

Happy New You!

INTRODUCTION

- A. Throughout this past week, we've heard the expression "Happy New Year!" countless times.
 - 1. The celebrities from our favorite programs have done 30-second spots wishing us a "Happy New Year."
 - 2. Many of us watched the ball drop in Times' Square and heard the expression "Happy New Year."
 - 3. Many of us were with family and friends when the clock struck midnight Monday evening, and as the clock struck 12, we shouted, "Happy New Year."
- B. For many the new year is really not happy.
 - 1. While thousands shout "Happy New Year," they awaken to the same burdens as before: not knowing how to meet their financial obligations, not knowing if their marriage can be saved or if it's even worth saving, not knowing how to escape the bondage to drugs, alcohol, sex, gambling, or countless other addictions.
 - 2. There is no magic moment at midnight that suddenly ushers in utopia.
- C. Instead of a "Happy New Year!" we need a "HAPPY NEW YOU!"
 - 1. What is it that makes a "HAPPY NEW YOU"?
 - 2. THE NEW BIRTH, THE NEW WALK & THE NEW GOAL.

THE NEW BIRTH

- A. "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:3).
- B. Birth is the way we made our entry into this physical world.
 - 1. Spiritual birth is the way we make our entry into the spiritual world.
 - 2. Nicodemus and the other Pharisees believed that their physical descent from Abraham entitled them to acceptance in the kingdom of God — Jesus makes it plain that it is spiritual birth, not physical birth, that entitles one to acceptance in God's kingdom.
- C. Notice the necessity of the new birth.
 - 1. Jesus said that unless we are born again we cannot see the kingdom of God.
 - 2. Jews understood seeing the kingdom of God as participating in the kingdom at the end of the world.
 - a. Seeing the kingdom of God would mean that one is resurrected.
 - b. Unless we are born again, we shall not be resurrected.
- D. As we examine other passages, we learn some things about this new birth.
 - 1. This new birth comes from God — we "were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (Jn. 1:13).
 - 2. This new birth is possible on account of the resurrection of Jesus Christ — God "has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet. 1:3).
 - 3. This new birth takes place through the word of God — we have been "born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever" (1 Pet. 1:23).
- E. At this time of the year, so many dream of starting over — starting a weight loss program, spending more time with family, finding a new job.
 - 1. In Jesus, it is really possible to start again.
 - a. As we are born again, we have a new identity as a child of God, we have new opportunities to serve God, we have a new hope that we shall be with God in eternity.
 - b. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).
 - 2. Have you experienced the new birth or do you need to be born again?

THE NEW WALK

- A. "We were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).
- B. When we were buried with Christ in baptism, we were raised to live a new life.
 - 1. We were not saved to live the same lives we lived before our conversion.
 - 2. Let us examine some requirements of this new walk.
 - a. We are to consider ourselves "to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:11).
 - b. "Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal. 5:24).
 - c. Jesus "bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness" (1 Pet. 2:24).

- C. If our life does not change after our baptism, can we really claim to be a Christian?
1. Illustration about Officer Kenneth Trevithick of the Spencer, Iowa police force, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #10835.
 2. Illustration about Augustine seeing his former mistress and replying, "It is not I."
 3. That's the change that must take place after our conversion. Have you made that change?

THE NEW GOAL

- A. Phil. 3:13-14.
- B. Before his conversion, Paul had one primary goal — to be the best Jew he could be.
1. Notice what Paul says concerning his former days in Judaism.
 - a. Phil. 3:3-6.
 - b. Gal. 1:14.
 2. Paul was well on his way to being a powerful influence in Judaism.
- C. What were some of your past goals? Were your goals to see how many women you could take to bed in a single week-end, was it to see how many profane words you could use, was it to see how much money you could earn, was it how far you could advance at work, regardless of whom you hurt?
- D. When Paul became a Christian, his ambitions in life drastically changed.
1. He forgot those things which were behind him.
 - a. That Paul forgot those things behind him did not mean that he obliterated his memory, but it means that he did not allow these things to consume him to where he could not keep his eyes on his goal.
 - b. We, too, need to forget our past lives — we need to forget our past sins, our past failures, our past successes, and focus on serving God as well as we possibly can.
 2. He was no longer concerned with being the best Jew he could be, but he was determined to serve God to the best of his ability.
 3. Scripture implores us to have goals for ourselves.
 - a. "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able" (Lk. 13:24).
 - b. "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed" (2 Tim. 2:15).
 4. What new goal are you going to set for the is new year? Will it be to be faithful to God? Will it be to move closer to heaven? Will it be to attend the services of the church? Will it be to obey the gospel?
 5. Illustration about Alice in Wonderland asking the Cheshire Cat which way she should go, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #4326.
 6. What goal are you going to set?