

December 31, 2017

Hope for a New Year

"Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love for us we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him."

Lamentations 3:21-24

"...those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint."

Isaiah 40:31

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time."

I Peter 1:3-5

Tomorrow we begin a brand new year! If you are like me you are wondering what it might hold. Looking ahead can be and frankly, often is, a scary proposition. Those of us who have been around for lots of new years know that the future can hold some really great things and it can also hold some pretty awful things. It is probably a good thing that God in his wisdom does not let us see very far into the future.

So, how ought we who claim to follow Jesus plan to live in this new year, in 2018? We could look at a lot of verses but for today I want us to consider several simple commandments that will make everything better.

- *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth...But store up for yourselves treasure in heaven..."* (Matthew 6:19-24) Our culture teaches us to crave worldly possessions. The drive to obtain more and more is mantra of our world. But, not one of these worldly treasures will leave this life with us. What matters is what we have stored in heaven for us.
- *"...do not worry about your life...or about your body...but seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow..."* Matthew 6:25-34 We are consumed by worry and anxiety and suffer from depression and all manner of mental illness because of it. In truth we struggle to trust our lives day by day to God, but there is no other path to peace.
- *"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."* Matthew 7:1-5 I have a tough time living my life well from moment to moment. I don't need to or frankly, want to, try to run your life too.
- *"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you..."* Matthew 7:7-11 Life has a simple rule. Nothing comes to those who do nothing. If I want a better life; a more righteous existence, I will have to look for it and work to achieve it. But in the final analysis God will give provide.
- *"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets,"* Matthew 7:12 Finally, what really matters is how I treat others. No matter who I am or what I believe how I chose to treat others is the ultimate and only measure of my life that matters.

Tomorrow we start a new year. What will this new year hold for us? We cannot tell, but by choosing to live according to the principles that Jesus gives us our new year will absolutely be filled with God's love and blessing.

