

New Year – An Opportunity

Jeremiah 6: 9 – 16

Key Verse: “Stand at the crossroads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way lies; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.” (V. 16)

Every New year is a God given opportunity. And the future of our life depends upon on the way we are going to use this opportunity. Crossroads mentioned in today’s key verse symbolises all types of opportunities, a traveller has. But the key verse also suggests three truths about the opportunities:

- So many opportunities at a time are confusing.
- Opportunities can be good as well as bad.
- The choice of the right opportunity requires divine wisdom.

In the context of the New Year, its necessary to understand following two dynamics of opportunity.

1. *Opportunity means giving time some time:* There is a famous quote, “Every New year is a New Notebook. You open a new page and start writing a new life story.” But we all know that it’s not like that. In every new year we are going to carry the wounds, failures and guilts of the previous year. New year can be a fresh start if we are ready to process these three types of previous year baggage. And for that in the beginning of the year itself if we are ready to give our lifetime some time, then God will heal everything.

2. *Opportunity means living God’s dream for the life instead of dreaming the life:* The biggest encouragement to live for a human is, having future dreams. When we are entering this new year, we all have some dreams for 2024. But which is more important – Having own dream for the future or finding God’s dream for us for 2024? the pursuance of our own dreams is always very stressful. But chasing God’s dream for our life is always satisfactory and blessed. In the beginning of this new year itself be sure about God’s dream for your life and get excited to pursue it. And then it will become your life force to be alive in 2024.

Reflection:

1. How does the baggage from the past stop the future growth in personal & professional life?
2. How can your dream for the new year can complimentary to God’s Dream for CMC & H, Ludhiana?

Prayer Points:

1. Director’s Office & Administration of CMC & H, Ludhiana
2. Department of Anaesthesia
3. Sponsoring Body – Synodical Board of Health Services Church of North India

New Year – Expectations

Luke 13: 1 – 9

Key Verse: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none” (v.6)

New Year is always connected with the word, “*Excitement*”. But the question arises – Excited for what? Every new year we are excited for the fulfilment of expectations. Word expectation means, “*A strong belief that something will happen.*” Today’s parable also talks about expectations. A man is planting a fig tree in a Vineyard with lot of planning and providing resources to grow. And when time arrives, he went searching for fruit in it, and found none. This parable gives some strong life insights:

1. In every relationship; planning, planting and caring is the investment. And love is the reason of this investment. This Man has invested his planning & resources for the fig tree.
2. In love there will always be some expectations. This man had also some expectations from this plant.
3. Love in a relationship always provides opportunities. This man gave multiple opportunities to the fig tree to be fruitful.
4. The opportunities won’t be there for eternity. At the end caretaker also requested one more opportunity, before cutting the tree.
5. If in place of this fig tree, another fig tree has been planted; that tree might have thrived. This fig tree has not only wasted its own opportunities but also the opportunities of another tree.

Some points for Reflection:

- God has planted us in CMC & H, Ludhiana with a plan & resources. He has invested his love in us through keeping us alive, letting us live, work and thrive.
- As God loves us, He has some expectations from each one of us regarding our life in CMC, Ludhiana. What are those expectations?
- When we miss our opportunities to excel & serve in the institution, we are also wasting someone else’s opportunities.
- Is your life aim complementing our institution’s motto “*We serve a king.*”

Prayer Points:

1. Medical Superintendent’s Office
2. Department of Anatomy
3. Sponsoring Body – Church of South India

Challenge & Change

John 5: 1 – 14

Key Verse: “Do you want to be made well!” (v6)

It's very important for us to understand the meaning of words, “Challenge” & “Change” Challenge is something which hinders the forward movement of life. And Change is overcoming that challenge. 38 years of paralysis is the challenge of this man. And for him change means overcoming that challenge. But he was not able to face that challenge because of two reasons:

1. *The longer we live with our challenges the more discouraged we become:* After having a paralytic life for 38 years, now this man is completely discouraged and there is no energy left in him to try anything different also. Strong discouragement is very much visible in His words.
2. *the more discouraged we are – more better excuses we will make:* Unresolved challenges not only creates a lot of discouragement but also a lot of guilt. And the best way to face the guilt is to have a foolproof and just excuse. This man's excuse is also very just & foolproof – *“There is no one to help me and I cannot help myself; so I am here with my challenge.”*

In background of these two realities Jesus' question, “Do you want to be made well?” must be understood. This question has two implications:

- *For a change, faith must be stronger than the familiarity:* Jesus wants to know

whether the man has the courage to leave the 38 years of comfort and familiarity of Bethesda Poolside and face the unfamiliar outside world.

- *Desire for change must be stronger than the need of change:* A need can create a desire to fulfil that need. But an intense desire can only push someone to look for all different options and try best to have change.

Reflection:

1. A challenge can be a habit, a life style, a thought process or a dominance of a particular negative emotion.
2. Old challenges become the comfort zones and create a pseudo notion – *“It's part of my being. I am like this and I won't change.”*
3. On basis of above two statements, what are your challenges in your working style. And how can you change?

Prayer Points:

1. Nursing Superintendent office & Nursing Dept.
2. Department of Biochemistry
3. Sponsoring Body – Council of Baptist Churches in North East India

Resistance, Firmness & Harmony**Matthew 7: 15 – 27**

Key Verse: “The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock.!” (v25)

The parable of House on the rock & House on the Sand symbolizes life as a house built on rock and life as house built on sand. Today we are going to think about the life as house built on rock. Rock symbolizes 3 things:

- Resistance to movement
- Firmness of constitution
- Strength of togetherness

Now these three symbols are strongly connected with the three things hitting the house in the parable:

- Blow of wind
- Falling of rain
- Coming of flood

1. *Blow of Wind:* Blow of wind symbolizes a destructive force or influence. We are living in a world of influences. And some influences are so strong and powerful that they can move our beliefs, lifestyles & goals. To have a life founded on the rock means; having the power to resist such influences or the movement caused by such influences.
2. *Rain Fell:* Rain symbolises changes happening internally in life. Every season and stage of life cycle brings different changes in the life. and most of the times these changes are overwhelming. But during all these cycles the constitution of us as Child of God never changes.

During all the changes the firmness of the constitution of the rock will be intact. Whether small or big, rock will always be rock.

3. *Floods came:* In the way of floods, rocks usually won't move, as they huddle together and become a force to fight with. Floods symbolizes the sudden excessive sufferings. The best example was the pandemic happened recently. But during that time also the togetherness was the strength.

Reflection:

1. What are the strong influences which can distract you from your mission?
2. How is the strength of togetherness helping you in facing your professional obstacles?

Prayer Points:

1. General Superintendent's Organisation
2. Betty Cowan Research Centre
3. Sponsoring Body – Council of Medical Work, Methodist Church in India