



SAFE HARBOR

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Resolutions

Every year around New Year's Day people sit down and make resolutions which they may or may not keep. A trip through the dictionary or through a thesaurus gives a multitude of definitions and synonyms for this complex word. There is everything from an act of determination to making a picture or image clearer. Many of the resolutions made on New Years are hopeful solutions to perceived problems. So I would like to suggest some resolutions for Christians and the Church to make and fulfill by the determination and the power of the Holy Spirit.

1. To try all that is spoken, whether from pulpit, radio, TV or print, against the full word of God. (John 14:25-26) Just because someone says it and it sounds good does not mean that it is of God.
2. To do as much as humanly possible to verify that any giving done is going to helping the poor and needy and not towards satisfying an ego trip that requires bigger and more lavish churches, pastoral estates or the likes. (James 1:27; Matthew 25:34-36)
3. To not follow the dictates of popular culture but to stand firmly and humbly in opposition to the people who would bring the wrath of God upon society by their selfish appeal to a false humanity. (Romans 1:28-32; John 15:18-19)
4. To begin each day with a prayer for the illumination of the Holy Spirit and continue the conversation with God throughout the day. (Ephesians 6:18)
5. To remember that the Church shares the mission of Jesus to seek and save the lost. It is not to become a social club. (Luke 19:10)

These sound simple enough to keep but how difficult is the task to see through to completion.

Any resolution requires commitment on the part of the resolver. The lack of commitment is the major reason why all the New Year's resolutions quickly fade into the abyss of disappointment and oblivion.

Have you ever been in a church service and participated in singing, “I have decided to follow Jesus”? Please think about the words of this song. It spells out commitment to the Risen Savior and the new life he gives. But do we take it to the workplace and proclaim our dedication to Christ or back down from the first challenge? When someone disparages the Christian faith, are we ready to boldly proclaim the truth of the Gospel?

Peter swore that he would never turn his back on Jesus but in the court of the High Priest he denied Him three times.

Foxe’s Book of Martyrs is reading that inspires as well as condemns today’s church for its lack of commitment. The stories coming out of Africa constantly remind us of the price of discipleship.

In the end the question is simply “How resolute are we in our commitment to Christ and His love”?

Reflections

Newsweek magazine recently published an article which purposed to show that the Bible was not true and full of contradictions. Evidently the writer of the article had never read the Scripture or sought only to prove his point without any understanding of the truth and accuracy of the Bible. This is an invitation to all Christians to learn about their Scripture.

The Psalmist write, “O come, let us sing to the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation! Let us come into His presence with Thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise!”. (Psalm 95:1-2) Consider the relevance of this for the Christian whose body is now the Temple of the Holy Spirit. We are therefore continually in the presence of God and should be making our songs of praises continually. This is a remedy to apathy as well as temptation.

How truly welcoming is your Church to strangers? The Church is not an exclusive organization of hermit saints but rather a place where sinners may find the answer to their world of devastated by sin.

Words of Promise

*Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is discord, harmony;
Where there is error, truth;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

This prayer was attributed to St Francis of Assisi. Its origin is unknown. Its first documented appearance was in 1912.

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