

Remnant Life Church  
Sunday, January 3, 2016

## 2016 – Looking Ahead or Looking Back?

Daniel 1:1-7; Romans 5:1-8

- Last Sunday we talked about what it means to finish well; closing out 2015
- Next Sunday I want to share with you a teaching on Expectation vs Disappointment and to start to get you prepared for that...
- Top 10 list of NYR from 2015:
  10. Spend more time with family
  9. Fall in love
  8. Help others with their dreams
  7. Quit smoking
  6. Learn something exciting
  5. Stay fit and healthy
  4. Enjoy life to the fullest
  3. Spend less, save more
  2. Get organized
  1. Lose weight
- Next week we will look at what expectations do and how, I believe, how harmful they can be when they are not applied in the right way and in the right places
  
- Question: This morning, the first Sunday of 2016, are you looking ahead to the opportunities God is going to provide or looking back at the times of adversity and difficulty?
- Daniel is an excellent model for how we should be looking ahead to this coming year
- What do we know of him according to the first chapter of Daniel?
  - He lived the life of privilege as a part of the nobility of the kingdom
  - He was tremendously intelligent
  - Diligent in his work and would certainly have accomplished a great many things as a young man
  - He was handsome, physically fit, and brilliant in all types of learning
  - He was not only a teacher's dream but a coach's dream as well
- He was in the elite class; related to the king of Judah
  - He would have been raised in wealth, power, and education
  - He probably hob-knobbed with the kings and dignitaries of the day
  - He enjoyed servants who saw to his every wish
  - With all that he had he would have been a mother-in-law's dream
- Yet with all that he had he was a man of character, faith, and humility who refused to compromise and was in every way committed to serving God.
  
- But Daniel, with all that he had going for him, was caught in a land and culture that had forgotten God
- God had repeatedly sent prophets to warn the people of Israel against their sin and rebellion; but they refused

- In 605 BC he allowed the superpower of the day, The Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar, to attack and conquer Jerusalem
  - When Nebuchadnezzar had completed his conquest he set up a puppet government under King Jehoiakim
  - As insurance against any further rebellions he took most of the royal family captive, Daniel being among them
  - He was probably around 14 when captured and would be trained for 3 years
  - Daniel was not being punished for his actions he was caught in a culture that forgot God
  - When a nation forgets God everyone suffers; we are in that time in this nation
  - Daniel probably was filled with questions and even doubt as he was traveling the 800 miles to Babylon but God's plan was in motion
  - He would one day wield more power than any other member of the Jewish race had ever known and God put it in place
  - (What is God working in your life right now?)
  - Daniel is a prime example (Like Joseph, Moses, and Paul) of a person who turned adversity into opportunity
  - Looking ahead not back
  
- 5 lessons from Daniel that we can apply to our lives as we enter the new year
  1. Accept the inevitable interruptions in life
    - ^ life is often not fair
    - ^ bad things often happen to good people
    - ^ innocent people are preyed upon and the bad guys often get away
    - ^ We do have a hope: [Rev 21:3-5](#) gives us this promise:

*And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."*

2. Don't get hung up about the source of your situation
  - ^ It is natural to wonder or ask why but it is dangerous to place blame
  - ^ Every time we face adversity we have a choice
  - ^ We can yield to the flesh (to Satan) and allow our lives to be consumed by the circumstances or we can choose to live by faith in God
  - ^ Every circumstance of adversity is another opportunity to see the Hand of God work in your life
  - ^ Paul writes of an incredible promise we have been given in [I Cor 10:13](#)

*No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.*

3. Resist the temptation to believe that you are entitled to the “good life”
  - ^ Our culture wants us to think that we should have what we want when we want it
  - ^ This is where Life Isn’t Fair comes from
  - ^ When you are questioning God can I remind you who you are talking to?
  - ^ AW Tozer said, “Whoever seeks God as a means toward desired ends will not find God. God will not be used.”
  
4. Absolutely do away with and refuse to blame others
  - ^ There are an exceptionally few number of times when there is total innocence in any adverse situation and you are not the exception
  - ^ Joseph did not sulk and become bitter when he was wrongly put in prison
  - ^ Daniel, in spite of being a POW, rose to a position of great power
  - ^ That does not happen when you are spending energy trying to blame other people for your circumstances
  - ^ Jesus demonstrated this powerfully from the cross when He said, *Father forgive them for they don’t know what they are doing.* – [Luke 23:34](#)
  
5. Never forget that God wants to use you in greater ways than you can ever imagine
  - ^ This means living by faith in greater ways every year
  - ^ Paul saw the big picture and encouraged the readers of [2 Cor 4:16-18](#)

*Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*

[Eph 3:20](#) - Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

[Rom 5:3-5](#) (New Life Version) - We are glad for our troubles also. We know that troubles help us learn not to give up. When we have learned not to give up, it shows we have stood the test. When we have stood the test, it gives us hope. Hope never makes us ashamed because the love of God has come into our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who was given to us.

- In this year to come let every circumstance of adversity you encounter become an opportunity to see God work in your life in ways that you could never possibly imagine.