

Happy New Year - The time for New Year Resolutions:

1* (Storypeople slide) Things I learned from our dog about resolutions

1. the best resolutions are more playing, eating and sleeping
2. Resolutions are a waste of time if you see a squirrel

We know that New Year's resolutions usually have limited value! But I did feel convicted to ask God if He wanted to say anything at the start of the year.

2* He showed me a picture of a mechanical heart

He said – for many – their relationship with Me has developed into something mechanical, which means 'performed automatically and impersonally' and it's resulted in a heart that is more like a machine than one made of flesh. It's operational but not really connected to a life giving, love-giving source. It's functional but it's also harder, colder, and it creaks and it leaks!

I want you to have a heart like this!

3* Soft, vibrant, passionate and pulsating with life. Full of energy, revelation, connection and desire.

I asked God how a mechanical heart could become soft and responsive again and He said through applying 'bolts of truth and through oiling it with the Holy Spirit.' This will increase love and desire for God, and for others to know Him.

God also said that when we live and move from the place of having hearts filled with love and life, nothing will be too much for us. It will be our pleasure to sacrifice and serve Him and others, something that a mechanical heart won't have.

He said to ask ourselves:

Q. Do I have that desire for Him and others burning in my heart?

Q. Do I want my heart to be restored to all God intended it to be?

Q. Do I want bolts of truth and the oiling of the Holy Spirit to do a work of God in me?

Then let's pray and ask Him for that as we begin this year – it's more likely to transform us than any resolutions we might make!

Onto tonight's teaching – which is quite relevant to what we've just prayed since it about finding salvation through Jesus by revelation and faith!

SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST (& HIS FAITHFULNESS TO US) BY REVELATION & FAITH IN HIM Gal 1:11 -12: 3:6-8.

4* Our new teaching series is on Galatians. We will be using other related scriptures but essentially we are focussing on this book because it is all about

5* freedom and

6* outrageous, radical grace! And if we don't remind ourselves of these truths on a regular basis we can easily slip back into a lesser form of the Gospel; the Good News of Jesus, and we can get bogged down in rules and performance and condemnation and judgement – all of which Christ has set us free from!

Galatians is one of Paul's earliest books (AD48) and it burns with passion and a fair amount of indignation because the freedom of the Gospel was under threat.

Jesus' hard won freedom, once found by us, can be easily lost, or become diminished in some way. The Gospel is this: through faith in Jesus and the finished work He has done for us through His death and resurrection, we are a free people - free from sin, guilt, shame, striving and death; free from trying to earn our salvation through doing good works and trying to uphold the 10 commandments.

So, first of all – how do we find this salvation and freedom in the person of Jesus, and how do we ensure we don't lose it?

It must be experienced by us:

7* Gal 1:11 -12,15: Beloved ones let me say emphatically that the Gospel entrusted to me was not given to me by any man. No one taught me this revelation, for it was given to me directly by the unveiling of Jesus the Anointed One.... God called me by His grace, which unveiled His Son in me so I would proclaim Him to the (non-Jewish) people of the world.

8* We see from this passage that salvation comes to each one of us directly (not second hand or through someone else) as revelation. Jesus Christ is unveiled to us as the living Son of God and as someone we can have a real and solid relationship with, by faith.

9* rev•e•la•tion (, rɛv ə'leɪʃən):

1. something not previously known or realized that is revealed or disclosed
2. a. God's disclosure of Himself & His will to His creatures
- b. an instance of such communication or disclosure
- c. something that contains such disclosure eg the Bible

So we see that revelation is how God, the Creator of all things, makes Himself known to us. Without God doing this, we would have no way of knowing that He exists; who He is; what He has done to save us in Jesus Christ, or how we are to live and worship Him.

Bible scholars speak of two types of revelation: natural and supernatural (general or divine).

10* Natural (or general) revelation is where God shows us Himself through the things He has made in nature and creation. He reveals Himself in both what we can observe about the physical world and through the human soul. Natural revelation is natural firstly, because when we look at the created world around us, we have the natural ability to learn about God; and secondly, because the way we learn about Him is through our natural use of reason.

11* Romans 1:19-21 TPT: In reality, the truth of God is known instinctively, for God has embedded this knowledge inside every human heart. Opposition to truth cannot be excused on the basis of ignorance, because from the creation of the world, the invisible qualities of God's nature have been made visible, such as His eternal power and transcendence. He has made His wonderful attributes easily perceived, for seeing the visible makes us understand the invisible. So then, this leaves everyone without excuse.

Natural revelation makes us God-aware but it is insufficient revelation to save us into a close and personal relationship with Jesus.

