

SOMETHING TO REMEMBER AS WE START A NEW YEAR

Ephesians 2:8-10

Introduction: The Bible tells us to learn from the past, history tells us to learn from the past or we are doomed to repeat it. We've been taught that hindsight and foresight work well together. Looking back through this past year have you learned anything that will be beneficial to you in this next year? What can you look forward to? What can you now knowingly avoid? As Christians, let's review some things that will be valuable to us in this new year that we are facing:

I. AS CHRISTIANS, WE HAVE BEEN SAVED (vv 8, 9)

1. We were saved by God's grace (undeserved, unmerited, unheard of favor and kindness of God).

- God has given grace to US despite:
 - our rejecting Him, using His name in profanity, rebelling against Him.
 - our hostility toward Him, denial of Him, neglect of Him.
 - our half-hearted commitments to Him, even false worship.
 - our idolatrous worship, our trespasses, our sins.
- God has given US something we did not deserve - HIS SON.
- God is not off someplace, far removed, uncaring, but is HERE, graciously caring.
- We were condemned to die, but Jesus died in OUR place.
- God showered His grace upon US, lost, sinful and condemned.

2. We were saved through Faith.

- Jesus died for US, took OUR sin and punishment.
 - When we really believed that Jesus died for US, God did a wonderful thing, He took our faith and counted as if it as the death of Jesus, His Son.
- Our faith causes God to look upon US as having been in Christ when He died. Our faith causes God to credit US with salvation.
- Jesus is God's gift to US.
 - We didn't have to take it, we were created free to choose.
 - Only when we reached out in belief did God's gift become OURS.

3. We did not save ourselves.

- God is perfect and all that come into His presence must also be perfect.
- Perfection has always been an impossibility for us.
- If we ever were to be acceptable to God, it would never be by our hands, we just could never be perfect, there we couldn't save ourselves.

4. We were saved as a gift of God, NOT by our works or doings.

- We couldn't get God to owe us for our good works, if we ever had any.
- We had nothing perfect to bring to God.
- We couldn't make God forgive us for we only caused Him hurt.
- We couldn't heal or help God's broken heart.
- None among us could save another or him/herself.
- We couldn't do anything good enough to make God love us.

- We couldn't ever get rid of our guilty conscience when it bothered us or have peace.

5. God saved us by grace and not our works, so we have no cause to boast.

- All honor, glory, praise and any reason to boast belongs to God.
- **How small we really are.**

II. WE ARE ENTIRELY GOD'S WORKMANSHIP (v 10)

1. We were created by God in Jesus. (Our parents created us by God's laws of nature, but God created us by His Own Spiritual Laws.)

- God made our spirit come alive.
- God caused us to be born again (spiritually).
- God actually placed His divine nature into US.
- God created a new people out of us.
- God renewed US by His Holy Spirit.

2. We were created to do good works.

- We are to show that we belong to God by the way we live our lives.
- Our very nature is to ultimately be like that of Jesus, as a fruit is of it's tree.

CONCLUSION:

1. Let us remember that none of us have any reason to boast.

2. Let us start this new year off in humility and adoration.

3. If anyone in this room has not received God's gift of eternal life, He offers it to you but you must believe in Jesus and His death for you, then reach out to God in your faith and receive God's gift of eternal life.