

“Both Now and Forever!”

Psalm 115:17-18

Intro. – You’ll remember the special TV series that had a run called “TV Bloopers.” You know about what I’m talking. This where TV excerpts are reviewed showing the inappropriate things being said or done while “on the air.” Well, I thought it would be helpful to share a few “preacher/church bloopers” to introduce this message:

Illus. – preacher making the announcement that they had found “a black lady’s pair of gloves.”

Illus. – preacher during a Mother’s Day worship assembly asked, “Are all these children legitimate?”

Illus. – preacher seeing two lady guests said, “Will the two ladies with Harry Butts please stand up.”

Illus. – Church Sign – “Don’t let worry kill you – let the church help.”

Illus. – Church Bulletins:

- “At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be ‘What is Hell?’ Come early and listen to our choir.”
- “Bertha Belch, a missionary from Africa will be speaking tonight... Come tonight to hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa.”
- “Our youth basketball team is back in action Wed. at 8 PM in the recreation hall. Come out and watch us kill Christ the King.”
- “Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community.”
- “For those of you who have children and don’t know it, we have a nursery downstairs.”

Following same line of thought, but on a more serious vein, we turn to one more illus. of inappropriateness. In Omaha, Nebraska, you’ll find a street named “Mercy Road.” At 7800 Mercy Road you’ll find this leads to a cemetery called “Calvary.” At this point street is marked with sign: “Dead End.” How inappropriate for the road of mercy paved by our Lord at Cross of Calvary was anything but a “Dead End.”

Purpose: to see the appropriate counsel the Bible gives for the New Year

The key phrase in our text is “...both now and forever” or NASB “...from this time forth.” I believe this text reveals four appropriate instructions for the New Year – instructions that focus around the cross of Christ:

I An Appropriate MEMORY

- v 17 instructs us in what this appropriate memory is – “*It is not the dead who praise the Lord...*”

A. Some Have Left the Ranks

1. There are “gaps” in this church family – especially after 2013!
 - a. some abandoned their commitment (1 Timothy 1:19 “...and so have shipwrecked their faith.” or 2 Peter 2:22 “A dog returns to its vomit and a sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing...”)
 - b. here, however emphasis on those gaps in our ranks as result of death of saints...
2. Yes, these are those who once worshipped/served Lord with us, but have since died... now part of *the great cloud of witnesses* inspired writer of Hebrews urges us to consider as we run race...
3. For this we rejoice...; yet, text reminds us their death means no longer adding work here X’s ch!
4. Thus, the gap they leave must be filled and we’re the ones who must fill them...

B. We Too Will Leave the Ranks

1. Death (i.e. the grave) cuts off opportunity worship/serve King together here – i.e. “*do it now!*”
2. We too are soon to leave through physical death – will we be found faithful until then?

Both now and forever, may we keep this appropriate memory in mind – the dead do not praise the Lord.

II An Appropriate RESOLUTION

A. We Have Been Blessed by Him

1. Physically our needs have been met... just like He said...
 - a. those of us with families dependent upon us... ought to bless the Lord making possible to do.
 - b. those of us with sound bodies/minds = ought to bless Him!
 - c. Bible says, “*Every good and perfect gift is from above...*” (James 1:17) – from this standpoint alone, what other resolution could be more appropriate than “*bless the Lord!*”
2. Spiritually our needs have been met:

- a. C. Spurgeon described a person who was alive but spiritually dead: “He is a walking corpse, an animated dunghill, a Lazarus who stinketh by this time and yet is not in his grave.”
- b. God is to be blessed – He alone makes it possible to be living sacrifices and not living corpses
- c. because of this, the resolve to bless the Lord is more than appropriate!

B. We Are Being Blessed by Him

1. Self-deceived are those who think all things consist in, around and for them
2. Those who acknowledge the Lordship of Christ recognize how dependent they are upon Him... and in Him all things consist (Colossians 1:16,17).
3. Thus, can there be any more appropriate resolve than that of “*blessing the Lord?*”

C. We Shall be Blessed by Him

1. *Shall* speaks of the future – even as v 12 says
2. How we must resolve to bless the Lord because of what He has promised and will do in future!

III An Appropriate COMMENCEMENT

- v 18 makes clear this appropriate commencement – “*both now and forever*” – NOW is the time to “*bless the Lord*” – beginning a new year we ought to do this in the following ways:

A. In the Local Church

1. Now is the time for faithful, biblical preaching/teaching...
2. Now is the time to have and developing of qualified/willing leadership intent upon His will !
3. Now is the time to pattern local church after HIS pattern...

B. In the Home

- 2014 – Now is the time for marriages, parents, kids to accept their roles given to them by God and to make sure they work within those roles...

C. In Individual Lives

1. NOW is the time to become a Christian – 2 Corinthians 6:2 “*...I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.*”
2. NOW is the time to grow in Christ... appropriate commencement? = “*Both now and forever...*”

IV An Appropriate CONTINUANCE

A. Can We Cease to Praise Him?

1. When shall we cease to bless our God? When we are no longer in debt to Him? When He is no longer worthy? When He proves untrue to any of His promises?
2. As for our part, we can cease – we can choose to *fall from grace* (Galatians 5:4) and *crucify again to ourselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.*” (Hebrews 6:6).

B. Will We Cease to Praise Him?

1. Only you can answer this question – God forces no one to bless Him in time let alone in eternity!
2. Yet, those with proper relationship know the appropriate continuance of blessing Him = forever!

Conclusion: With this in mind may I give one last illustration of inappropriate counsel. Quote Magazine gives the following advice for the New Year to those who forget or who fail to carry out their resolutions: “Remember that you can resolve again on the following dates: Islam New Year – January 20, 2007; Chinese New Year – February 18, 2007; Persian New Year – March 20, 2007; Jewish New Year – September 12, 2007.

Yes, to listen to the counsel of the world is to accomplish nothing and to gain even more. Just as the world’s counsel is inappropriate, God’s Word is appropriate. His word gives this counsel to you and me, right here and right now – **BOTH NOW AND FOREVER...!**