

The Bridge to Beyond

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Introduction

We are looking so forward new opportunities as we look forward to a New Year 2010.

This morning, I'm going to present some material that I actually heard last year at this time. I was inspired by Wayne Cordeiro Pastor of New Hope, Oahu, as he spoke about moving beyond good intentions. I never forgot his message and I wanted to share it with you.

So, I'm going to talk about moving past good intentions and we are going to build a bridge today to get there.

Be honest, by a show of hands, how many of you have mentally made some New Year's resolutions already?

It's only been a couple days, so there's a good chance that you...

...haven't broken any yet.

...haven't started on any of them yet. You have just had good intentions.

A Bible story about good intentions:

(Mt 21:28-31 NIV)

²⁸ *"What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'*

²⁹ *" 'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.*

³⁰ *"Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.*

³¹ *"Which of the two did what his father wanted?" "The first," they answered. Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you.*

The first son got past his intentions to not go and went, the second son said “I will”, but never got past good intentions. Who actually did the will of the Father in the end? Well, people who get past good intentions.

People are full of good intentions but can never cross the gap between good intentions and reality. And year after year the same thing happens and people never change.

Now the same is true with us. If we don’t find a way to get past our good intentions, and find a way to cross the gap, then this year will be the same as any other year in which we never got past good intentions.

New Year’s resolutions? “I want more of God’s best in my life.” How many of you with a raise of your hand say, “That’s me! I would love to have more of God’s best in my life.” Every single one of us would want that however, we’ve got to remember this...

God’s best will never happen except through great intentionality.

Hard Work

How does it happen? Example: Paul worked hard. In Phil 3:13, 14, he talks about straining toward and pressing on towards the goal of God’s high calling for him. Prov 14:23 says, “*All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.*” (NIV) Profit can be:

Material as in reaching financial goals or buying that dream boat,
Physical as in the results that come from health & diet goals,
Spiritual as in a closer walk with God.

So somehow we have to build a bridge to cross the gap. How do we do that?

Planks

First make them goals/dreams visible, measurable. How do we get there? 1 John 2:6 says, “*Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.*”

We've got to walk in the same manner as He did even if we don't feel like it. It's a choice.

So how do we build the bridge to cross the gap?

We'll use three bridge building planks.

1. Put guard rails in place and respect them.

The NASB of Jer 31:21 *“Set up for yourself road marks, Place for yourself guideposts; Direct your mind to the highway.”*

“Set up for yourself...” This is important b/c no one can set them up for you; you have to do it yourselves.

“Place for yourself guideposts ...” Guideposts are posts upon which guard rails are built. You are choosing to say, “No, I'm going to set up certain guard rails that I am not going to cross. I'm not going to do this anymore.”

“Direct your mind to the highway...” Because our minds need to be directed.

Guard rails are important. Example: nature

- Without borders a river that was once clean, forceful, directed, filled with life, without borders or banks, that river becomes a swamp.
- Force without limits becomes a destructive explosion.
- Fire without controls becomes an inferno.
- A mind without parameters equals insanity.
- A road without road signs causes one to be lost.
- A life w/o disciplines is a life wasted.

Another example: Man with granddaughter beating on the keys of the piano. No music, she thinks she is free.

Where does true freedom come from? True freedom doesn't just come from random movement.

Another example: Concert pianist. Years of discipline of the scales makes freedom a reality.

True freedom is birthed out of discipline.

That is why Prov 23:19 (NIV) says, "*Listen, my son, and be wise, and keep your heart on the right path.*"

Why does it say keep your heart on the right path? Because our hearts need to be kept within guard rails. Remember, not limited, but birthing true freedom.

Example: Rollercoaster are fixed on rails, so even when it goes over an apex or turns and twists, people are fine with it. It is trusted because it's dependable. There are certain parameters that it will not violate. That is what gives us freedom. So in order to get past good intentions, we have to set certain guard rails in our lives and we will experience true freedom.

So, the first plank is putting guard rails in place, but how do we begin?

Write them down.

Rev 1:19 "*Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later.*" "Write what you have seen".

What did Jesus do, even when Satan tried to tempt him? He said in Lk 4 "*It is written!*"

God still speaks to us today about what He wants to change in us. Write it down. It acts as a reminder of what God's best is for your life. Repeat it in different places. Everywhere we turn, it is like God is reminding us of what He wants us to become.

Second plank (first plank was Put Guard Rails in Place)

2. **Practice what you know is God's best.**

You won't always like practicing...

Example: Sports, musical instrument requires practice.

Hebrews 5:14 (NIV) "*But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves...*" The NI Reader's Version actually says "*They trained themselves with a lot of practice.*"

Example: Our senses like spoiled children; we make them do what needs to be done or they run our lives. Practice.

The third plank:

3. **Look for proof of your faith as a measuring standard.**

This is about proving the bridge to gain the confidence to get across the bridge. It builds faith and faith has to have proof. Lk 7:35 "*Wisdom is proved right by all her children.*" And Mt 11:19 says, "*by her actions.*"

Our faith is proved by our fruit. 1 Pet 1:7 says that trials have come so that our "...*faith – of greater worth than gold - may be proved genuine...*" The proof of our faith is precious. The kind of faith that is proven is the kind of faith that gives us confidence to walk across. If there is no proof, then we won't have the confidence to get past good intentions.

This proof also helps in the defeat of enemy attack that leads to discouragement. "You are not reading the Bible enough; you are not spending enough time with God." You have proof in the days checked off. Builds a sense of confidence. It also helps as a tool to see if you need to pick up the ball if you have dropped it.

So, this brand new year, let's start it off well.

- Let's put the guard rails in place and write them down. True freedom, starts with disciplines that we put on ourselves and that gives birth to and results in freedom and music in our lives.
- And then practice it, just like a pianist would, practice, even though your flesh is saying "I don't want to". We practice it, b/c we know we are going to need it.
- Finally, prove it. The proof will give us the confidence that we need to walk forward. The bridge is going to hold. It is proven.

Those are the planks you are going to need to get past good intentions. And when those three planks are laid in place, I tell you, it won't be just good intentions; it will be fruitfulness. It won't just be desires; it will be reality. It just won't be dreams; it will be dreams fulfilled. And that is the kind of people God wants to have as we move past good intentions.