

- New Years is a strange time of year. We celebrate the turning of a calendar.
- It becomes a time of year we make pledges and vows to better ourselves or do what we can to make the year to come, better than the year that is passing.
- We look at what we did in the past year, and look at what we can do to make ourselves better, or our situation better by changing a habit, routine or mentality.
- Jesus had a much different idea of how we are to change:

While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "**Follow me, and I will make you** fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Matthew 4:18-22

The Big Idea:

It is our responsibility to follow, and His to make.

- It is, "Follow me, and *I will make you*." We should repent of what we have been, but rejoice in what we may be.
- It is not "Follow me, because of what you are already."
- It is not "Follow me, because you may make something of yourselves;"
- but, "Follow me, because of what I will make you."

There are two important points here:

1. Our role, our job → We are to follow, He makes.
2. Our focus → Character over position/situation.

³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Matthew 6:33

Following Jesus Means:

Letting go of our desire to be self made.

- Our society values the concept of being self-made. Being independent, being able to accomplish success on your own.
- But in the gospels we continuously see Jesus placing value in a lost art called dependence.

So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

John 5:19

Focusing our attention on Christ-like character.

- As we look forward to a new year, as we contemplate changes that are to be made, so often we look at our situation and what we can do to improve it.
- Instead I think that it is our character we should be examining... and instead of concern with what we might become ourselves, we ought to be concerned with becoming the kind of people God can mould.

"For this is the will of God, your sanctification..."

1 Thessalonians 4:3

- Unfortunately when it comes to the idea of becoming what God wants us to be we find ourselves on one of two extremes:
- One, we embrace the sinful worldly form of growth and try to achieve our position independently,
- Or, two, we wait idly by, praying and seeking God for His will and fail to act until we get some sort of clear supernatural direction.
- Jesus' formula: we follow, he makes should be our model.
- There is something for us to do: follow him, read about him, learn about him, model his characteristics, fight for meekness, gentleness, self-control, humility etc...

***Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.***

***He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.***

***All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies...***

Who is the man who fears the LORD?

Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose.

Psalm 25:8-12

- Psalm 25 tells us 4 things:
- 1. Sinners are not disqualified from God's sovereign direction (thank goodness)
- 2. The humble are led into what is right
- 3. The Lord leads us in paths of steadfast love when we keep his commands
- 4. He will instruct those who fear him.
- All of these deal with our character. The point is, **you focus on becoming the KIND OF PERSON God promises to lead, and he will MAKE YOU into the person you are to become.**

One thing that I am going to let go of:

One thing that I am going to focus on:

NEXT SUNDAY:

Costs & Benefits part 1

Luke 14:25-33