

Forgetting Those Things That Are Behind

Happy New Year!

When I thought about writing “Happy New Year” it occurred to me that a lot of people don’t know what “happy” is. It doesn’t even look like a real word if you just look at the spelling and say it a few times. Go ahead look at the word---happy., happy!, happy? H-a-p-p-y? Say it out loud a few times. It doesn’t even look like or sound like a real word now does it?

When people say “Happy New Year” they are bestowing upon you more than just a casual greeting or phrase. Much more!

Just to help you along here is the definition from Webster’s New World Dictionary. Happy – 1) favored by circumstances, lucky, fortunate. 2) having, showing or causing a feeling of great pleasure, contentment, joy, etc.; joyous, glad, pleased 3) exactly appropriate for the occasion; suitable and clever.

When you are saying “Happy New Year” to someone you are actually commanding a blessing upon them. Saying, “happy-be favored by circumstances, be fortunate, have great joy and contentment in the new year”. Now that you are clear on what ‘happy new year’ really means lets go on.

In order to have great joy and contentment in the new year there might be some things that you may need to let go of from the “old” year. In Philippians 3 the Bible says to forget those things that are behind and to reach or to press towards those things that are before. (Philippians 3:13-15) In the Message Bible it reads “[13]Friends, don’t get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I’ve got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. [14] I’m off and running, and I’m not turning back. [15] So let’s keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision—you’ll see it yet!”

Paul is talking about running the race of being a Christian- a follower of Christ. What happens when a marathon runner is running full speed ahead and looks back or takes his eye off of what is in front of him? He can get tripped up, lose his footing, run into someone else and cause them to stumble or can actually fall down. That is not God’s plan for you in 2007.

Paul says that he has his eye on the goal where God is beckoning him onward to Jesus. He says he is not turning back, he is focused on the goal of everything that God has for him and he says that if anyone else has something else in mind then he has blurred vision and God will clear it up.

God’s plan in 2007 is to cause you to be happy-highly favored, blessed, full of joy and contentment in your Christian walk. You have to be looking ahead running with all of our body forward not with your heads on backwards (take a second and picture that). God wants you to be looking straight ahead towards Him and His goals for your life, and really, if you look towards God you are looking up and ahead, above all the worldly circumstances, people that have hurt you, and all of hurdles that this life has had to offer.

Every day you have opportunity to look behind, begrudge the past, walk in unforgiveness, walk in the hurts of yesterday, walk in the grief. You may have even had the opportunity over the recent holidays to acquire some new hurts or injuries. Every day it is your choice whether you will walk in and live in them or not! Your choice!

God knew that as a person you would have the propensity to drag the past with you. Don’t you know that you can’t run the race dragging all of your suitcases filled with the disappointments, griefs, unforgiveness and injuries of the past? You would not be

running you would be crawling or at a stand still with the weight of the baggage dragging you back. A few of you have those things from 2006 that you need to leave behind in order to experience the 'happy new year'.

This is a "new" year. A new day. The opportunity of newness is here. New means never having existed before or happening for the first time. So if you have never experienced contentment and joy this is the new day to do it a new year to experience it.

In those verses Paul also tells you to keep 'focused' on the goal. Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus as you run the race. God has a vision for each of you. He has that good expected end for you. You press on, by faith, you press on. You keep your eyes on Him and above the circumstances.

In Ephesians 3 verses 16-20 Paul is offering a prayer for the Ephesians and it is for you as well. Especially in verse 20 he says that God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. That means 'new'—above what you can ask or what you can imagine or think. Why? Because His mighty power works in you. Don't you know that the God that created the universe wants to create newness in your life?

If you know Jesus as your Savior then the Bible says that because God lives in you, you have the same creative power available to you that He had and has. In Romans 4:17 God called those things that are not as though they were. He was demonstrating faith by the words of His mouth and as an example so like Him, because He lives in you and His power is in you, that by the words of your mouth you can demonstrate faith. He 'said' and it happened. You say and believe and then you receive. Mark 11:23-25 (KJV) For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. [24] Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. [25] And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

Last year might have been a mountain to some of you but Jesus said that by faith it can be removed. If you have had a tendency to speak negatively-rehearsing the past then stop it! If you are still having difficulty 'seeing' a healthy, happy, prosperous future then I encourage you to read your Bible to renew your mind so that those old things can pass away. Fix your eyes on Jesus. We are closer now than we have ever been to the return of Christ. Don't waste your days in the sorrows of the past. If you don't know Christ as your personal Savior please ask Him to forgive you of your sins and come into your life and 'behold' *He will* make all things new.

So by faith today say 'happy-highly favored, full of joy and contentment is my new year'. Say it out loud. Say it now! Believe what you said. Receive what you said. Believe that this will be the best year that you have lived yet. Regularly say those things out loud. Believe that the old things have passed away and all, not just some, things have become new. 2 Cor. 5:17 (KJV) Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Now stand, run the race, keep your eyes fixed on Him and receive the reward of a life filled with joy and contentment regardless of the circumstances. God is a good God! Yes He is! Happy New Year!