

Pastor's Ponderings

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"A Clean Slate"

by

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²*And then GOD answered: "Write this. Write what you see. Write it out in big block letters so that it can be read on the run. ³This vision-message is a witness pointing to what's coming. It aches for the coming—it can hardly wait! And it doesn't lie. If it seems slow in coming, wait. It's on its way. It will come right on time."*
Habakkuk 2:2-3 MSG

God is faithful to give us new opportunity for ministry and mission at the beginning of the New Year. Actually, the opportunity is always there. We do not have to wait for a New Year to have a new beginning. But, that's how we measure time and in most aspects of life, that's when we are most likely to start afresh. As you contemplate what you will attempt to accomplish in 2008, allow me to encourage you to make a covenant with God. That's right a covenant. Forget about resolutions this year and make a covenant with God. A covenant is an agreement between two parties. A covenant says that if party A does such and such then party B will do this and that.

What is it you want to accomplish for God in 2008? Maybe, it is better to ask, "What is it God wants you to allow Him to do through you in 2008?" When you look back at 2007 and reflect on some of the missed opportunities, it should encourage and convict you to not miss those opportunities in 2008.

Can you reasonably expect to do better in 2008 if you continue to do things the way you did in 2007? I think you know the answer to that one. As Roberta often reminds me, "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you always got." If you expect different results, you're going to have to use different methods. Refusing to

change will only produce more of the same old, same old!

Here's my covenant written in big block letters for 2008: **WITH GOD'S HELP, I WILL PASSIONATELY PREACH THE GOSPEL, FEARLESSLY TEACH THE SCRIPTURES, AND HOPEFULLY REACH OTHERS FOR JESUS CHRIST.**

I can depend on God to do His part. God never broke a covenant, which means you and I can trust God to keep and fulfill our covenant(s) with Him.

Obviously, the weak link in the chain is not God. Will I really preach passionately every time I step into the pulpit? Will I really teach fearlessly every time I open God's Word in a class or one on one setting? Will I really reach others for Christ with the hope I have in Jesus? Can I really do this with a 100% commitment to keeping my end of the bargain (covenant)?

Paul reminds us in 1Corinthians 3:7, "*It's not the one who plants or the one who waters who is at the center of this process but God, who makes things grow.*" God will enable and empower me to preach passionately, teach fearlessly, and reach others hopefully. God will cause the growth in me and those I minister to.

I can look forward to 2008 knowing God will keep covenant with me. I may have missed some opportunities in 2007, but I know I have a clean slate to start 2008.

"WITH GOD'S HELP, I WILL..." I know without God's help, I can't accomplish anything of any eternal value. With God's help I can do anything. Matthew's Gospel says, "*Jesus looked hard at them and said, "No chance at all if you think you can pull it off yourself. Every chance in the world if you trust God to do it"*" Matthew 19:26 MSG.

I ask you again, "What is it God wants you to allow Him to do through you in 2008?" Covenant with God and it will happen. A clean slate is available to you. What are you going to write in "*big block letters so it can be read on the run?*" Write your covenant with God on the clean slate that is 2008.