

January 2, 2022

**"As We Enter a New Year, Consider These Things"**

**Isaiah 43:18-19**, "Do not call to mind the former things, or consider things of the past. Behold, I am going to do something new, now it will spring up; will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, Rivers in the desert."

**Ezekiel 11:19-20**, "And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, so that they may walk in My statutes, and keep My ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God."

**Jeremiah 29:11-13**, "For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart."

**Deuteronomy 6:4-9**, "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is *one*! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

**Mark 12:28-31**, "One of the scribes asked [Jesus], 'What commandment is the foremost of all?' Jesus answered, 'The foremost is, Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (*If you love God, you will love others.*)

God wants us to learn from the past, but not to dwell on what has already happened (2021 is gone, 2022 is here); unless we are considering what we learned about God during some past event, struggle, or blessing.

Is your (so-called) faith and belief, in God, expressed and exemplified through your behavior, as you live out your life for Christ? God has given us everything we need to know Him, trust Him, enjoy this life, and do what pleases Him today, tomorrow, and forever.

**2Peter 1:3**, "His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life [mortal/temporary] and godliness [spiritual/eternal], through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence."

What are we to do with all the blessings from God?

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**Colossians 3:17**, "Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." **23-24**, "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord and not for people, knowing that it is from the Lord that you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve."

As you think back to 2021 (and you most likely will many times this year), what event, struggle, or blessing (experienced by you or a family member), was pivotal in your relationship with the Lord? Did anything happen that caused you to seek God more fervently? Did God use others to help you through a tough time this past year? Did God use you to help others?

**Proverbs 3:5-6**, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight." *God wants to guide and provide for you.*

**Philippians 4:6-7**, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." **12-13**, "I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." **19**, "And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

God wants you to be saved, to know His love, and to serve Him by loving others on His behalf, as you live out your life following Christ's example.

**1John 2:6**, "The one who says he abides [*lives*] in Him [Christ] ought himself to walk [*live*] in the same manner as He walked [*lived*]... [*following His example*]."

**Matthew 11:28**, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest [*spiritual rest*]."

**1Timothy 2:3-4**, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men [*women, and children of age*] to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

God provides you with everything pertaining to life now and forever; He does this by forgiving all your sins and granting you eternal life. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord [*for the forgiveness of their sins*] will be saved [**Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13**]!

God loves you, and He wants you to love others on His behalf. Did God use you to help others on His behalf this past year? Of course He did!

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**Ephesians 2:10**, "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" [to live our lives for God].

As a Christian, the greatest thing you can do is to share God's love: His plan, purpose and provision of Jesus Christ, showing God's light in this darkening world where unbelievers remain prisoners of darkness and only Jesus Christ can set them free.

**Matthew 5:14-16**, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

**2Corinthians 4:6-9**, "For God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed."

*We have victory in Jesus, now and forever!*

**2Corinthians 5:17-21**, "*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*"

What does God's righteousness in us look like?

**Philippians 4:8-9**, "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."

**Ephesians 5:1-2**, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk [live] in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."

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During this past year, was there a time, or perhaps many times, when you were aware that God was working in your life to encourage and strengthen you, so that you might help others on God's behalf?

**Hebrews 10:24-26**, "Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near."

**1Thessalonians 5:16-18**, "Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

As you enter 2022, make sure you belong to God through Christ: repent of your sins, trust in God's Son for salvation; read and heed God's Word daily, pray to God continually, giving thanks at all times, as you love and encourage others to know and to do what pleases God; while at the same time, sharing God's message with all who will receive it, so that those who believe will be saved.

**1John 5:11-13**, "And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."

May your greatest joys in 2022 be realized in and through Jesus Christ, God's Son, Lord and Savior: Crucified, Resurrected, and Coming Again!

*Pastor Mike*

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