

resolution: the act of finding an answer or solution to a conflict or problem

What conflicts or problems do you have in your life that you are ready to find an answer for?

resolve: decide firmly on a course of action

I want to be a person, and I want to be a part of a tribe of people, who “decides firmly to find answers and solutions to the conflicts and problems” that we, and those around us, are currently facing in life.

Can we be this kind of people today? I believe confidently that the answer is yes, and I’m excited to share with you how we can achieve this together.

DARE TO RESOLVE

December 28th, 2014

Philippians 3:12-21 (ESV)

“¹²Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. ¹⁶Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

¹⁷Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of

Christ. ¹⁹Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. ²⁰But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.”

Paul is clear here in his letter to the Philippians that he has not achieved anything yet but that he has changed his lifestyle to mirror that of Jesus Christ. He has identified many areas of concern in his life and has RESOLVED to change them but as you can see, the agent of change is Jesus Himself. Paul is not performing some set of religious rituals in order to attain perfection, or resurrection from the dead as he speaks of, rather he is submitting himself completely to Christ and choosing to respond out of the great LOVE he has experienced. I love the language, “I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me HIS own.” Wow. Doesn’t that change everything? It totally changes the way I approach my life and “being good” as it helps me to see clearly that my purpose is not simply to be good or be better but rather it is to serve Christ by responding to His great love for me.

My goal in this season of life is not just to make a few fleeting and cliché “resolutions” that won’t last to President’s Day. My goal, and what I believe our goal as a church should be, is to have a heart change in the areas of our life where we can honestly and transparently say that we have a conflict and a problem. Once we make those decisions, and our heart begins to shift, I firmly believe it will only stay that way in the context of Christian community. It is so vastly important that we don’t try to do this life alone. It is so vastly important that no man becomes an island. It is so vastly important that we look to the Holy Scriptures to understand God’s heart for us in this area:

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV)

²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

It's evident that God never planned for you and I to go at this alone. Our faith is best expressed as a journey, and a journey with others at that. Who do you have on your journey with you? Who's in your corner? Who's your wingman? Who's with you no matter what?

This is one of the many reasons why we believe it's so important to be in a CONNECT GROUP. A Connect Group is simply what our church calls a small group of people that meet together regularly to encourage one another, pray for each other and to help keep the truth in front of our eyes. Another way of saying that last one might be, "and to help others find the answer or solution to the conflicts and problems someone is facing in life." To come to a RESOLUTION! Similar to any team, and you've heard this many times before, we are only as strong as our weakest link.

Sometimes when we hear that kind of language, "weakest link," we can start to assume that it's hurtful to say that and that it's embarrassing to those that are weaker than us. No, I say it shows us that we are missing it somewhere and that the only reason they are weaker than us is because we're not doing something about it to help them be all they were created to be. You see, we don't experience this kind of life if we don't live in community. If our mindset is about "me and mine for the here and now" we will surely miss out on many blessings that God has in store for us and we will in essence rob others of joy that can be experienced only in the context of community. In other words, we ought to be The Church; the Body or Christ. The Word speaks clearly about this:

1 Corinthians 12:12-20; 26-27 (ESV)

“¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

¹⁴For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

²⁶If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. ²⁷Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”

Honor is such a tough thing, isn't it? We care about people and when they deserve it, there's something in us that desires to honor and thank them but on the other hand, we've seen what heaping too much honor and attention on humans can do to the pride inside of us and how it can spread like a disease and become one's downfall. It's such a tightrope to walk in life. With this being said, I truly believe God wants me to share with you today about the reality that here in Grays Harbor, on average, I think we're missing in when it comes to this principle of honor. Isn't honoring someone really just about the Golden Rule (Matthew 7) and treating others how you would like to be treated? It's not about putting someone up on some pedestal and praising them like they are a God...that's not how you would want to be treated is it? Is it? ☺

I think of honor more in the context of 1 Corinthians 12 and treating all people equally, especially in the Body of Christ, His Church. Do we do this? How would we rate if we graded ourselves in this area? What kind of mindset do our actions reflect? That of a selfish and worldly mindset or the upside-down backwards way of the Kingdom that says, “the last shall be first and the first shall be last?”

(Matthew 20:16) Why do I bring this up in regards to making resolutions? Because until we are in a place of humility that allows our actions to be questioned and even challenged by our brothers and sisters in Christ, we will never be in a position to allow the Holy Spirit to do the exact same thing.

In closing, if we want to be a people who are transforming our world, we must be a people who are transforming ourselves. We cannot attain this unless we are committed to change and in order to change, we must be willing to be honest with ourselves and others and be approachable by ALL members of our ONE SAME BODY.

If making a resolution isn't just about committing to do something less or more and rather, is about identifying a problem area or area of concern in our life and seeking to change it, then the Church of Jesus Christ should "resolve to make resolutions" daily!

Psalm 51:10-11 (ESV)

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me."

In this next season of my life, **I resolve** (decide firmly on a course of action) **to make a resolution** (identify a conflict/problem in my life and find an answer/solution to it). I will also not just be ok with, but actually invite, correction to come from the outside; from others around me. And, like Paul, I must remember that the agent of change is the Spirit of Jesus Christ and not me, my will or anything or anyone else. Will you join me in this endeavor?