

HOW TO MAKE 2009 THE BEST YEAR OF YOUR LIFE

MESSAGE NUMBER 3 OF 4 IN THIS SERIES

When I say that 2009 will be the best year of your life I am not saying it will be great because you won't have any trials, heartaches, or sorrows this year. You will! What I am saying is that 2009 will be the greatest year of your life in spite of the coming trials, heartaches, and sorrows.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR GREETING

One of our members sent Martha (Shaw) an interesting "Happy New Year" Greeting. You might enjoy this:

"I want you guys to be the first of all my E-mail buddies that I wish to send Happy New Year greetings."

As I reflect on 2008, I can say we had a great year:

- Blacks are happy: Obama was elected.
- Whites are happy: O.J. is in jail.
- Democrats are happy: George Bush is leaving office.
- Republicans are happy: Democrats will finally quit saying "Bush stole the election."
- And all of us are happy because the election is finally over.



"I think 2009 will be even better. Immediately after his inauguration: Obama will balance the budget, revive the economy, solve the real estate problem, solve the auto industry problem, solve our gas/alternative energy problem, stop the fires in California, ban hurricanes and tornados, stop identity theft, reverse global warming, find Osama, solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, get rid of corruption in government, and achieve world peace. Then on the 7th day he will rest."

THE KEY TO SUCCESS IN LIFE

On a more serious note, the key to true success in life is to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ as found in the Word of God. Jesus made a promise in Matthew 6:33. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

PUT JESUS FIRST

Do you really want 2009 to be the greatest year of your life? Then put Jesus first in everything. How do we do that?

Make Jesus Lord

The first thing you must do is trust Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and make Him the Lord of your life. Jesus is not just your "Savior, He must be your LORD!

First Part of Every Day

The second step is to give God the First Part of every day (I recommend thirty minutes early in the morning).

First Day of Every Week

The third step is to give God the First Day out of every week. Sunday is the Lord's Day.

First Dime of Every Dollar

Last, but not least, you give God the first dime out of every dollar. This is called Tithing. This is how you acknowledge God's ownership of everything.

- **(Psalm 24:1)** "The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."
- **(Haggai 2:8)** "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts."

A person who tithes acknowledges that God owns the earth and all of the wealth (including ours) on this earth and we are God's "stewards" (Managers).

Someone put it this way:

"Tithing is not man's way of raising money. Tithing is God's way of raising children."

REVIEW OF LAST WEEK

Before we go any further, let's take just a moment to review a couple of things from last week. I accidentally left out something important.

First Thirty Minutes

When you give God the first part of your day I suggested getting up early and give God at least thirty (30) minutes. Divide that thirty minutes between Prayer and Bible reading.

Prayer Outline

The second part of that thirty minutes is spent praying. Written copies of the sermons where this is explained are available and here is how you pray.

- 1. Praise**
- 2. Thanksgiving**
- 3. Confession**
- 4. Intercession**
- 5. Petition**

Bible Reading Outline

When we read our Bibles, we begin to look for things God desires to reveal to us. Here are "nuggets" we should look for.

- 1. Is there a new truth revealed?**
- 2. Is there a sin I should forsake?**
- 3. Is there a command I should obey?**

4. Is there a question answered?

5. Is there a new subject I would like to have more information on?

We Overlooked Two Points

Last week we somehow left out two of the most important points to look for when reading our Bibles.

6. Is there an example I should follow? The Bible is filled with examples of great men and women.

Parents should pray for their children, name them after the great characters in the Bible, and challenge them to be like those persons (Examples: Joseph, Caleb, Joshua, and Daniel).

7. Is there a promise I can claim?

Someone has said that there are more than three thousand (3,000) promises in God's Word. When you read your Bible and discover those promises it is more exciting than panning for gold.

GIVING GOD THE FIRST DAY OF EVERY WEEK

In a moment, I want to give you my opinion on what is right and wrong on Sunday. But first, let's consider the Sabbath and Sunday. Which day is the Lord's Day for New Testament believers?

Saturday or Sunday

The Sabbath is the seventh day of the week and Sunday is the First day of the week.

- **The Sabbath is on Saturday** and Sunday is on Sunday (of course!).

- **Jews, Seventh Day Adventists, and Seventh Day Baptists** meet on Saturday. They all still believe that we are under the Law.

- **Christians who follow** the New Testament meet on Sunday, which is our "Lord's Day."

- **We meet on Sunday**, the First Day of the week because Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week.

- **The early church met** on the First Day of the Week. Read through the book of Acts to confirm this.

Old Testament



In the Old Testament, God's people (Jews) were under the Law of Moses and they worshiped on Saturday.

Not only did they worship on the Seventh Day, there was a whole list of "do's and don'ts" they had to follow. The rules were very strict.

For example, if a person worked on the Sabbath they were put to death. It was serious business. There were so many rules it was a full-time job just to keep up with them.

New Testament

In the New Testament, things are all different. They were under the Law. We are under Grace. Those under the Law worshiped on Saturday, there was also a long list of "foods" they couldn't eat.



Watch out for those who want to place you back in bondage under the LAW. They will burden you dietary rules and regulations such as no pork, catfish, etc. They will also try to convince you that Saturday is the proper day to worship.

THREE IMPORTANT SCRIPTURES

There are three Scriptures you must read if you want to be right on this matter.

1. Colossians 2:16-17

(LB) "So, don't let anyone criticize you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating Jewish holidays, and feasts, or New Moon ceremonies Sabbaths. For these were only temporary rules that ended when Christ came."

I Timothy 4:1-6

4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the

faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

4:2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,

4:3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

4:4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; 4:5 for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

4:6 If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed."

Those living under the law couldn't eat



pork or catfish. Under GRACE, We can eat anything we want to eat.