12* Example of Dad – painter

13* Supernatural (or divine, special) revelation is needed for that!

Supernatural revelation is, in essence, God's disclosure of Himself through His dealings with Mankind - and the ultimate revelation is His salvation plan through His only Son, Jesus Christ.

14* This plan; this living message, along with the dealings of God with His people throughout history are recounted in the inspired words of the Bible. It is here we learn how we are saved—and about the only One who can save us! Burk Parsons makes a good point - If we want God's revelation, we must be in His Word, the Bible and allow the Holy Spirit to bring it alive in us!

15* Hebrews 1:1-2 TPT: Throughout our history God has spoken to our ancestors by His prophets in many different ways. The revelation He gave them was only a fragment at a time, building one truth upon another. But to us living in these last days, God now speaks to us openly in the language of a Son, the appointed Heir of everything, for through Him God created the panorama of all things and all time.

We need both natural and supernatural revelation for life; however, we cannot do without supernatural revelation for salvation and eternal life.

Supernatural or divine revelation is the unveiling of Truth, a light going on inside us!

The Bible puts it like this:

16* 2 Corinthians 4: 3-6: If our Gospel message is veiled, it is only veiled to those who are perishing, for their minds have been blinded by the god of this age, leaving them in unbelief. Their blindness keeps them from seeing the dayspring light of the wonderful news (Aramaic: the flame of the Good News) of the glory of Jesus Christ, who is the divine image of God... For God, who said, 'Let brilliant light shine out of darkness,' is the One who has cascaded His light into us—the brilliant dawning light of the glorious knowledge of God as we gaze into the face of Jesus Christ (Or in the face-to-face presence of Christ).

This explains the revelation of salvation through Jesus perfectly and it also shows the work of Satan to prevent that happening to us. We are all born into a world where God's enemy, Satan, or the god of this age (but not the age to come we note!), tries to outwork his kingdom, a kingdom set on maintaining separation and enmity between us and God, our heavenly Father. For Satan to succeed in his plan to keep us in separation and darkness he must find agreement with us in lies about God, as Romans 1:21 describes:

17* Romans 1:21 Throughout human history the fingerprints of God were upon them, yet they refused to honour Him as God or even be thankful for His kindness. Instead, they entertained corrupt and foolish thoughts about what God was like. This left them with nothing but misguided hearts, steeped in moral darkness.

For 'corrupt and foolish thoughts' let's think 'lies inspired by Satan,' but the Truth is: Jesus through His death and resurrection has done away with the separation caused by our deception, disobedience and sin and made possible a close relationship with our heavenly Father - but if Satan can keep us blind to that and put a veil over our minds and souls, darkening them, then we will never know the truth or act upon it and the separation will tragically remain in us.

18* Supernatural revelation is in effect, spiritually having the veil removed from our minds and souls, opening us up to increasing light, rather than increasing darkness. This is a work of God as He cascades, or pours, His light into our minds and souls. And what does His light reveal and disclose? – It reveals Jesus, bringing us face-to-face with His presence, and it discloses the truth that we can be free because of the unearned, undeserved love and favour of God, revealed in the person and actions of Jesus!

19* Romans 10:9-10 TPT: And what is God's 'living message?' It is the revelation of faith for salvation, which is the message that we preach. For if you publicly declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will experience salvation. The heart that believes in Him receives the gift of the righteousness of God—and then the mouth confesses and gives thanks to salvation.

God will cause everyone who asks Him to remove the veil and pour His light inside them to directly and personally experience salvation; revealing the presence of His Son, Jesus. Then, as they put their trust in what Jesus has done for them and publically declare Him Lord of their life, they are saved into a perfect, eternal relationship with the Father, the kindest person we could ever have the joy of knowing.

20* Romans 5:1-3: Our faith in Jesus transfers God's righteousness to us and He now declares us flawless in His eyes. This means we can now enjoy true and lasting peace with God, all because of what our Lord Jesus, the Anointed One, has done for us. Our faith guarantees us permanent access into this marvellous kindness that has given us a perfect relationship with God. What incredible joy bursts forth within us as we keep on celebrating our hope of experiencing God's glory!

The Bible tells us that this revelation of Jesus not only saves us - it opens up a whole new life to us – we are transformed! And there will be evidence of such a happening in our lives. For me the first tangible thing was the absence of the fear of death. Peace instead of fear is a mark of God's love and light pouring into our lives!

21* Another major transformation that takes place is we sin less and we are involved in spreading goodness, not selfishness. I've heard it said many times that sin will always be part of our lives this side of eternity. I don't often hear it said that we can be sinless! But that statement is truer than the first – let us remember why!

