

A Resolute Faith

Introduction To Theme: Family Focused

Introduction: (James 4:7-10)

During this time of year, everyone is taking inventory of their life. We think about the year that has been and what we want to accomplish in the new year. We make resolutions. Sadly, we rarely get out of January with them. But this practice is good and important. In fact, throughout the Bible we find people of faith being a resolute people. They say, "I will!" What will we do?

A. People Of Faith Are People Of Resolve

1. David: I Will... Not Be Ruled By My Circumstances (Psalm 5:6-7; 13:3-6)

- a. The main author of the psalms is David, the second king of Israel. David's life was not always easy. He faced incredible enemies both on the national and personal front. He battled with temptation and did not always win. He felt the pain of betrayal. He watched as wicked people prospered & righteous people suffered. He expresses great joy and great sorrow. The psalms are real and raw.
- b. There is a pattern in the psalms that is important. David is very open and honest about the difficulty he is facing and follows that up with a resolution to do something. He does not speak with doubt or uncertainty about how he will respond. He does not just react to his circumstances... He thinks and commits!
- c. Even when David had spiritual lows, even when he had doubts and uncertainties in his faith... He did not allow his emotions to control him. He stayed in it, knowing his heart would eventually return. He acted by faith not feelings. He went to God... kept worshipping... told others about God's works... reflected on God's greatness.
- d. David could have made plenty of excuses. He had so much on his plate and then had people doing everything they could to overcome him. His resolve was greater!
- e. This year, will you make the resolution to have a faith that is greater than your circumstances? God's people should be a people who respond instead of just reacting. We live by what we know, not what we feel. We are able to say that in spite of what is going around us or happening to us, we will worship the Lord... treat people right... stay faithful... tell of God's greatness (James 1:2-5)

2. Daniel: I Will... Not Be Influenced By The Pressures Of The World (Daniel 1:3-8)

- a. The Jews as a whole had been unfaithful to God and living in sin for a long time. So God used another nation, the Babylonians, to punish them. The Babylonians invaded Jerusalem, destroyed it, and carried a bunch of people back to Babylon as captives. These would be forced into Babylonian culture and life.
- b. Among these captives was a young man named Daniel. Perhaps a teenager at the time. After watching his home get destroyed, he was taken to a foreign land and forced to serve in the king's courts. He would learn their language, their ways, and eat their food. Babylonians were idolatrous. The differences weren't

just culture & language... it was faith and sin. Daniel knew he would face incredible pressure to compromise his convictions. He knew he'd have to choose between obeying God and following the crowd and the king

- c. Daniel resolved in his heart not to defile himself. Other versions say he purposed in his heart. Some of this food would have been unlawful for a Jew. Perhaps some he would have been unsure about. Daniel made a commitment to only do what he knew was right. Even if meant losing out on things or facing disadvantages
 - d. When did Daniel do this? All we know is it was BEFORE he was confronted by the temptation. Had Daniel waited until the pressure was in his face, it would have been much more difficult to do right. He knew ahead of time what he would do!
 - e. This year, will you be devoted to living righteously in an unrighteous world? Will you be purposeful about setting your heart on doing right in the face of great pressures to do wrong? Like Daniel, we have to be prepared in a tactical way. Know what we will do before we have to do it! If we wait for the moment to present itself, we won't be ready. Be committed to not being conformed! Why? Not just because its right, the world needs to see God's way is right! **(Rm 12:1-2)**
3. Job: I Will... Not Allow My Desires To Rule Over Me **(Job 31:1-4)**
- a. When the story of Job's life opens, it sounds like he is living the dream. He had 7 sons and 3 daughters, great wealth, good health, and great relationships. He was the greatest man in that part of the world! But suddenly his life is one serious of terrible events after another. His servants were murdered, his animals stolen, and all of his children died in a tornado... all around the same time. Then Job's own health was taken from him. He existed in misery inside and out. When his friends came to comfort him, they assumed God was punishing Job for some great sin, but Job couldn't figure out what it could be. Job defended himself.
 - b. Job made a covenant with his eyes. Covenants were serious things... you didn't enter one lightly. He made a commitment to just look away. He knew if he let his eyes linger where his mind might go. He understood God saw everything. He knew that moment of pleasure wasn't worth sacrificing the portion he had in God
 - c. The fact that Job had to make a covenant with his eyes meant this was something he struggled with. He battled with lust. Desires didn't mean he wasn't righteous. He was not a dirty man. The desire wasn't wrong... but it could lead down the wrong path. So, Job cut it off before it could be a problem **(James 1:13-15)**
 - d. Job could have easily rationalized letting his guard down... could have made excuses for giving in to temptation. Life has been a nightmare you can't wake up from... a terrible series of unfortunate events. He could've also reasoned that lust was normal. His desires were created by God. It's not a big deal as long as he didn't act on it, right? Job didn't reason it away. He took purity of heart seriously!
 - e. This year will you be determined to stop letting your flesh rule over you? Our temptation usually doesn't take us by surprise. Satan attacks our vulnerabilities. How serious will we take it? Those who are serious will take steps to limit the opportunity. Job wouldn't even look... Was he weird? No. It made him serious about being pure. We need desperate measures! **(Matt 5:29-30; Rom 13:14)**

