

Where This Church can Go

INTRODUCTION

- A. Poem “A New Leaf,” Encyclopedia of 15 000 Illustrations, #13408.
 - 1. That is the promise of each New Year, a chance to begin again and do things differently, if need be.
 - 2. It is as John R. Rice has said, “No matter what a man’s past may have been, his future is spotless.”
- B. To aid in this New Year process, we make “resolutions” we plan to keep in the coming year.
 - 1. We seldom keep these resolutions.
 - 2. This church, however, should make some resolutions we really intend to keep.
- C. Let’s examine these resolutions.

WE CAN BE UNIFIED

- A. The Scriptures exhort Christians to be unified.
 - 1. We need to speak the same thing and have no divisions (1 Cor. 1:10).
 - 2. We are to be “like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind” (Phil. 2:2).
 - 3. Paul encouraged Euodia and Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord (Phil. 4:2).
- B. We can accomplish so much more if we are unified.
 - 1. If we aren’t unified, the community will have reason to talk.
 - a. Imagine the glee in both the secular and denominational world if we were having problems here.
 - b. If we stood in the parking lot and fought and then some of us left to go somewhere else, this community would have the time of its life.
 - 2. Groups obviously accomplish more when they are unified.
 - a. During the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln paraphrased Jesus, and said, concerning this nation, “A house divided against itself cannot stand.”
 - b. Imagine a basketball team that couldn’t get along with itself. The players, instead of working with each other, would be working against each other—The same thing happens when we fight as a church.
- C. There is absolutely no room in the church for fighting amongst one another.
 - 1. So many churches fight over things that don’t matter.
 - a. How many songs should we have before the sermon?
 - b. What color should the carpet be?
 - 2. We need to be focused on Jesus, and then many things won’t matter.

WE CAN STAND BEHIND OUR LEADERS

- A. The Bible teaches us to support our elders.
 - 1. Those elders who rule well are considered worthy of double honor (1 Tim. 5:17).
 - a. “Double honor” refers to paying elders—in the first century, many churches paid their elders so they could give themselves full—time to that task.
 - b. But, even those elders who don’t rule well are worthy of honor.
 - 1) That is the implication of “double honor”—all elders are worthy of some honor, and those who rule well are worthy of even more honor.
 - 2) We are to honor those who serve as elders.
 - 2. An accusation cannot be accepted against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses (1 Tim. 5: 19).
 - a. If someone tells us an elder is drinking, we can’t accept that accusation with just one witness.

- b. This shows that elders deserve respect.
- 3. We should esteem our elders “very highly in love” (1 Thess. 5:13).
- 4. We are to obey our elders (Heb. 13:17).
 - a. We are not asked to agree with our elders.
 - b. We must, however, do what they ask.
- B. Let us support our elders by:
 - 1. Praying for them.
 - 2. Doing what they ask.
 - 3. Not criticizing them.
- C. Are we honoring our elders?

WE CAN OPPOSE WHAT IS WRONG

- A. God’s people cannot take sin lightly—we must oppose sin.
 - 1. We are to “abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good” (Ro. 12:9).
 - 2. Those who love the LORD must hate evil (Ps. 97:10).
- B. We are to purge sin from our number (1 Cor. 5:6-7).
 - 1. In Corinth, a man was living with his stepmother, his father’s wife.
 - 2. Paul told the church to get rid of the adulterer. .
 - 3. The church could not tolerate adultery among its members.
 - a. Some churches turn a blind eye when someone is involved in sin.
 - b. Are we opposing what is wrong?

WE CAN STAND FOR SCRIPTURE

- A. We must believe and practice every word of Scripture
 - 1. Scripture deserves our respect.
 - a. It is the very word of God.
 - b. It is our pathway to heaven.
 - c. The Scriptures have been respected through the years.
 - 1) When Ezra read the Law before the people, the people were attentive to the Law (Neh. 8:3).
 - 2) When the book was opened in front of the people, the people stood (Neh. 8:5).
 - 2. The Scripture cannot be broken (Jn. 10:35).
 - 3. Only those who do the will of God will enter the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 7:21).
- B. Scripture must be what we practice. Is Scripture what we practice?

WE CAN SET GOOD EXAMPLES

- A. Those in the community must see Jesus living in us.
 - 1. We are to let our lights shine before men (Mt. 5:13-16).
 - 2. Our conduct is to be honorable among non-believers (1 Pet. 2:12).
- B. We can do great harm to the church by failing to heed these admonitions.
 - 1. Those in the community will have every right to accuse us of being hypocrites—The names Jimmy Swaggert and Jim Baker are synonymous with hypocrisy.
 - 2. Those in this community will have every right to refuse wanting to be members of this congregation.

WE CAN GIVE LIBERALLY OF OUR MEANS

- A. Preaching concerning giving is an unpopular subject.
 - 1. I have heard brethren say things like, “If the preacher preaches concerning giving, I’m leaving.”

2. This attitude shows a lack of respect for God's word.
- B. Giving is a biblical injunction.
1. On the first day of the week, we are to give as we've prospered (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
 2. God will bless those of us who give liberally (2 Cor. 9:6-7).
 3. Jesus told us, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).
- C. We must give, because:
1. Scripture teaches us to give.
 2. Not giving harms the work of the church.
 3. How much we give tells us what's important in our life (Mt. 6:19-21).

CONCLUSION

- A. We can accomplish much in this coming year.
- B. We have opportunities to honor God. Are you honoring God?