

## Resolved for Christ

Brothers, this morning I would like to draw your attention to the first four verses of Psalm 101.

**A Psalm of David.**

**I will sing of lovingkindness and justice,**

**To You, O LORD, I will sing praises.**

**I will give heed to the blameless way.**

**When will You come to me?**

**I will walk within my house in the integrity of my heart.**

**I will set no worthless thing before my eyes;**

**I hate the work of those who fall away;**

**It shall not fasten its grip on me.**

**A perverse heart shall depart from me;**

**I will know no evil.**

Notice the firm determination in David's prayer, here. Listen to the *resolve* he expresses in almost every verse. He says: I *will* sing... I *will* sing... I *will* give heed... I *will* walk... I *will* set no worthless thing before my eyes... It *shall not* fasten its grip on me...I *will* know no evil. Now these are noble words from the greatest of all the Old Testament kings of Israel - a man after God's own heart. But what is this Psalm teaching us about being a godly man? David is an example for us, here, but we would only be falling into a kind of moralism if we simply say - "Look at David and see how good he is, here. Just be like David! Now go and do the same." And not only that but we know more of David's story. When we read our Bibles we know that when at the *end* of David's life sadly he said "Truly, my house is *not so with God*" (2 Samuel 23.5). This is

a confession from David the King, that for all of his resolve to walk within his house in the integrity of his heart, he knew that he had not pleased the Lord in all things. He did not always walk in a perfect way.

But the Psalms also point forward prophetically. We must remember that David is a prophetic type of the Greater David who was to come - our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one who now may say with confidence that, "While David may have failed to walk with integrity of heart in all things as the King of Israel, I did not fail to please my Father in all things" and He continues at this very moment living out *His resolve* to glorify the name of God as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, world without end. Jesus is a man of resolve like no other. David's words here picture *Him* with His face set like flint on God's purposes. And the good news, brothers, is that He obeyed God perfectly in our place. His obedience by faith becomes ours. This is good news because we make resolutions and then we fail and fall down and get so discouraged that we just don't ever want to attempt great things again. So, why bother making a resolution if we know that we will sometimes fail and if we are credited with the perfect obedience - the perfect service - of the very Son of God? Brothers, let me make a case to you this morning that *we must be resolved for Christ*. It is our love for the Lord and what He has done that compels us to set our minds on the things that please Him. It compels us to set aside the things that displease Him. His love constrains us. If we love Him we look for ways to show Him just that. And He sees. And He is pleased even by our most feeble efforts. But what then if we make a resolve in some area and then fail? Remember that He is mindful that we are but dust. He is the one who heals even our backsliding. How much more will He accept our feeble efforts and multiply the fruit of our imperfect obedience? So, brothers, take courage. *Be resolved for Christ*. Even now, *He is resolved for you* for your good and for His own glory. His purposes do not change and as the objects of His

love He does not change His resolve to finish the good work that He began in you - and to stir you up to greater things. “The people - the men - who know their God will be strong and take action” - it says in Daniel 11.32.

Consider then with me what this may look like for your own personal life in Christ. How may we be resolved for Christ in a more intentional way this morning? What are some non-negotiable things that we need to have firm determination to put into practice? And why should we consider these things? Brothers it is because ***He is worthy***. He is worthy. “By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to **walk in the same manner as He walked.**” (1 John 2:5-6) How did Jesus walk? He walked by faith and not by sight. He walked in order to give and not to receive. He walked so that a bruised reed would not be broken and a smoking flax would not be put out. He walked so that all might be fulfilled that was written in the Law and the Psalms and the Prophets. He walked in dependent prayer upon His Father in Heaven. He walked sustained by the food of doing the will of His Father. He walked in order to seek and to save that which was lost. Brothers we are certainly called to follow our Master in His resolve.

So then what can we do? We can start by seeking the Lord and asking the Holy Spirit to stir us up and to teach us ***what it means*** to be resolved for Christ. Then we can take a step of faith and write down ***something specific*** that we are resolved to do. Make sure that it is tethered to Scripture in what it says. Put a date on it. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to be faithful in it.

Two words of caution with this approach. First, don't make a new law for yourself that isn't commanded by Christ. Find an area of Scriptural obedience that you need to improve upon and highlight that for yourself. Don't set a bar of perfection or rashly vow to never fall short.

Second, don't ever think that you commend yourself to God by your diligence, or think that you have sinned yourself outside of His grace by your feebleness in obedience. Be humble - don't think more highly of yourself than you ought.

Now with all that said, sometimes it is helpful to read Christian biography and see what other men of God from previous generations have done and when you find how they made specific resolutions in order to spur themselves on to greater things in the Lord, then take what good you can from them. They are not perfect but when you see an example of a man who is resolved for Christ then it is a good thing to imitate such faith and imitate such obedience. This morning my intent is to give you one such list of resolutions made by a missionary to China over 100 years ago because you may find it helpful as an example. Feel free to take from it what the Lord may be using right now to provoke you in a good way.

