



Sermon Series Notes

“Building Up The Church in 2016”

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Intro: Prov.17:22 Laughter does good like a medicine...

Last Christmas, grandpa was feeling his age and found that shopping for presents had become too difficult. So he decided to send checks to everyone instead. In each card he wrote: “Buy your own present, Merry Christmas!” He made sure to mail the cards early enough so everyone could choose a gift before Christmas. After the holidays he noticed he had not received any thank you cards from the people he normally bought gifts for. It was only in cleaning off his cluttered desk that he discovered, hidden under a stack of papers, the checks he had forgotten to enclose with the Christmas cards!

Reporters were interviewing a 104 year old woman and asked, “What do you think is the best thing about being 104.” She simply replied, “No peer pressure.”

I feel like my body has gotten totally out of shape, so I got my doctor’s permission to join a fitness club and start exercising. I decided to take an aerobics class for seniors. I bent, twisted, gyrated, jumped up and down, and perspired for an hour. But, by the time I got my leotards on, the class was over.

A guy is 70 years old and loves to fish. He was sitting in his boat one day when he heard a voice say, “Pick me up.” He looked around and didn’t see anyone, so he went back to fishing. A moment later he heard the same voice say again, “Pick me up.” He looked and there in the water, floating on the surface was a frog. The man said to the frog, “Was that you talking to me?” The frog said, “Yes, I’m talking to you. Pick me up, kiss me, and I’ll turn into the most beautiful woman you’ve ever seen. Your friends will be envious and jealous because I’ll become your bride!” The man looked at the frog for a short time, then reached down, picked it up, and put it in his shirt pocket. The frog said, “Didn’t you hear what I said, kiss me and I’ll turn into your beautiful young bride?” The man looked down at the frog in his pocket and said, “No thanks, at my age I’d rather have a talking frog.”

With age comes wisdom.

By far the # 1 NY’s resolution by state for 2016 was to “Enjoy life to the fullest.”

But as a Christian I need to consider living this life in light of the life to come (I Cor.15:30-32).

“Only one life, ‘twil soon be past, only what’s done for Christ will last.” (C.T. Studd, famous English cricketer, became missionary to China as one of the “Cambridge Seven”). Their testimonies, and the stories behind each one’s call from God to go to China, was recorded in a book called “The Evangelization of the World: A Missionary Band.” It became a national best seller. The Cambridge Seven became religious celebrities, and their influence upon world missions was huge. Hudson Taylor had started The China Inland Mission, and he was the one the Seven had gone to work with. The China inland Mission went from obscurity to unprecedented prominence, and in just a few years hundreds of missionaries had become part of their work.

Hebrews 11 has been called “The Hall of Faith” because it lists saints of the past and how their faith enabled them to accomplish great things for God. Many were empowered to perform miracles, while others were empowered to endure severe hardship and persecution. Moses is specifically mentioned as to how he by faith chose to be mistreated with the people of God rather than enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

The last time I taught through Hebrews 11 the Lord slowed me down, and I looked thoroughly at the individuals in the chapter and what faith enabled them to accomplish. When I got to verse 29 I received a fresh revelation on the subject of faith.

Hebrews 11:29 By faith **the people** passed through the Red Sea as on dry land...

The next verse is similar, mentioning how by faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the people of Israel had walked around them for seven days.

Now, if I were talking to you simply as individuals as we look ahead to this new year, I would encourage in two ways:

1. Receive Jesus Christ as your Lord & Savior
2. Develop & maintain a devotional life with the Lord
 - a. Booklet – “Spending Time With God”

But I felt led of the Lord to address you as a group, as a local church, as Calvary Chapel Saint Petersburg. This is a thank you message, and a message of encouragement as we go into a new year.

Gen.11:6 The Lord said, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.” The Lord said this about those at the Tower of Babel who were acting outside the will of God “in order to make a name for themselves.”

If people united in a cause not in the will of God can accomplish great things, how much more can a group of God’s people united in the work of the kingdom accomplish?

Note: All faith has to be exercised individually, but the more individuals there are united by faith in a common cause, the greater the impact.

I am extremely thankful when I look back at all the Lord as done thought this local fellowship, CCSP. But what we must be very careful not to do is to live in the past. It’s a new year, and who knows what the Lord will be able to accomplish in this year & beyond?

James 2 says that faith, if not accompanied by action, is dead. So faith must be exercised. I want to suggest several things **we** can do together by faith in 2016, as each individual believer at CCSP exercises their faith.

- Play a part in building up the church
 - Eph.4:31 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.
 - The least one can do: GIVE (Matthew 25:26-27)
 - Begin with the tithe (Gen.14:18-20; 28:20-22; Heb.7:1-10)
 - Become a generous giver (I Tim.6:17-19; II Cor.9:6)
 - Learn to give sacrificially (II Cor.8:3)
 - II Cor.8:7
 - 2016 goal to pay off lowest church loan of \$269,000
 - Note: Do not take from your tithe to the Lord, and from ministries you already give to as led by the Lord (special needs, missions, etc.).
 - Beginning this week, Easter weekend is 12 weeks away. If 1500 of us would give an extra \$15.00 per week for the next 12 weeks, this loan would be no more!
- Serve

- Gal.5:13...serve one another in love.
- Get involved in fellowship (Acts 2:42)
- Remove any leaven from your life
 - I Cor.5:6 Don't you know that a little yeast spreads through the whole batch of dough?
 - Hebrews 12:1...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles...

CONCLUSION

“Two little lines I heard one day, Traveling along life's busy way; Bringing conviction to my heart, And from my mind would not depart; Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last. Only one life, yes only one, soon will its fleeting hours be done; Then, in 'that day' my Lord to meet, and stand before His Judgement seat; Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last. Only one life, the still small voice, gently pleads for a better choice, bidding me selfish aims to leave, and to God's holy will to cleave; Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last. Only one life, a few brief years, each with its burdens, hopes, and fears; Each with its clays I must fulfill, living for self or in His will; Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last. When this bright world would tempt me sore, when Satan would a victory score; When self would seek to have its way, then help me Lord with joy to say, only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last. Give me Father, a purpose deep, in joy or sorrow Thy word to keep; Faithful and true what e'er the strife, pleasing Thee in my daily life; Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last. Oh let my love with fervor burn, and from the world now let me turn; Living for Thee, and Thee alone, bringing Thee pleasure on Thy throne; Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last. Only one life, yes only one, Now let me say, "Thy will be done"; And when at last I'll hear the call, I know I'll say "twas worth it all"; Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last. ”