In OT days people were made aware of their sin when they received the 10 commandments; they saw how far they fell short of God's holy perfection. God gave them a way of ridding themselves of their guilt by putting their wrongs on a spotless, wrinkle free lamb. Placing their hands on its head they 'transferred their sins' to the lamb and it died in place of them and justice was upheld. They were then free - until the next time!

This was a sign, a shadow, of the real freedom to come from Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the whole world for all time, which includes yours and mine. In placing our wrongs on Jesus and our lives in Jesus, He takes upon Himself our wrongdoing, guilt and shame (past, present and future), dying in place of us, and upholding justice. Then He rises again (unlike all those sacrificial lambs) and transfers His perfection to us making a way for us to walk in freedom with Him, forever.

22* 2 Corinthians 5:21: For God made the only One who did not know sin to become sin for us, so that we who did not know righteousness might become the righteousness of God through our union with Him.

This is the Good News; this is salvation and this is grace! The miraculous truth is - every believer today possesses the perfect and complete righteousness of Christ. We are seen by the Father as righteous as His Son..

23* This brings us great security and confidence because we no longer jump in and out of favour and acceptance with God based on our performance. Instead we have Jesus' holiness and righteousness, together with God's full acceptance. God is satisfied with Jesus every day and for that reason He is satisfied with us every day! When this is revealed to us, deeper and deeper, and we know who we are, we will sin less, maybe not at all on a day when we remind ourselves of grace!

If we don't understand that all our sins are covered, our eternal security and salvation will seem to hang in the balance and we won't be fully confident in God's presence and unfailing love and acceptance of us. We will feel that if we fail, or don't do enough, we aren't 'right with God' and we will think relationship is damaged or lost. We will be on emotional seesaws feeling OK and favoured sometimes (or even self-righteously great compared to others!) and feeling a terrible failure and unfavoured at other times. Not understanding full forgiveness of sins will affect how we relate to Jesus and the Father and it will leave us open to agreement with Satan's condemning and accusing voice. The truth is we are totally forgiven and free to enjoy the new covenant blessings through Jesus' finished work. Let the Accuser put that in his pipe and smoke it! But let's remember, only revelation of God's grace can keep us in truth and stop us from sinning.

The Bible, full of the inspired revelation of God's grace doesn't address every area of life or answer every question we might have about God or our lives. This is intentional on God's part and requires us to pursue Him for more and deeper unveiling of truth and guidance. In the context of our relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, together with others in the family of God, we continue to live by revelation and by faith.

As a church CL is committed to living and walking by revelation; the specific God-breathed, revealed words of God to us. Supernatural revelation has shaped who we are and what we are called to do together – the declarations on our walls of who we are and what we are about are all based on supernaturally revealed words of God that also align biblically!

We would not have developed CLEAR, Greenhouse, the Soup Run, Young Life, Amber, the Sacred Space, Two Sunday Celebrations and the vision of Shine; we wouldn't be pursuing this building, the Living Room Café or many other things over the years if it had not been for specific revelation and guidance from God to do so.

Many individuals within CL have also been led through revelation of God's call or will upon their lives... J&J, A&N in NZ; Ruth in the Yemen; Aldermore Farm, SOHoP, Alder Trust, New Shoots, Drs, nurses & teachers in various settings, here and overseas.....people living in the Flower Rds specifically called to this area... the list goes on!

24* If you want to get involved with the things declared here, then City Life is the church for you – come and get stuck in with us! At the start of this New Year, 2019, let's determine to live by daily grace and the revealed word of God. Let's refocus if needs be on going to God's word, the Bible, seeking revelation; let's re-look at our prophetic words and see which ones to pick up (let's not let any fall to the ground). Let's expect God to speak and reveal Jesus more and more when we ask and give Him time. Let's prioritise once again our First Love.

And if we've never before realised what Jesus has done for us and we want a direct experience of salvation into Jesus Christ's righteousness and relationship with our heavenly Father – let's not waste another minute! Let's ask Him to unveil our hearts and minds and pour His light and love into our lives. Let's make Jesus our Lord and Saviour tonight and let's tell the world about it! Pray.

CONNECT GROUP Qs & DISCUSSION POINTS:

Q. How can we ensure daily that we are we living in the fullness of the finished work of Jesus and in perfect relationship with the Father (Discuss including times when we mess up and we come under accusation and condemnation)?

Q. God gives layers of revelation through His Word, the Bible. How do we personally access this and build our relationship with God through it?

Q. Are there areas of revelation and prophecy God has given us that we need to pick up and run with, rather than letting them fall to the ground? Share these and pray into them together.

Pray for the City Life or individual works/projects that move you. Gather some prophetic revelation to encourage them!