

It Starts Now...

2 Corinthians 6:2 - NIV

² For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you."

I tell you, ***now is the time of God's favor***, now is the day of salvation.

This is the time of year that people make New Year's Resolutions.

They set new goals.

- Relationship goals
- Financial goals
- Physical goals
- Spiritual goals
- They make Life Changing Decisions.

But ***not everyone actually accomplishes those resolutions*** however important they are.

- ***According to Forbes magazine, only 8% of people achieve their financial goals.***
- ***US News reports that 80% of people fail when it comes to New years Resolutions having to do with their health.***

The ***Washington Post says*** in an article entitled -

Why do people make resolutions??????

- ***"A New Year's resolution is a decision to do or not do something in order to accomplish a personal goal or break a habit.***
- It comes at a time when people ***look back*** at the past year and ***make an effort to improve themselves*** as the new-year begins.
- ***Adults often make New Year's resolutions to lose weight or exercise more.***

When asking ***Wikipedia the online encyclopedia*** -

How did New Year's resolutions start?????

Wikipedia responds...

- ***"Religious origins. Babylonians made promises to their gods at the start of each year that they would return borrowed objects and pay their debts. The Romans began each year by making promises to the god Janus, for whom the month of January is named."***

I think people should return what they borrow and pay their debts. And I have to admit that I've never considered how the first month of the year got it's name.

But I am interested in people wanting to change.

- In fact, I'm pretty sure that this is what *interests God the most*.
- It's why He lived and preached *in this world* for 33 years.
- It's why He disciplined 12 men *to continue His message*.
- It's why He allowed Himself to be *crucified on the cross*.
- It's why He was *resurrected on that 3rd day*.
- And it's why He offers forgiveness of sin *through repentance*.
- And it's why He promises the infilling *of His Holy Spirit* to us.

God is in the business of helping people change their lives.

If only **8%** of people are capable of achieving their financial resolutions...
20% their health goals and far less than that continue them into the next year...

- *God knows we are unable to live in this world* relationally and spiritually *the way we desire to* and *especially the way He would command us to*.

Understand, *if we are going to have* real, positive, significant and lasting *change in our lives* (especially spiritual change)...

- It's going to *take more than any of us are capable of* on our own.
- It's going to *take the help of God*.

So how does it all get started???

- Better yet... *When does it all get started?*
- *This is a great question.....*

For a lot of people, *the only time they seriously consider change in their life is when they make a New Year's resolution*.

- But honestly, we all make *small incremental changes* in our lives every day.
- To some degree or another *our lives are like a ship on the sea* being pushed one way or another *by situations and circumstances*.
- And *our responses to these things* result in the *gradual changes* that make up the direction our lives are going.

This kind of change is sometimes reactionary.

- It is involuntary many times.
- And it generally leads us where we really don't want our lives to go, hence ***the need for things like New Years resolutions***.

Honestly, ***it's the reason we need God's help in our lives***.

- Because ***spiritually each and every one of us*** is naturally drawn to the things in this world that destroy us spiritually and separate us from God and ***His will in our lives***.

We might need more than a New Year's Resolution if –

- We really and genuinely want to have ***the kind of change in our lives*** this year that's going to ***make a difference in our lives....***
- And cause us to live above ***the guilt and shame of sin....***
- And ***the things that would destroy us*** physically, relationally and most importantly, spiritually.

I wonder if there could come some change in someone's life today.....

- **Not** because it's New Years,
- But because they simply have decided ***"It Starts Now!"***
 - ***I'm ready - I've had enough - It's time!!!***

We do this every week.

- We'll be back here next week doing it.
- And the week after that.
- ***Offering people the chance to change their lives*** and make things right with God.

It's not a New Years thing - It's a *"It Starts Now"*** thing!!!**

Peter told those people on the day of Pentecost

Acts 2:39 – ***The promise is for you and your children*** and for all who are far off— for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

They asked Peter 2000 years ago, ***what should we do?***

- **What change needs to happen?**
- ***How do we fix our lives?????***

Peter told them the same thing I'm going to tell you today.....

Acts 2:38 - Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

We can't fix our spiritual conditions ourselves!!!

- You and I **need God's forgiveness**.
- That's why **we repent**.
- That's why **we get baptized**.

All of us need the gift of His Holy Spirit if –

- We are going to have a chance **at living above the spiritual onslaught** –
- That **the devil is going to throw our way**
- **To keep us from living for God**.

But we don't just make up our minds to **do this in January because it's New Years**.

- **We do this in February** - And in **March** - And in **April** -

Joshua said in - Joshua 24:15 -NIV

¹⁵ ***But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.***

Paul tells us in

Hebrews 12:1 - NIV

12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us **throw off everything that hinders** and **the sin that so easily entangles**. And let us run with **perseverance (or Patience)** the **race** marked out for us,

Patience, that ***means consistency***.

- Every day.
- It's not just a **New Years** thing.
- It's not just a **Sunday** thing.

It's a **Walk With God** *not a visit to the spiritual Emergency Room.*

- We don't come running in here only when our lives are falling apart.
- We don't just pray when we've got no alternative.
- We don't just worship Him because it's 11 am on a Sunday.

We're walking with God.

- On Sunday - On Monday - On Tuesday

We're at church when the church doors are open...

- **not** just because it's Sunday.

We pray all the time...

- **Not** just because we're facing the worst thing that could ever happen to us.

Someone said... ***I need some change in my life.***

- Well, start now!

Someone says, ***my family really needs some help.***

- Well, It starts now.

It's not about New Years.....

- ***It's about the fact that Jesus loves you!!!!!!!!!!!!!!***
- He wants you to live above sin and successfully in this world
- **Which by the way includes** your money, and your health and your relationships.....
- **Because - all of these things affect your spiritual condition.**

But ***we can't*** fix all this stuff ourselves....

- **We need God's help!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Revelation 3:20 -

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup (or Eat) with him, and he with me.

You know we always want to put stuff off.

- We all do it.
- Sadly too many people put this decision off until it's too late.

I do way too many funerals for people who never did open the door and let Jesus into their lives.

- I have to be honest with you. It's not fun doing those funerals.

CLOSE:

Revelation 3:20 -

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and **open the door**, I will come in to him, and will sup (or Eat) with him, and he with me.

Do you hear that??????

"Open the door"!!!!!!!

Jesus says, "It starts now!"

- **Open the door!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**
- Open the door of your heart
- Open the door of your mind
- Open the door of your faith

Open up and let God in.....

- It starts the moment you open that door!
- It starts the second you say yes to Him and ***begin to give your heart and life to Him.***

People want to play "tough guy."

- Nope... I can do it myself.
- Nope.. I don't need anybody's help.

I got news for you...

- At some point, you're not only going to need someone else's help,
- **but you're going to need God's help!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**
- And you're going to need His help in a really big way.

And if you want that help.

- If you accept His grace...
- It can start right now.....

You don't have to make a resolution.

You don't have to hire a coach.

You can bow your head right now and ask for His forgiveness and His help.

You can decide to bend a knee at this altar and give your life to Him today.

It starts now!!!!

2017 – Is a year of restoration!!!!

AND IT STARTS NOW!!!!