

1-1-23 Message

GREATEST GOAL FOR THE NEW YEAR IS TO LOVE HIM IN 2023

Intro: This is the first Sunday of the new year 2023. As we enter a new year, we usually look back on where we came from in the previous year and then look forward to where we want to be in the next year.

The New Year is a time of setting goals... a time of taking inventory..

Don't we all want to do great things for God in this next year?

Dwight L Moody once said..

*The world has yet to see what God can do with a man fully consecrated to him.
By God's help, I aim to be that man."*

Let me suggest to you, that the greatest thing you can do in 2023 is be a person who is fully consecrated to God..

In fact this is what Jesus said, was the greatest commandment for each of us.. Which is to love God with all our hearts.. which is in essence to be fully consecrated to God. We find this in recorded in Matthew and Mark..

Matthew 22:36 Master, which [is] the great commandment in the law?

Matthew 22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

Matthew 22:38 This is the first and great commandment.

Matthew 22:39 And the second [is] like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Matthew 22:40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Mark 12:28 And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

Mark 12:29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments [is], Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

Mark 12:30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this [is] the first commandment.

Mark 12:31 And the second [is] like, [namely] this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

IF YOU GIVE HIM YOUR WHOLE HEART IN 2023 this is the greatest thing you can do..

Intro: Our theme for the new year is loving God with your whole heart..

What greater thing can you do for the Lord.. in 2023..

What do you have that God wants? Only your heart...
What do you have that God needs? Nothing...

The only thing he wants of you is your heart and devotion....
THERE IS NO GREATER THING YOU CAN DO FOR HIM BUT LOVE HIM IN 2023..

Also this is an achievable goal for each of us...

There are many noble goals we can have for 2023, some things we may achieve and some things we may not.. But to love God with all our hearts.. this is something we all can do.. It is achievable for all of us!

Our faith in Him is but a byproduct of our love and devotion for Him..
Our service for him is but a byproduct of our love for him..

The Bible pronounces great blessings to those who love the Lord..
The Bible proclaims cursing on those who do not love the Lord..

1 Corinthians 16:22 If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.

What does the word Anathema mean?

anathema, an-ath'-em-ah; from 394; a (religious) ban or (concr.) excommunicated (thing or person):-accursed, anathema, curse, X great.

----- Dictionary Trace -----

anatithemai, an-at-ith'-em-ahee; from 303 and the mid. of 5087; to set forth (for oneself), i.e.propound:-communicate, declare.

WHAT ARE THE BLESSINGS WE WILL RECEIVE WHEN WE LOVE THE LORD?

Now I am sure that each of us wants a blessing from God in 2023. Let me suggest to you that if we set a goal of loving God with all our hearts.. a byproduct of that will be that we will receive certain blessings.. What are these blessings we will receive?

I. WHEN YOU LOVE GOD WITH YOUR WHOLE HEART HE WILL CHANGE & BLESS YOUR DESIRES

When you give him your whole heart he will change your desires

Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure.

Psalms 37:3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; [so] shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

Psalms 37:4 Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose.

God changes your heart..

The greatest blessing you can receive is to have a heart that does not desire things that would bring a cursing upon you...

The richest person in this church is that person who is content and has no desire to obtain riches..

I Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

A benefit of loving God is that he takes from your heart certain passions that would cause you hurt. Love of money is the root of all evil. Notice how Paul says that those who love money pierce themselves through with many sorrows..

It is amazing how people love things that are actually killing them..

Cigarettes

Drugs..

And a host of other things..

How blessed is it when you can actually only enjoy things that are healthy and beneficial to your life..

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

God only gives us things that are good.. for us..

The Devil perverts our desires...

So a great benefit of loving God is that he will teach you to love things that are good and healthy for you...

Note how God brings good things in our lives when we love him with all our hearts and want to obey him ..

Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure.

1. WHEN WE LOVE AND DELIGHT IN GOD HE WILL GIVE US NEW DESIRES..

Psalms 37:3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; [so] shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

Psalms 37:4 Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

It is God that places in our hearts a desire.. these are spiritual desires, these desires proceed from the spirit of God.

God placed in me a desire to serve him.. and preach his word.. these were not natural desires.. Read that tract I wrote, "NOT ME" it is my testimony. I was about to graduate from high school, and I was thinking about what my fellow students would be doing after they graduated from high school. My high school was the 10th largest high school in PA. It had over 4,000 students and the graduating class was about 1000 students. The truth is it was like a city. There was a central rotunda where a lot of students just hung out and sat around. I remember as graduation neared sitting their thinking about the future. I was mostly thinking about the thousand kids that swarmed by me and wondered what they would be doing in the future. I was wondering who would be the doctors, the lawyers, the teachers, mechanics, factory workers.. Then I thought to myself who would be the priests... I couldn't think of anyone who fit the profile. Then I thought about myself. I laughed when I thought about being a priest.. I thought I knew what I was going to be doing in my life.. I wrote down a little list of my goals was I was 12-13 years old. I was pursuing those goals.