(See wild hog in the picture above).

I remember one of our members brought fried Rattlesnake to Dinner-on-the-Grounds. People liked it until they found out what it was.

Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)

There was a great controversy in the early church between the Jewish believers

and the new Gentile believers.

- The Jewish believers felt that the Gentiles should keep the Law just like they did.
- The controversy became so great they had to call a meeting in the big church at Jerusalem.
- They had the meeting, voted, and sent a letter out to all of the Gentile churches. That letter laid down the rules for Christians in the church.

FOUR SIMPLE RULES

15:28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things:



15:29 that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell."

This was the official position of the First Church in Jerusalem. Notice, they said they did not want to place any further burden" on Gentile believers. The Law was a heavy burden (see picture above).

GOD'S 4 RULES FOR CHRISTIANS

- 1. Don't eat meat offered to idols.**
- 2. Don't eat or drink blood.**
- 3. Don't eat animals that have been strangled.**
- 4. Live a sexually pure life. Don't become involved in sexual immorality.**

NOW, WHAT ABOUT THE LORD'S DAY?

What can we do on Sunday and what should we avoid? May I share my personal opinion on this?

- 1. We should recognize Sunday as the Lord's Day.**
- 2. We ought to go to church on Sunday.**



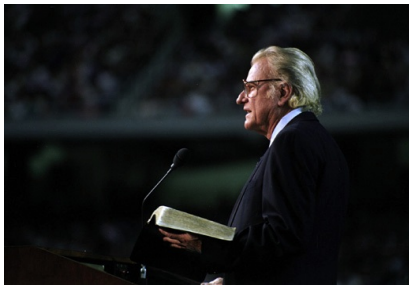
Church attendance is important. Serious Christians attend church faithfully. **(Hebrews 10:25)**

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (King James Version)

3. We ought to Praise God and Worship God on Sunday.



4. We ought have Praise and Preaching on Sunday.



5. We should bring our Tithes and Offerings to God's House on Sunday. (1 Cor. 16:2)



“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered

him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”

(NLT)

“On every Lord's Day, each of you should put aside some amount of money in

relation to what you have earned and save it for this offering. Don't wait until I get there and then try to collect it all at once.”

Every Christian should tithe and that tithe should be brought to the local church on the First Day of every week.

Tithing acknowledges God's ownership of everything. God is the owner and we are his “stewards” (managers).

Nobody should ever be allowed to hold any leadership or position in the church if they don't tithe. Tithing is where good stewardship begins - - not where it ends.

Children will learn to “Rob God” or they will learn how to be good stewards by watching their parents.

Giving is an important part of true worship. In the Old Testament, no-one would even think of going to the house of God without a gift or an offering.

We will focus on that next week in the last message in this series.

6. We ought to observe the Lord's Supper on Sunday (Acts 20:7)

“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.”

7. We ought to rest and spend time with our families on Sunday.



Sunday is like the Sabbath in this respect. When people were to work six days and rest one, they will usually live longer, happier,

and healthier lives.

When Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath," He was explaining that one day of rest was designed to benefit the people and their animals, not God.

8. We ought not to work on Sunday unless we absolutely have to.



There are times when we have no choice: We must work on Sundays. But when we have a choice, we

should choose not work on the Lord's Day. The real reason many businesses remain open on Sunday is to make more money. That's the "bottom line!"

I promise you, if you will put God first, work hard for six days, and honor Sundays, God will see to it that you make as much (or enough) in six days doing things "His way" than you would have made in seven days doing things "your way."

We Won't Starve

In the Old Testament, God not only required His people to rest from work one day every week (the Sabbath), He also told them to let the ground rest for one whole year every seventh year. That meant that they couldn't plant any crops for one whole year.

The question on everyone's mind when they heard this was: "What are we going to eat the next year if we don't plant any crops on the Seventh year?" God knew what they were thinking ahead of time and told the Holy Spirit to answer them by putting these verses in the Bible.

(Lev. 25:20-22)

20 And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase:

21 Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years.

22 And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye shall eat of the old store."

Why not try "doing things God's way" this year and see what a difference it will make in your life.

9. We should not get involved with people, programs, activities, or anything that takes us away from church for any length of time.

We attend church once a week or four times a month if we come "all the time." Do you realize that if you miss one Sunday, you are out of church one-half of

that month. You not only miss the worship, you miss hearing the preaching of God's Word for that week.

Sports on Sunday

Some parents think their kids must play on a sports team that travels on Sundays or they won't "be seen" and will never



have the opportunity to get a scholarship and attend college.

Don't let Satan fool you! Avoid any club, business, or activity that takes you away from church on Sunday.

The decision is simple! Will I do things "My Way" in 2009 or will I do things "God's Way?"

10. Remember that this is the Lord's Day and not our own.

Let me close with a verse of Scripture about the Sabbath, that contains the basic principles about the Lord's Day.

(Isaiah 58:13-14)

13. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

14. Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed

thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."

Notice: ". . . shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:"

WHAT IS YOUR DECISION?

When we consider all Jesus has done for us (left heaven, came to earth, gave His life on the cross), are the four steps I have urged you to take asking too much?

If you do give God the first 30 minutes in the morning, you still have 23.5 hours every day to do everything else you want to do.

If you do give God the First Day out of every week, you still have six days of every week to do everything else you want to do.

If you do give God the First Dime out of every dollar, you still have 90 cents left out of that dollar to spend any way you want to.

"Try it!" You'll like it!"

This sermon was preached by Pastor Gene Keith on December 11, 2009. Written copies, audio copies, and Power Point copies of this service are available upon request. (352) 332-1493 or 332-9731. You may also visit our website: cbcgainesville.org Pastor Keith's Email is: gk122532@bellsouth.net
