

# *Loyal Heart* MINISTRIES

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**New Every Morning - Lamentations 3:22-23**

A Devotion for Men by *Rush Witt*

*Lamentations 3:22-23 ~ The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.*

For many people, the turn of every New Year is accompanied by new goals, hopes, priorities, celebrations, diets, exercise regimens, budgets, memories of the past, plans for the future, and a myriad of other aspirations. In the minds of most people, the birth of a new calendar signifies a renewed opportunity for change. While smelting the dross of life is essential to the process of sanctification, unfortunately much of our self-examination and repentance occurs only on an annual basis. Yet the Bible does not teach us to rejoice, repent, or worship because a new year has arrived. The Scriptures proclaims the power of the gospel every day!<sup>1</sup>

Though Jeremiah was consumed through much of his writing with the state of sin and misery in which Israel wallowed, he also rejoiced in the hope of God's mercy. Though he and his people were afflicted by bitterness and wandering, his hope remained steadfast in God, whose mercies were not new every year, but *every day*. Though his soul was bowed down in sorrow, strife, and sin, he consistently fought for joy, remembering the hope of his God. Out of his turmoil he wrote, "This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness."<sup>2</sup> Notice in this passage that the hope of Jeremiah's heart rested firmly upon the mercy and compassion of God which was new *every morning*. Of course, Jeremiah was not suggesting that God's mercies tarnished or spoiled over the course of *each day*, requiring renewal at dawn. Instead, he was commending to his readers the faithfulness of his unchanging God. No matter the trouble they were to face – even if the earth were moved from its' foundations to be carried into the sea or the waters were to roar with trouble, shaking the mountains – they could depend upon the steady mercies of God. He was conveying that God's mercies are new *day by day by day*.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, Christians do not rejoice merely because a new year has brought new hopes, but because of God's compassionate character daily expressed toward them in the gospel.<sup>4</sup>

In light of God's fatherly compassion, those who believe in Christ do not have reason to celebrate simply because a ball drops in *Times Square*. Indeed, they have reason to rejoice every morning because God's mercies are constantly new and available to them. Therefore, believers (and believers alone) have the joy and privilege of ringing in each *new day* of God's mercies with sacred and hearty celebration.<sup>5</sup> So, how exactly does a Christian celebrate the grace of God on a daily basis? The answer is simple yet profound, through repentance and worship. This ought to be the sunrise response of every Christian and the refrain of his heart throughout *every day*.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 145:1-3

<sup>2</sup> Lamentations 3:21-23

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 46:1-5

<sup>4</sup> Psalm 13:5-6

<sup>5</sup> Psalm 96:1-2

<sup>6</sup> Psalm 25:5

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First, the fundamental response of the Christian life is repentance.<sup>7</sup> Fallen man has so very much of which to repent. However, unlike those who live apart from the salvation of Christ, Christians do not merely change outwardly. While the mass of men resolve to change their outward behavior, Christian men are able to change inwardly, by the Scriptures, through genuine repentance (change of heart).<sup>8</sup> In the face of idolatry, preoccupation with self, and the literally hundreds of other transgressions, faults, and imperfections which lie in the heart of fallen man, repentance is essential to a right and daily response to God's grace. Until Christ returns in a final triumph over sin, there will not be one day in which any mortal man needs no repentance.<sup>9</sup>

Second, God's grace and mercy compel believers not only to the practice of daily repentance, but also to humble and passionate worship. After all, worship has been God's intended purpose for mankind even since His creation of Adam and Eve.<sup>10</sup> The apostle Paul prayed for Christians to "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to *please Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God." The pleasure of God has always lain at the center of man's existence and is the essence of Christian worship. Yet even in all our efforts to please God, sin is ever with us along the way, working to sabotage our worship.<sup>11</sup> Is it any wonder why so many of our good intentions die away so shortly after the turn of each year? The reason we fail is that our resolutions are often full of self and devoid of God.

About.com cited the top ten New Year's resolutions as to *spend more time with family and friends, become fit, lose weight, quit smoking, enjoy life, quit drinking, get out of debt, learn something new, help others, and get organized*. Do you hear much worship reflected in that list? While in and of themselves there is nothing terribly wrong with any of these resolutions, at the end of the day they are all profoundly self-centered and behavior-oriented, two concepts which are contradictory to genuine Christian worship.<sup>12</sup> Goals such as achieving an A+, earning a promotion, and losing weight are all idolatrous unless the highest motive behind them is the pleasure and worship of the Triune God. Any human aspiration, goal, or resolution which is not centered upon the illumination of God's glory and advancement of His fame is mere idolatry. Yet, in the gospel, Christians find daily empowerment to repent and worship from the heart.<sup>13</sup> To use the words of Paul to the Colossians, "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."<sup>14</sup>

We Christians would do well to daily consider only two resolutions: repent of sin and worship God. What a year that would be!

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<sup>7</sup> 2 Peter 3:9

<sup>8</sup> Hebrews 4:12

<sup>9</sup> Psalm 51:3

<sup>10</sup> Psalm 19:1-6

<sup>11</sup> Romans 7:21

<sup>12</sup> Matthew 16:24, Hebrews 10:22

<sup>13</sup> 2 Peter 1:2-3

<sup>14</sup> Romans 12:1