

Sunday January 6, 2013
“What Will be Different in 2013?”
by C Benjamin Dill

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Today is our first sermon of a brand New Year; 2013!

What does the Lord have in store for us in this New Year?

I went back and read the message The Lord sent us on January 1 of 2012; “What will be different in 2012?”

I found it very interesting to look at the challenge the Lord presented to us at the beginning of last year and then to compare it with what really is different today.

A short recap of last year’s message is;

Jesus won’t be different.

Malachi 3:6 For I *am* the LORD, I change not;...

The world won’t be different. They are still going to hate the Lord...and us.

With a few exceptions the earth won’t be different.

Our Church won’t be different; (meaning that we will still, God willing, be committed to all the same things: winning souls, filling the Church with real saved people and bringing all the glory to the Lord we possibly can.)

So, the conclusion was that if anything would be different in 2012, it was likely going to have to be us!

I got a real kick out of an email sent out this week by one of our deacons; it was a New Year's prayer:

"Dear Lord, this year please give me a skinny body and a fat bank account...and please don't get those mixed up like you did last year, Amen."

Many of you were here on January 1 of 2012, and you received that very challenge from the Lord. So, how are you different one year later?

(Let me remind us that when God sends us His message every week, it is not for our entertainment; He requires that we act upon it.)

Your circumstances may have changed; to some degree or another, circumstances always do change. But, that's not what I am asking; how are **you** different than you were one year ago?

I am to some degree wiser than one year ago. I stand before you about 33 lbs. lighter than one year ago.

Lisa and I are somewhat closer to being debt free than we were one year ago.

We have reduced the clutter in our lives and have become better managers of our time.

I have one more complete journey through God's Word under my belt.

You see, we really CAN do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

Some of you have learned this very truth in 2012.

Some of you have overcome harmful addictions in 2012 and you are now free!

Some of you have begun to take control of your finances for the first time in your life.

Some of you have learned how to love your spouse in 2012 and there is now mostly peace in your home (except for an occasional relapse now and then.)

21 of you read all the way through your whole Bible in 2012; some of you for the first time.

Some of you have attained a level of strength and faith and confidence in the Lord that is night and day different than one year ago.

Some of you became soul winners in 2012.

However:

Some of you should be and could be standing here very different than one year ago; but sadly, you are not.

Some of you have become Christians but you are still trying to fit in with the world; thus you are very frustrated and will continue to be until you are willing to come out of the world and separate yourselves unto the Lord.

If you are born again, you have God's promise that He will empower you to make every good change you need to make.

Psalm 84:11 For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

You have examples all around you of other believers who have successfully gone where you need to go and done what you need to do and changed what you need to change.

Ephesians 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

You have the **promise**, you have the **proof** and you have the **power**;

There is no reason that you ought to stay a slave to your old addictions.

There is no reason that you ought to stay frustrated and unhappy.

There is no reason that your marriage should not flourish in the Lord; at least on your side of it.

There is no reason you ought to keep suffering financially.

There is no reason for your life to continue being wasted on that which has no eternal value!

So, what's it going to be? Another year of the same old...or...a praise report next January when your life is night and day different from what it is today?

Today we are simply going to recap some of the things the Lord has taught us that I trust and hope will motivate you to see some real change in 2013:

Let me challenge you first of all:

I. Commit yourself to make that one change the Holy Spirit is leading and convicting you to make.

A. Every believer knows what this change is; here are some things that will help:

1. Don't try to go too fast or take on too much.
2. You did not accumulate all the baggage in your life in a day or a year; you can't unpack it all at once either.
3. Just deal with what the Lord is convicting you about right now; again, we each of us know what that is.
4. There are people out there staying unsaved because they have bought the lie that God demands they change their whole lives all at once.
5. Jesus will save you all by Himself with no help from you whatsoever; and all the changes afterward come one at a time with the Lord empowering you every step of the way!

B. Commit yourself to make a change and then get your motivation right.

1. There are many reasons to do right and make right changes in our lives.
2. But there is one that makes all the difference; do it for Jesus!
3. I will never forget when I quit smoking; I was completely powerless until it was just about

Jesus and my testimony for Him and on that day the miracle arrived!

3. I didn't lose this weight because of my bad knees or my health risk; good reasons though they are; I dropped this weight because I was setting a terrible example for you. Yes, I did it for Jesus.

4. God says we should challenge and encourage one another;

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

5. But don't depend on someone else to keep you motivated in what the Lord wants you to do; if I can talk you into it, you or someone else can talk you out of it! Let a heart that's sold out in love with Jesus do that!

