

## New Year's 4 Questions for 2019

### Most Common New Year's Resolutions

- (1) Exercise more
- (2) Lose weight
- (3) Get organized
- (4) Learn a new skill or hobby
- (5) Live life to the fullest
- (6) Save more money / spend less money
- (7) Quit smoking
- (8) Spend more time with family and friends
- (9) Travel more
- (10) Read more

Come a long way in 2018. It's my prayer God would continue to move us forward in 2019 on the shoulders of what we've looked at in 2018.

- (1) In 2019, will you see Jesus merely as Savior to be thanked or also as a Satisfier to be enjoyed?

Everyone in this room is a joy seeker and a pleasure seeker because everyone in this room is a worshipper at their core. Everyone in this room is geared to move toward things that satisfy and seems to offer abundant life. It is the motive of every decision we've ever made. Blaise Pascal said, "All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war, and of others avoiding it, is the same desire in both, attended with different views. The will never takes the least step but to this object. This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves." We're always moving toward what we think will offer us abundant life.

And from the very beginning that joy and abundant life that was designed to be found in God. All the acceptance, all the value, love, and wonder all in the person of God. But something happened in Genesis 3, a serpent suggested that abundant life is found in God's creation, not God himself. And Adam and Eve believed him, and as a result they lost the joy and abundant life they already had because they worshipped the creation rather than the Creator. And as a result, they were cast out of the Garden—away from the abundant life in God's presence; left in the wilderness. And we read Genesis 3 and we ask, how are we ever going to get back to that joy and abundant life in God's presence?

You get to Psalm 16:11 and you realize that the answer to the question is yes, David says "in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand there are pleasures forever more." He was able to experience God's presence in the temple which protected the people from God's glory while simultaneously allowing them to experience it. This was amazing. That's why Israelite society revolved around the temple—and that's why as a Jew it would be unthinkable that one day there would be an Israelite who could come along and say in Mt. 12:6, "I tell you, something greater than the temple is here." I'm the true temple. I am the high priest. I am the Passover Lamb. I am the living water! I'm the good shepherd. Jesus says in Jn. 10:10 that he came that we might have abundant life! Jesus didn't come to offer you a list of behaviors and a few life tips. He came to satisfy your deepest longings for joy and pleasure. He came not only to save you but to satisfy you in himself. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

I often ask people how much they enjoy Jesus. Not obey or worship Jesus, but how much they enjoy him. And it's like people don't have a category for enjoying Jesus. I didn't grow up with this understanding. And it's because, in the church we've done a good job of teaching people that Jesus is a Savior to be thanked,

but a poor job of teaching that he is a Satisfier to be enjoyed and as a result we have churches filled with people who are genuinely thankful but not a lot of people who are genuinely joyful. But this won't work.

There is a real danger that in 2019, you will try to live the Christian life on the fuel of gratitude alone. You can't just be thankful for what he did then, you have to be satisfied in who he is for you now. And if you don't then you'll be filled with gratitude for Jesus and seek your ultimate joy in the creation, rather than in God himself. And it will never work, because even if you have everything creation has to offer, you'll be left with a void that nothing in this world is big enough to fill. But don't take from me, take it from my buddy. **Tom Brady Video**. Jesus satisfies. Don't live 2019 like that's not true.

## **(2) In 2019, will you approach the Bible as a rule book to help you modify your behavior or as a window to gaze upon the glory of God?**

Well how can I experience Jesus as my joy, and one of the primary ways God has designed you to do that is beholding his glory. And one of the primary places he intentionally uses to display his glory, is the word.

**(1 Sam. 3:21)**

So many of us grew believing the Bible was something that it's not. We grew up believing that the Bible was an instructional manual that taught us right from wrong and told you how to live and included some stories where people made good decision and we're suppose to read those and be like them and some stories where people did bad things and we're not supposed to be like them. If this is your view of the Bible, you're times in the word will be marked by boredom and frustration mixed with constant confusion about how any of this really matters for your life.

I have an electric smoker and I came with an instruction manual. It had some recommendations. It had some warnings. So after reading I tried my best to do that, made some decent pork, and went to bed. Guess what, when I got up the next morning, I didn't read it. Or the next. Why? Well, I really don't need to. I understand what to do and what not to do.

And for many of you this is Scripture. I know the ten commandments I get it. Don't steal don't murder. I know you should love your neighbor and be like the good Samaritan. I know Jesus died and I have to believe in him. Why do I need to read that again? I read Jonah and the whale, the guy makes it you can't out run God. I get it. And here's the thing, if the primary point of the bible is to give you a list of do's and don'ts and a few good examples and a few bad examples....you don't need to read the Bible with any kind of regularity. But it's not. It's not a rule book, it's a window to help you see a person! It's like a love letter, you don't read it because you forgot what it said, you read it because it does something to you. **Pop up book**. I see who he is and what he's done. And I praise him for his patience and I stand in awe. I see his glory and I'm amazed. I see his mercy and I humbled and challenged.

And that's why sermons at New Century will never be centered on pop-psychology and self-help techniques—that's not what's going to help us become like Christ! What's going to fuel our growth in becoming like Christ? **2 Cor. 3:18**. We're not coming each week to learn a new technique, we're coming to see the glory of God put on display again and again and again. And as that cascades over your soul day after day after day, you become like Christ!

### (3) In 2019, will you be a student or a victim of suffering?

2019 will bring good but also some challenges. People in here are going to suffer in 2019. Someone is going to lose the job, get a diagnosis, lose the loved one. And when that happens, what will you do? It will push you toward God or away from God, but it will not leave you the same.

