the church – Acts 2: 47** – *“and the Lord added to church daily such as should be saved.”*

My hope and prayer for each of you this coming year is that you experience genuine, soul-deep happiness. That is not a sentimental wish, but a desire grounded in your personal relationship with Jesus Christ as your Savior.

As you walk day-by-day, you have the eternal blueprint for happiness: plant the flag of faith each day; conduct yourself in a manner that honors your Savior in how you live, by your Christian witness, and in your conduct in the church fellowship ;be on guard for the dangers which confront you – deception of men, snares set by the devil, and especially one’s self; and finally, focus upon your place in Christ’s kingdom.

Here’s to true and lasting happiness in 2010!

Let’s pray!