But here I am now having pastored this church for 40 years starting this year.

That was 52 years ago when I sat on those steps. How God has changed my heart and for the better I might say.

How did this all happen? It happened the day I decided to love God more than anything else. When I decided to put God above my carrier, and my little list of goals and everything else.

The benefit of loving God is he does good things in your life. What a wonderful Christmas Musical we had last night .. None of this would have been possible if God had not changed my life and he did that all because when you love God, he changes your life and desires. It is all his doing! All we can do is give him our heart.

New Years is a time to meditate on where we have come, what we have achieved in our vain life.. and what we may aspire to achieve in the next year. The truth is if we are honest, we have to conclude much of this life is vanity and vexation of spirit. Is this not what Solomon the wisest man that ever live concluded? In the end of his treatise called the book of Ecclesiastes. Or as the book starts out.. "THE WORDS OF THE PREACHER" He concludes the our whole purpose in life is to "FEAR GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS.." I think we could rightly substitute the word fear to mean "LOVE" God.. To fear God is to Love God!

When Jesus said that the first commandment was to love God with all our hearts.. The love we should have for God should be what Solomon mentioned as a reverent, love.. The Hebrew word fear....YARE' means to reverence God..

H3372 yare', yaw-ray'; a prim. root; to fear; mor. to revere; caus. to frighten:-affright, be (make) afraid, dread (-ful), (put in) fear (-ful, -fully, -ing), (be had in) reverence (-end), X see, terrible (act, -ness, thing).

affright afraid dread dreadful durst fear feared fearest feareth fearful fearfully fearing reverence reverend terrible terribleness

We are not to love God like we love our dog or pets..
We are not to love God like we love ice cream...
In other words our love for God is not just an affection towards God..

We are to love God with a godly fear and reverence...

2. WHEN YOU LOVE GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART HE IS ABLE TO KEEP YOU FROM FALLING..

Jude 1:24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present [you] faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

II. WHEN YOU GIVE HIM YOUR WHOLE HEART HE WILL BLESS YOUR FAMILY

Deuteronomy 5:29 O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!

God promises a blessing on those that love him..
This blessing will be to the 3rd and 4th generation..

What greater blessing is there than to see not only our children living right and serving the Lord but also to see your grandchildren and your great grandchildren..

WHEN WE LOVE GOD AND OBEY GOD.. WE CAN RECEIVE THIS KIND OF BLESSING!

God wants to bless us..

God wants to bless our families..

If we obey him and love him we will be blessed..

If we disobey him and despise his commandments.. we are cursed..

The ones who suffer the most from parents who do not love Jesus are the children of those backslidden and ungodly parents..

Deuteronomy 5:29 O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!

God wants to bless us.. but he can't if we are wicked and have wicked hearts..

III. WHEN YOU GIVE HIM YOUR WHOLE HEART AND AFFECTION YOU WILL BE A BLESSING TO HIS CHURCH

John 21:15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

John 21:16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

John 21:17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

John 21:18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry [thee] whither thou wouldst not.

When you love the Lord.. you will love his people and his church.....

THE LORD ASKED PETER IF HE LOVED HIM???

If you love the Lord.. you will love his people..

I John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.

I John 4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

I John 4:21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

Jesus said.. Peter do you love me... do you really love me.. Peter if you love me.. FEED MY SHEEP! Do good to my sheep. Do good to my people.

You can't really love the Lord and have no concern for his church or his people..

Paul before he was saved, claimed to love God. He was a religious leader. Yet he persecuted God's people. He did not love God. When the Lord meet him on the road to Damascus he said, Saul Saul why persecutest thou me? The Lord said to him who art thou Lord? He said I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

IV. WHAT CAN YOU DO TO NURTURE THIS LOVE FOR THE LORD...

1. SPEND TIME WITH THE LORD..

People who love each other.. will want to be with each other..

You can't say you love someone and can't stand being in their company...

Today Jesus is not bodily present with us, but he is with us in spirit. He promised to send the comforter.. the Holy Spirit to be with us when he departed. The Spirit of God can be present in the hearts of his people everywhere at the same time. So it is through the Holy Spirit that we draw near to the Lord though we cannot see him bodily present.

Bible study..
Prayer time..
Public Assembly
Public Worship