It may shock you to realize that God designs suffering in the life of the believer as a means to make them more like Christ. This flies in the face of the prosperity Gospel that says you should come to Christ so that your life can be free from suffering. Quite to the contrary...you look in the pages of the NT and people's lives seem to get worse, not better when they follow Christ. And this is part of God's design (Phil. 1:29) (Ps. 119:71,75) (2 Cor. 1:8-9)

Now this isn't to say that we should celebrate suffering. Suffering was not a part of God's original creation and it won't be a part of eternity. But in a world where there are sinners who need to be made holy, suffering, is a tool that God uses for sanctification. And when you realize that, it changes the way you approach suffering.

If there's one book in the Bible that gives us a picture of suffering it's the book of Job. Job and Mrs. Job. "Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die. But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips." Job 2:8-9. You see Job and Mrs. Job represent two approaches to suffering...

\_\_\_\_\_ **Victim** \_\_\_\_\_ Mentality—Mrs. Job: Self-pity; hope placed in changed circumstances.

I don't mean you're not a victim. But you're a victim of God. You doubt. You deserve so much better. God is mean. My only hope is changing my circumstances. Change them but don't hope in changing them! Maybe it's something that you can't change.

□ \_\_\_\_\_ **Student** \_\_\_\_\_ Mentality—Job

Trust in a God who suffered for us and suffers with us.

In a God who suffers for his people—we believe in a suffering God. A god who knows what it's like to lose everything, I know what it's like to be betrayed, I know what tears taste like, to be mocked and feel shame, to stay up at night wondering what's going to happen tomorrow, I know what it feels like to feel forsaken and lonely, as God I have not exempted myself from the reality of suffering. I've experienced all of it and I never had a moment where I doubted God or where my heart wasn't perfectly oriented toward him in holiness, which means that not only have endured suffering, I am uniquely qualified to walk with you in yours. And that's the promise he makes us. Not that he'll exempt us from suffering but that he'll walk with us through it.

I promise that when you're in the desert I'll be the pillar of cloud to guide you. When you're thrown into the furnace with Shadrack, Meshach, and Abednego, I'll be the fourth man in the fire, when you hear the wind and the wave and start to sink, I'll you up, and as we walk together through this, and as we do I'm going to change you. This is the diamond forged from the pressure of suffering. And this is the promise,-- not that God will change your circumstances, but that he'll change you through your circumstances. A student of suffering realizes this. Our focus is not just in changing your circumstances but in allowing God

to change you through them. God intends to teach us in suffering which means the worst thing we could do is suffer and not learn something.

o DON'T WASTE YOUR SUFFERING

When I wasn't depressed in seminary, I asked God not to let it stop until I'd learned everything.

**(4) In 2019, will you try to fit God into your plans, or will your life revolve around the fact that He has fit you into his?**

C.S. Lewis said that, "Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important." This is so true. Think about it! If it's not true what are we doing? If it is, is there anything even remotely close in its importance?. And the things that threatens to choke out your spiritual vitality in 2019 aren't bad things, just other things. You know my biggest fear 2019, it's that people are going to go out and be bad. It's that they're going to go out and do good things, fun, decent things, and maybe add a little bit of Jesus in there.

But if Christ has been raised, then that doesn't make sense...listen to Paul's attitude what if this was you in 2019 Phil 1:21-23 21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better."

You see for Paul, Christ was not a add on to a busy schedule. He was the lens through which he saw his entire life and death. Would this be a strange New Year's resolution. If Paul were here he'd say it'd be better to die in 2019 so I could be with Christ...

You say well I don't plan on dying in 2019 and I hope you don't, which means that for us there's only one option, fruitful labor...what does that mean? It means whether I'm eating or drinking I'm doing it for God's glory. Everything I do is done with an eye toward seeing Christ more fully formed in my life and the lives of those around me. Been studying history—Monks got it wrong!

Living for Christ doesn't mean that Christ is the only thing you do it's that Christ is in everything you do. Christ transforms everything We don't have work and family and hobbies and Jesus we have Christ-shaped work, Christ shaped families, Christ-shaped hobbies. Fruitful labor doesn't mean Christ is the only thing you do, but that he's in everything you do.

At my work am I producing a quality of worth that reflects the quality of the God I serve? Am I displaying Christlike character in the office classroom? Am I being intentional about making disciples for Christ in the work place? In my family, am I displaying the patience of Christ with my spouse and children? When I don't am I repenting. Is my goal in the home to maximize worship of Christ or to maximize my comfort? This is what it means to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. It doesn't mean we all leave our jobs and become pastors and vocational missionaries, it means that whether we're eating or drinking or playing or working we're doing it with an eye toward eternity...so that one day we can say with Paul For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing. (1 Tim. 4:6-8)

“God, I pray Thee, light these idle sticks in my life and may I burn up for Thee. Consume my life, my God, for it is Thine. I seek not a long life but a full one, like you, Lord Jesus.” Later that same year he recorded the following: “Prayed a strange prayer today. I covenanted with the Father that He would do either of two things: either glorify Himself to the utmost in me or slay me. By His grace I shall not have His second best. For He heard me, I believe, so that now I have nothing to look forward to but a life of sacrificial sonship or heaven — soon. Perhaps tomorrow! What a prospect!” Jim Elliot

Make goals Personal, Family, Church, Professional, Other.