6. And don't blame someone else if you have a setback or a failure; certainly do not give up!

7. Do not allow a lost battle to determine the outcome of the war!

Next:

II. Set up a plan.

A. Here are some really good quotes most of you have heard; the principles behind these are rooted firmly in scripture:

1. "He didn't plan to fail, he just failed to plan."
2. "Those who succeed plan their work and then work their plan."
3. "He that aims at nothing usually hits it."
4. For a Christian, simple basic obedience will place you under the regular guidance of the Lord Himself.
5. First you get saved, then you get scripturally baptized and thus become a part of the Church and then you simply act upon what God shows you and teaches you every week.
6. For the tough stuff you are going to need a plan; we can help you with that.
7. Our Church has been around long enough now that you have plenty of friends right here in this place who used to be where you are able and willing to help you with a plan based in scripture that will get the job done.

B. Be flexible.

1. Just so you will know it was the Lord and not your great plan; the Lord seems to always change it at least a little.

2. **Proverbs 16:9** A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.

III. Always follow Godly council.

A. The power of God to overcome, to see the fulfillment of God's promises in our lives is triggered by doing what He commands us in His Word to do.

1. **1John 3:22** And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

2. **Proverb 16:7** When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

3. **James 1:22** But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

4. Be more about doing right than stressing over not doing wrong.

5. Remember this saying we learned last year: "God is far more concerned with the righteousness you do than the sin you don't."

6. It is doing right that replaces your sin and it is the only thing that will; as well as triggering the promises being fulfilled.

B. Often those who set out to make a real change mess it up by a failure in some other area.

1. Sometimes we prevent the receiving of God's promises in one area when we actually negate them by foolish actions in some other area that is essential and basic. For example:

2. Proverb 6:9-11

9 How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?

10 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

11 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelth, and thy want as an armed man.

3. You may tithe and give, but if you are lazy and won't get up and go to work, God will not violate His Word in order to prosper you.

4. Proverb 6:12-15

12 A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth.

13 He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers;

14 Frowardness *is* in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord.

15 Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy.

5. You may be faithful to God's house, but if you don't clean up your mouth and your heart consequences will come.

6. Gossiping and voicing discord will shut down the power of God in your life faster than just about anything I know!

6. Proverb 6:16-19

16 These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him:

17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

18 A heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,

19 A false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

7. A prideful attitude, an uncontrolled tongue, the sowing of discord – these are things in our sinful flesh nature that will place a brick wall in front of any progress you hope to make.

8. If you are not seeing the victory you seek, you probably should ask the Lord to show you what you are doing or not doing that's messing things up... but you likely already know.

C. Don't be found on the wrong side.

1. Our Lord is the God of Peace.

Hebrews 13:20-21

20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

2. But He is also a divider.

Matthew 10:34-36

34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

36 And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household.

3. Never reject the Word.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

4. Since Jesus IS the Word made flesh; when we reject God's message we are rejecting the Lord Himself!

5. I am constantly amazed at how the message of God's Word affects different people. Most of you know that I love to preach on giving - those who have risen to the challenge also know why!

a. Heart of Purpose Sunday at Lighthouse Baptist Church - every December. We've been doing it for over 10 years now; you know you are probably going to hear something about giving, ok?

b. So, here we are; the same exact message; two different people; two opposite reactions:

c. Word got back from one; "All Pastor Dill talks about is tithing, we're never coming back to Lighthouse again!"

d. Another came to me personally (remember, same exact message) "Pastor, I had to come thank you; after I got over being upset, we started tithing...**and you're never going to believe what God did the very next week!**"

6. If you hear something you disagree with; you need to come talk to me. We will sit down as brethren and friends and get to the bottom of the misunderstanding; most of the time it will be just that.

7. Does it break my heart that someone I've loved and poured my life into says, "We're never coming back?" Of course it does.

8. Should we have sacrificed the great blessing that the one received to keep another a little longer who doesn't really want to be here anyway?

9. This is a moot point anyway considering that I do not get to choose what I preach: I can only preach what the Lord gives me.

10. Don't be that one who finds himself on the wrong side; the consequences are far greater than you could ever imagine.

Conclusion: When the sword of God's Word goes forth, it will either prune you and plant you deeper or it will cut you out and divide you from those who receive it.

What needs to change for you: what will be different in 2013?

Will you commit yourself to make that change?

Will you set up a plan and get started?

Some of you could have won many to the Lord in 2012: you are even equipped and know how to do it.

Yet because you were not committed to a plan and a schedule, few or none were won.

Some of you are still addicted to something vile; you tried to give it up but you didn't get some other things right and you found no power to change. It wasn't God's failure; it was yours!

What's it going to be? Another year lost? Another year of bondage?

Or a praise report next January like none before it?

You have the promise, you have the proof and you have the power; what are you going to do with it?

Get your motive right; What have you ever done that was really for Jesus and not just yourself?

Quit blaming God or me or someone else for what is your own doing.

Let's set up a real plan; follow it through; and you can stand here in 2014 with real victory under your belt.