

Joyful New Year! 2 Chronicles 34

Introduction:

1. Here we are on New Year's Day, and the most popular phrase you will hear today is "Happy New Year!"
2. However, happiness is dictated by one's circumstances. I believe, we should be wishing people a year full of joy. Joy is from the Lord and not determined by your circumstances, but by your position in Christ!
3. The period of kings in the O.T. is an interesting time. Some kings were evil, while others were good. I have always loved reading about King Josiah who took the throne at the age of eight! His father and grandfather were known for their evil ways, yet this young king brought a renewed joy to the people after years of wickedness.
4. We can learn a lot from this king and how joy can be found, regardless of the past.
5. Every believer can possess joy that comes from the Lord all year long, regardless of the past!

How can you guarantee 2012 will be a joyful new year?

First, by **removing the clutter and distractions from the past.** 2 Chronicles 34:1-7

1. Have you ever noticed how after Christmas the kids' closets get smaller, the garage gets smaller, and the attic is opened once again to house all your junk, until the next garage sale?
2. "Things" tend to build up in our lives when we aren't careful to watch!
3. Read Matthew 26:41.
4. Look at 2 Chronicles 34:1-3.
5. In verse 3, Josiah was 16 years old when he began to follow the Lord. This was not something he learned from his father. When he was 20, he began to remove the things that had accumulated in the land because of his father and grandfather. In verse 8, Josiah is 26 and finally finished with purging the land.
6. It took Josiah almost six years to rid Jerusalem of all the clutter and distractions that had built up over the past 57 years. Hezekiah, Josiah's great-grandfather, was a good king and brought revival to the people of Judah. However, his son and grandson were able to quickly destroy the good he had done and bring clutter and distractions into the land.
 - Manasseh reigned for 55 years
 - Amon reigned for 2 years
7. It takes time and effort to remove the things that build up in life!
8. We allow things to build up that affect our spiritual lives sometimes too!
9. We may not have altars built to false gods, molten images, or other objects hindering our walk with the Lord; however, we may have old habits from our former lives that lead us away from actively seeking the Lord.
10. I was in a restaurant enjoying a meal when some old songs that I used to love listening to came on. The songs themselves were not sinful nor were the messages. However, they didn't sing of God's glory and grace. The time I spent listening to

that music in my past robbed my spirit from growing in the Lord through Christ-honoring music.

11. Look at Josiah's grandfather Manasseh. His father was Hezekiah, who was responsible for bringing revival to the people of Israel, yet Manasseh allowed things that his father once removed to creep back into his life and the land.
12. Satan will tempt you to allow things from your past life, before Christ, to creep back in, causing distractions.
13. Look at Ephesians 4:20-24.
14. Here, we see that there is an old life that exists, but we are commanded to put it off and to be "*renewed in the spirit of your mind.*" Emotional baggage, hurt feelings, bitterness, pride, self-will, and desires—these things can build up fast and rob you of the joy that comes from the Lord!
15. Even though these things can build up fast doesn't mean they can always be removed fast.
16. They are from our former life in the flesh and they are corrupt. They have no eternal value. They will one day be in a landfill!

Second, by restoring the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. 2 Chronicles 34:8-13

1. Once the clutter and the distractions were removed, Josiah was then able to focus on the rebuilding of the temple.
2. Once you have removed the things from your life that hinder your walk with the Lord, you can then begin restoring your relationship with the Lord.
3. The temple was important to the relationship between Israel and God.
4. The temple was where the Hebrews came to commune with God, offer sacrifices for sin, and worship God.
5. What is significant about the timing of these events is that Josiah was wise enough to know that the rebuilding of the house of the Lord would have been of little effect if the corruption and distractions of the past were left intact.
6. Every year New Year's resolutions are broken and the greatest cause for broken resolutions is failure to properly prepare. People who make vows to diet and exercise, yet never really have it in their heart to rid their lives of the things that will keep them from going to the gym or eating the things that they shouldn't, will never succeed in following through with their vows!
7. Today, we no longer have to go to a temple or a special place to commune with God. Today, God's Spirit dwells in the believer.
8. Read 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 6:16.
9. The temple is more than just the physical body. The temple is the resting place, and we know that the Holy Spirit rests in the heart of the believer.
10. When false idols are allowed to build up in your life, it causes a weakening of your spiritual heart.
11. God's Spirit does not leave; however, it becomes grieved.
12. Read Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19.
13. As a parent, when you come home to a mess that your teenager made while you were out, you still dwell in the house, yet you are grieved! This changes the communication, but not the relationship.

Third, by remembering the will of God according to His Word.

2 Chronicles 34:14-33

1. It is so neat to see how things work when we, as people, get our priorities right!
2. As the men were cleaning and beginning to repair the temple, they found the book of the law of Moses. This was God's Word for Israel and it had been lost since at least the reign of his great-grandfather over 60 years before.
3. Read verses 14, 18.
4. Imagine the condition of your life if you had no copy of the Bible. I'm amazed at how Josiah was able to become so passionate for God when His Word had been lost.
5. God desires man to see his wrong ways, leading man to give Him control of his life.
6. Once God's Word had been discovered and read for the king, it brought the knowledge of Israel's sin to the king; and he responded with sorrow!
7. Read verses 19-21.
8. Although Josiah had been making things right, God's Word still was able to bring conviction to Josiah because of the sin of Israel.
9. When God's Word is given priority in your life, there is a peace that is found that cannot be explained.
10. Read verse 27.
11. Look at Romans 8:6.
12. Josiah was offered God's grace and Josiah used it to magnify the Lord. He had the law read for all the people.
13. It is God's Word that teaches us of God's grace, mercy, and love.
14. God's Word brings correction and healing to a broken spirit.
15. Look at Colossians 3:16; 2 Timothy 3:16-17.
16. God's will is not mysterious and something that can only be found when you commit to a life isolated from others. It is found when you commit to studying the Bible, rightly divided.

Conclusion:

1. Each day is a new day and a day full of choices. Josiah was a young man who was ready to face each day and make choices that would strengthen his walk with God.
2. We all have the same choices each day. Will you allow the things of the world to be placed in your way as distractions, pulling you away from what God desires for your life, or will you seek to completely remove those things as Josiah did and seek to grow in your relationship with Christ?
3. New Year's comes every 365 days, but new opportunities to grow and glorify God come every second. There is no need to wait until Monday!
4. To have a year full of the joy of the Lord, you must seek to live a life unto the Lord with no distractions now!