4. The Prodigal Son: I Will... Go Home (**Luke 15:17-20**)
- a. This person comes from a story told by Jesus. While the story is made up, the storyline is very real. A father has two sons. One day the younger one comes and demands his inheritance right then. He takes potentially a third of all his father's wealth to a distant land. He gets as far away from home as he can. He then blows his father's inheritance on wasteful living. He partied hard.
 - b. When the money dried up, the friends dried up as well. He was suddenly alone. He was broke. He was hungry. He found himself among the pigs wishing he could eat their food. Pigs were unclean to Jews... they would never eat their food or eat around them. This is a picture of hitting rock bottom. He is now broken!
 - c. It is then that this young man found his resolution. He realizes suddenly what his life had become. He realizes the mistakes he had made. He realizes who he was. Humbled, he says, "I will go to my father!" This meant owning up to his sinful pride and wasteful living. It meant owning up to his failure. It meant shame. But he knew home is where he belonged. He knew going home was right.
 - d. This young man was committed to going home no matter what it meant. He wanted to go home and just be a servant... not a son. He was going home even though it meant facing his father, who he had wronged and hurt so deeply. While he may not have known, it meant facing his brother who was bitter toward him
 - e. This year... Will you go home? story of the prodigal son is your story too. It is the story of all of us when we walk away from our Father's love & providence. Maybe we don't like the rules. We want to do things our own way. Have you been walking away from God? It's time to come home! It takes humility. It takes owning your pride & sinful... but God forgives & restores! In whatever way you have been resisting Him... arise and go to your Father! (**James 4:8-10**)

B. 2020 – Resolving To Be Family Focused

1. It is really heart breaking to see the failing family epidemic we have in our country and culture. Homes are broken. Fathers are absent or aloof. Mothers are distracted. Too many children are neglected or abused. As a people we are so busy that are houses have degraded to simply a set of walls in which we sleep. We live our own lives and keep to ourselves, so hospitality is becoming something of the past. The day of sitting around a table having a meal with family, friends, and brethren is quickly vanishing. So many problems in our culture goes back to failures at home and a lack of being family oriented with each other. The home has been under attack for years... the ruin is clear!
2. This year, let us be focused on our physical families. Parents, children, husbands, wives, grandparents, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters... We are all part of a family. This isn't just for those with kids at home. The Bible has much to say about our responsibilities and our relationships. Our homes must be a refuge of righteousness. A place where God is honored and His will pursued. It is a safe haven from the world. Our world is in desperate need of godly homes. We certainly can make ours stronger! (**Col. 3:18-21**)
3. We have another family, our spiritual family. The Bible repeatedly refers to fellow saints as brethren. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. How are we doing as a family? Are we

just a bunch of loose parts collected or a living organism where every member is connected and matters? Do we rejoice and weep together? Are we helping each other grow stronger in Christ? Some have forsaken family to follow Christ... we must provide their home. Do we honor and prefer each other over people of the world? **(1 Pet 4:8-11)**

4. As we face this coming year, let's do it with the resolute faith of Joshua. We cannot control what other people around us are doing... but we can control ourselves. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord! Let's examine our families... this local church and our physical families... and see how we can serve God & please Him more! **(Josh 24:14-15)**