Here are the 7 specific resolutions that this man wrote down in the fly-leaf of his Bible. Just listen to this and see what this man had as non-negotiable convictions in his life:

- 1. Seek to give much—expect nothing.**
- 2. Put the very best construction on the actions of others.**
- 3. Never let a day pass without at least a quarter of an hour spent in the study of the Bible.**
- 4. Never omit daily morning and evening private prayer and devotion.**
- 5. In all things seek to know God's will and when known - obey at any cost.**
- 6. Seek to cultivate a quiet prayerful spirit.**
- 7. Seek each day to do or say something to further Christianity among the lost.**

Let's consider, briefly, each of these resolutions and where they came from. If I could ask Jonathan Goforth - that was this missionaries' name - Goforth - that's a great name for a missionary isn't it? If I could ask Mr. Goforth right now - tell me why from your understanding of the Bible did you resolve to: **Seek to give much—expect nothing?** I'm sure that Goforth would give the Scripture to support this resolution such 2 Corinthians 8.9 which says: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich." *Seek to give much—expect nothing.*

Now what about the resolution to: **Put the very best construction on the actions of others?** Just look at Proverbs 17.9: "One who conceals an offense seeks love, but one who repeats a matter separates close friends." *Put the very best construction on the actions of others.*

Now what reasons are there from the Word of God to make a resolution to: **Never let a day pass without at least a quarter of an hour spent in the study of the Bible?** Look at Job 23.12: "I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." *Never let a day pass without at least a quarter of an hour spent in the study of the Bible.*

So then where does the Bible say that a man would: **Never omit daily morning and evening private prayer and devotion?** Look at Psalm 55.17: "Evening and morning and at noon, I will pray and cry aloud, and He will hear my voice. *Never omit daily morning and evening private prayer and devotion.*

Where does the Bible tell us that we should be so resolved that: **In all things seek to know God's will and when known - obey at any cost?** Look at Psalm 143.10: "Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; let Your good Spirit lead me on

level ground. *In all things seek to know God's will and when known - obey at any cost.*

What moved this man to make the resolution to: **Seek to cultivate a quiet, prayerful spirit?** Look at Psalm 63.1: “God, You are my God; I shall be watching for You.” *Seek to cultivate a quiet, prayerful spirit.*

And for the last resolution what is the Biblical reason why a follower of Christ would: **Seek each day to do or say something to further Christianity among the lost?** Look at 1 Peter 3.15-16: “Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, but with gentleness and respect; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who disparage your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. *Seek each day to do or say something to further Christianity among the lost.*

Jonathan Goforth and his wife Rosalind served almost 50 years in China and North Korea, they had 11 children and of those they had to bury five of them in China at young ages. He was almost killed in the Boxer Uprising of 1900 but managed to escape, and later was instrumental in the revivals in Manchuria and what is now North Korea.

Brothers, we haven't arrived yet. For some of us there is much ground that we have yet to cover in our walk with Christ in this life. For others of us our time is short and none of us knows how many days we have left. Moses prayed, “So teach *us* to number our days, that we may present *to You* a heart of wisdom.” (Psalm 90.12) But we must count the cost of being resolved for our Lord Jesus Christ. *It will mean renouncing the world.* One Puritan wrote:

*“He that is **resolved** for Christ, though with the loss of all, and with the displeasure of all the world; he that can be poor for Christ, that can be vile for Christ, that can go hungry and naked with Christ, that can go alone with Christ, and that even then, when it is but turning away from Christ, and he may be rich and honorable, and be clothed, and be filled, and have company enough, as much as he desires,—he forsakes the world. He that can renounce the world, whenever either Christ must be forsaken or all things for Christ; he has renounced the world.”* -Richard Alleine

To be resolved for Christ will mean renouncing the world and to be resolved for Christ will mean **renouncing sin**. This pastor goes on to speak of self examination and true, specific repentance. Listen carefully to this:

*“Never make yourselves believe you are enemies to sin, till you make narrow and particular inquiry after it; after all sin, the several kinds of it, whether of omission or commission, whether open or secret, greater or smaller, sins of ignorance or knowledge; your beloved, your most pleasing sins, your most gainful lusts, whatever they be, you can never renounce them till you **resolve** to make a diligent search after them.”* (Richard Alleine)

Brothers, my prayer is that God may continue to grant us repentance and that in setting our mind on the things of Christ we may together be resolved for Him alone. Thank God that He was so resolved to seek and to save wretches like us - that nothing could distract Him from the cross. The devil couldn't make Him waver. The world couldn't allure him. And he disciplined himself to know and do the will of His Heavenly Father at all costs. Praise God though we are great sinners, we have a great Saviour. So, brothers, again, take courage. Be resolved for Christ. Even now, **He is resolved for you** for your good and for His own glory

Brothers, will a few of you pray, and then I will, to close our time together?