

*Happy? New Year!*

A message delivered to  
**MAYER COMMUNITY CHURCH**

**January 3, 1999**

**TITLE: Happy? New Year!**

**TEXT: Luke 5:33-39**

**THEME: Resolution or Renewal**

**THRUST: To be *renewed* according to the Word.**

**INTRODUCTION:**

On New Year's Eve,

a number of people met here at the church  
for a time of worship, prayer and communion.

At the conclusion of that time

several individuals gathered around and compared notes;  
I found out later they were comparing their  
New Year's "Resolutions"!

That is one of the traditional things people do;  
since it is the beginning of a New Year,  
the intent of resolutions is to eliminate some problem area  
or work on some area of self-improvement.

Most of the time, these are worthy pursuits,  
and far too often they are also exercises in futility!

With "New Year's Resolutions" on my mind,  
I cruised the Internet to see what others had to say:

x x x x x

1. *That I will try to keep in touch with God a little more.*
2. *That I won't be obsessed with the Spice Girls.*
3. *I'll try to be nicer to my parents.*
4. *To scoop my cat's litter every day.*
5. *I resolve to be even more stingy and mean-spirited than ever, because the world has degenerated into a shriveled up, hopeless orb of depravity and unworthy of enlightened souls. Go for the gusto, I say.*
6. *I will exercise, get good grades, save my money, get more friends, and change churches.*
7. *To become a better Christian.*
8. *To lose 20 kilos before September and try to be more in control of my bad temper and be more tolerant of people around me .*
9. *To live without regret.*

x x x x x

Near the end of his life, the Apostle Paul stated 2 Timothy 4:7-8:

*"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth*

*there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not me only, but unto all them that also love His appearing.”*

x x x x x

One of the difficulties we face as humans  
is that we are limited in what we are able to accomplish  
in pursuit of our own resolutions.

For some, that limitation is a result of circumstances  
beyond their control; for others,  
their limitations are further complicated  
because of wrong choices they have made.

For all of humanity, our desires and determinations in resolution  
hit a brick wall when we try to become righteous  
or attain to God’s standard of righteousness.  
That brick wall is our flesh, our tendencies apart from God.  
All of the “New Year’s Resolutions” in the world  
will not change that.

At some point in time, during some aspect of our resolution, we will hit that wall.  
The unfortunate thing is that far too many who call themselves Christians  
have the exact same failure rate with their personal resolutions  
as those who are not Christian.

Why?

Because we, as Christians, have not truly grasped  
the truth of Paul’s words when he stated:

*I know that in me, that is in my flesh dwells **no good thing.***” ~Romans 7:18 (emphasis added).

In other words, there is nothing in our *flesh*  
that is worth the effort needed to enact a “resolution”.

There is nothing in our flesh that is worth redeeming.

There is nothing in our flesh that in “resolving to change”  
will make one iota of difference in eternity!

*Only one life, twill soon be past,  
Only what’s done for Christ will last.*

So, what are we to do?

Well, one school of thought is to *refuse* to make resolutions!

*To make no more resolutions ... they only get broken!*

In one sense, that is recognizing the futility  
of trying to change ourselves.

In another sense, it is a cop-out, because we are refusing  
to take responsibility *for* our own behavior.

Another school of thought is to *resolve* and hope for the best!

Still another states that we, as Christians  
should not hesitate to make the need resolutions  
but should also recognize the *Spiritual component*.

*I resolve to – read my bible every single day.*

*I resolve to be more prayerful.*

*I resolve to be a better Christian example.*

May I suggest to you that there is still a strong likelihood  
that those individuals will “hit the wall?”

Matthew, Mark and Luke record a conversation between  
Jesus and some Pharisees and Lawyers.

All three record the same event

with almost exactly the same words.

Luke adds one clarifying statement to his account.

It’s as though God wants us to understand the principle  
of “new” versus “old”

before He gives us His perspective.

**Luke 5:33-39** They said to him, "John's disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking." <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered, "Can you make the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? <sup>35</sup> But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast." <sup>36</sup> He told them this parable: "No one tears a patch from a new garment and sews it on an old one. If he does, he will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. <sup>37</sup> And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. <sup>38</sup> No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins.

Jesus has *new wine* that He wants to give to us!

But there is a problem: we have old containers – old wineskins.

Some of us have old *whine*-skins!

Old thought patterns –

Old thought patterns can’t contain the *new wine*!

Old habits –

Old habits can’t conform to the *new wine*!

Old comfort zones –

Old comfort zones can’t feel comfortable  
with the *new wine*!

Jesus is not talking about *salvation* here,  
but about the changes that are necessary

in our Christian Walk.

Changes in *us* as we walk along the *Highway of Holiness!*

If you feel that you are being “forced” to change

then there is great probability

that you will *resent* the change!

What has to happen in order for the change to be effective?

There must be *new!*

Why? Because otherwise we will fulfill verse 39:

<sup>39</sup> And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, "The old is better." (NIV)

The key word here is *wants!*

The *need* here is to desire the *new* over the *old!*

It is not to *resolve* to make the old better,

but for it to be renewed!

**Rev 21:5** And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new....

**Rom 12:1-2** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. <sup>2</sup> And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

**Eph 4:22-24** That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; <sup>23</sup> And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; <sup>24</sup> And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

**Col 3:10** And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

**Titus 3:5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost... .

## Conclusion