

Preaching In The New Year

In preparing a sermon for today I considered several topics:

Things I learned in 2006:

- We are people of grace not people of justice
- Christianity is about looking around at what God is doing and recognizing this as an invitation...Rick Warren

But that didn't happen...re-visitations of stories we've heard

I really felt led recently to talk about hands.

I had a song that made people cry by Nickel Creek that Jean couldn't listen to...

...and an incredible video of Tony Melendez...Toe Jam Music

Service and our hands as Christ's hands

The focus on Christ living in us and our service upwelling as a result of Christ's overflowing our hearts.

All really good stuff to reflect on but it never came together.

I wanted to include discussion of the real meaning of Christmas...a week too late...goodness without Godness...the VHF radio.

Expound....

I then thought about a sort of end of the year spiritual inventory when I ran across this:

Testimony of a young preacher from Zimbabwe

I'm part of the fellowship of the unashamed. I have the Holy Spirit's power. The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made; I'm a disciple of His! I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still.

My past is redeemed; my present makes sense; my future is secure. I'm finished and done with low living, sight walking, small plannings, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed visions, worldly talking, cheap giving and dwarfed goals.

I no longer need preeminence, prosperity, position, promotions, plaudits, or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognized, praised, regarded, or rewarded. I know life by faith, lean on His presence, walk by patience, am uplifted by prayer, and I labor with power.

My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way rough, my companions few, my guide reliable, my mission clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded, or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity.

I won't give up, shut up, let up, until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, and preached up for the cause of Christ. I am a disciple of Jesus. I must go 'til He comes, give 'til I drop, preach 'til all know, and work 'til He stops me. And when He comes for His own, He will have no problem recognizing me...My banner will be clear.

Pretty great stuff but the idea of any sort of personal inventory in the face of this excellent definition of the Christian attitude...well...maybe next year.

So in the interest of trying to achieve a few well placed baby steps in this direction I came up with this idea owing to my long held personal adage when in doubt ...make a list. Actually I had already drafted the list of “things to do for 2007 spiritual growth” when I started reading in Luke and one after another passages began to emerge as biblical support for the list. It went like this:

Things to do:

Pray daily and humbly **Luke 18:***1* Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. *2* He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. *3* And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' *4* "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, *5* yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!'" *6* And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. *7* And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? *8* I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: *10* "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. *11* The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector. *12* I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' *13* "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' *14* "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For

everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Love somebody un-loveable Luke 16:19 "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. **20** At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores **21** and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. **22** "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. **23** In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. **24** So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' **25** "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. **26** And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.

Provide something truly significant for someone who could never repay you Luke 14: 12 Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. **13** But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, **14** and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Find someone once close to you that you have lost touch with who wouldn't know and tell them that you are walking with the Lord *Luke 4: 14* Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. *15* He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. *16* He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. *17* The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: *18* "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, *19* to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." *20* Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, *21* and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." *22* All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked. *23* Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself! Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'" *24* "I tell you the truth," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown."

Give to the service of the Lord *Luke 21:1* As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. *2* He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. *3* "I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. *4* All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

Help a child to become more and tell the child about Jesus

Luke 18: 15 People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them.

16 But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. **17** I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

Talk to someone you have known a long time about Jesus... where He is in your life...why...how He got there...what He's doing

Luke 7: 16 They were all filled with awe and praised God. "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said. "God has come to help his people." **17** This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country. **18** John's disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them,

19 he sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" **20** When the men came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?'"

21 At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. **22** So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. **23** Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me." **24** After John's messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? **25** If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear expensive clothes and indulge in luxury are in palaces. **26** But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. **27** This is the one about whom it is written: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' **28** I tell you, among

those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

Pray

Love

Provide

Find

Give

Help

Talk

We need to make 2007 a year of action

We need to be alert to what God is doing around us and with us

We need to remain available for Him to work through us remembering that the hands and feet we use are His to use.

We need to pray that the Spirit of God fills us up so that in all we do we find ourselves humble participants in His works to His glory according to His will.

We need to start right now...Let us pray