

VISION 20/20 - Acts 2:40-47

With every New Year comes new resolutions! The top New Year's resolutions for 2020 are: 1) Lose weight; 2) Improve your finances; 3) Exercise; 4) Get a new job; 5) Eat healthier; 6) Manage stress better; 7) Stop smoking; 8) Improve a relationship; 9) Stop procrastinating; 10) Set aside time for yourself. (Parade Entertainment/parade.com). We can all relate to one or more of these resolutions.

It's interesting, *however*, that five out of the *ten* resolutions for 2020 have to do with *physical* and *mental* health but *none* with *spiritual health*. A real New Year's *health resolution* is incomplete without a right relationship with God! (Proverbs 3:7-8) **Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.**

Today, *on the eve of a New Year*, I'd like to share with you a *spiritual resolution* (vision) displayed in the early church. It's a *comprehensive*, four-fold 20/20 vision for 2020 - a commitment to *know, grow, show, and go!* As a follower of Christ!

The first fold of this 20/20 vision for 2020 is to KNOW. (v.40, 41). There are three evidences of knowing Christ found here. 1) To know Christ is to be saved. This was the Day of Pentecost, 50 days after Passover, when the Holy Spirit was poured out, giving birth to the church, whereby **three thousand** souls come to know Christ! To know Christ is to be saved from this "perverse generation," an age given over to evil and unbelief and appointed unto wrath! 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 - tells us that as believers we have not been appointed to wrath, but salvation through faith in Christ! To know Jesus is to be born again, transported from the Kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of light!

But it doesn't stop there. As evidence of salvation, Christ must be our priority; (ttt) Philippians 3:7-11. Seeking to know Him is a *daily resolution* for followers of Christ, lest we start to consider *rubbish riches, and trade the knowledge of Christ for nothing!* We don't know what the New Year holds, but we know we can know Him; *whether in power or suffering, His presence is never diminished!*

The second evidence of knowing Christ is: 2) To know Christ is to receive His word gladly. What does it mean to gladly receive the word?

(Colossians 3:16) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

The third evidence we find here of knowing Christ: 3) To know Christ is to obey Christ. “...and were baptized...” (v.38-39) - If you want to start the New Year on the wrong foot, make rebellion your resolution! (1 Samuel 15:22b-23) “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.”

Prosperity belongs to the obedient! (Psalm 1:3) “*He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.*”

The second part of a *spiritually healthy resolution* is GROW. (v.42) *It's been said, “The biggest room in the world is the room for improvement.”* To avoid *spiritual stagnation*, follow the advice given in (ttt) Colossians 2:6-10. No matter what we might face in this New Year, we can *still* abound in Christ! If we will walk in Christ, stay rooted in Christ, built up in Christ, and established in faith, with thanksgiving! Thanksgiving - by recognizing Christ's *sovereignty, faithfulness, power, mercy, and grace* in every circumstance!

This can only take place in, “good soil!” (Hosea 10:12-13) Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the Lord, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you. You have plowed wickedness; You have reaped iniquity. You have eaten the fruit of lies, Because you trusted in your own way, In the multitude of your mighty men.

There are three ingredients that make up good soil, found in (v.42). 1) Continuing steadfastly in doctrine. (Romans 6:17-18) But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. Obedience from the heart *cultivates* good soil! The second soil mixture is 2) Fellowship. (v.42) We cannot grow, apart from fellowship - koinonia: communion, communication, contribution, intimacy.

We grow *individually*, but *also collectively*, as the body of Christ! (Ephesians 4:15-16) “...but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ – from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” Therefore (Hebrews 10:25), “*Do not forsake the assembling of ourselves...*” The body (of Christ) needs what only you can supply, *in truth and love*.

The last ingredient for good soil, *in an effort to avoid spiritual stagnation*, is 3) Prayer. One of the most healing acts we can perform in the church is to pray for one another. (James 5:16) Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Ephesians 6:18-19 - Paul reminded us: *Prayer for the saints should be offered with all perseverance and supplication (in humility)*.

With prayer we can do more for each another in private than we could ever do in public! (Matthew 6:6-7) But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

Notice: (v.43) where we find a **good soil** mixture, *spiritually, doctrine, fellowship* and *prayer*, reverential fear, and the power of God will be present *amidst* God’s people. Let us enter the New Year determined to grow, that the world might know He lives!

The third part of a *healthy spiritual resolution* is SHOW. (v.43-45) (Matthew 5:16) Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. The believers showed (*demonstrated*) their love for one another in a tangible way, by meeting one another’s needs.

(1 John 3:18) My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. In love they *also* demonstrated a *simplicity* in faith in their relationships. (v.46b). *Because* they kept *the main thing, the main thing! Loving God and loving people!* (2 Corinthians 11:3) But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so

your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.
“K.I.S.S.” is a great acrostic to remember as we enter the New Year!

The last part to a *healthy spiritual resolution* is GO! (v.47) For the *early church* to have favor among the people, they had to be *among* the people! As a result, people were being added to the church daily by the Holy Spirit. Evangelism is an essential part of church *growth* and effectiveness. As the saying goes, “A church that does not evangelize, will soon fossilize.”

We must go, because Jesus commands it! (Mark 16:15) “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” We need not go far; *we can go to our jobs, schools, families, etc.* This year ask God for opportunities to share your story. *God is not looking for ability but availability.* You don’t have to be a theologian, pastor, etc.; just tell your story! (Revelation 12:11) “*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.*”

CONCLUSION: Start the New Year out with the 20/20 vision! To *know, grow, show, and go!* Knowing your Father has *already* set you up to prosper you; *because “no weapon formed against you will prosper!” (Isaiah 54:17).* (Psalm 65:11) You crown the year with Your goodness, And Your paths drip with abundance. Have a blessed New Year, in Christ!