

“I Am Resolved”

Intro:

- A. A song we often use to encourage people to respond to the gospel invitation following a sermon is “I Am Resolved,” which we will sing immediately following this lesson.
1. Each of us has something we need to resolve to do and stop doing.
 - a. We may know we need to do it, but have not resolved to make it happen.
 - b. We just continue with our lives without making the changes we need to make.
 2. Webster defines "*resolve*" as: "to determine or decide; to settle, or settle on; to form a purpose or resolution; to determine after reflection; as, to resolve on a better course of life."
 3. In other words, to make a resolution, or to resolve to do a thing, is to decide or determine in your mind a course of action you shall pursue.
 - a. In Luke 16, within the parable of the unjust steward, the term "*resolve*" appears in verse 14. In this context, it refers to the steward's recognition of his situation and his subsequent decision regarding his actions.
 - b. Some do their resolving right before the first of the year.
 - 1) It is referred to as “**New Year's Resolution.**”
 - 2) But **NOW** is the time to resolve to do what you need to **do**, or **stop** doing what you should not be doing.

- B. We have all resolved to do things; otherwise, we would have no accomplishments.
1. Every adult here could make a list, and some things would be impressive.
 2. While I could discuss my own achievements and completed resolutions, doing so would constitute self-promotion rather than effectively conveying the intended message.
 - a. Therefore, we will not proceed in that direction.
 - b. The main points of the lesson will be addressed shortly.
- C. God himself resolved to do certain things.
1. In Acts 2:23, we read: "This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and fore-knowledge; and you with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross."
 2. Hence, it was God's determined or predetermined plan for Jesus to die by the hands of wicked men on a cross – it was a resolution, and he followed up and made it happen.
- D. This sermon emphasizes the importance of making firm resolutions in the Christian life, urging believers to watch their speech, avoid defilement, actively preach Christ, and forget past failures to press forward in faith and service to God.
- E. Let us briefly note some resolutions that we need to make that will be helpful to us in our service to God.
1. As we look at these things, we need to remember that we must be determined in our minds.

2. Half-hearted efforts seldom accomplish anything.
 - a. Col. 3:23 - **And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;**
 - b. Ecc. 9:10 - **Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.**

Body

I. Let's Resolve To Watch What We Say With Our Mouth

- A. Psalms 17:3 says, **"I have resolved that my mouth will not sin."**
- B. We ought to pray with David: **"May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer" (Psa. 19:14).**
And further: **"Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; Keep watch over the door of my lips" (Psa. 141:3).**
- C. We need to determine right now that we will watch what we say.
- D. How easy it is to sin with our mouth!
 1. Therefore, we ought to **"put away perversity from our mouth and keep corrupt talk far from our lips" (Prov. 4:24).**
 2. Sometimes we speak in haste, saying the wrong thing without thinking.
 - a. The wise man said, **"Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few. As a dream comes when there are many cares, so the speech of a fool when there are many**

words. . . . Do not let your mouth lead you into sin" (Eccl. 5:2-3,6).

b. We need to realize that what comes out of our mouths reflects that which is in our hearts (Mk. 7:20-23).

1) Therefore, it behooves each of us to exercise care not to be guilty of filthy talk, gossip, backbiting, grumbling, slandering, and talebearing.

2) "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen" (Eph. 4:29).

i. If we would just take this precept to heart, the Lord's church, as well as society, would be the better for it.

E. Last of all on this point, brethren, let us resolve or determine not to praise God with our mouths and forget him in our practice.

1. Jesus said: "These people draw near (honor) Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me, and in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:8-9).

2. Long ago, the prophet Ezekiel condemned this popular practice.

"My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain...for they hear your words but do not put them into practice" (Ezek. 33:31-32).

3. Let each of us determine to watch what we say.
 - a. What better person could we be in the Lord's service?
 - b. And what a greater influence we will have among our fellow men if we resolve to do it and follow through!

II. Let's Resolve Not To Defile Ourselves

- A. "But Daniel resolved not to defile himself" (Dan. 1:8).
- B. *Defile* means "to make filthy, or to befoul; to tarnish, as reputation; to dishonor."
 1. Paul wrote: "Since we have these promises dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates (filthiness) body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God" (2 Cor. 7:1-2).
 2. James: "Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you" (James 1:21).
- C. We defile ourselves, tarnish our reputations, and bring dishonor on the Lord and his church when we give ourselves over to the *works of the flesh* (see Gal. 5:19-21).
 1. The same apostle said the following in 1 Cor. 6:9-11:

"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? **Do not be deceived:** Neither the sexually immoral nor idolators nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders, nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of

God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

2. We want to emphasize the phrase: "**Do not be deceived.**"
 - a. In our day and age, many are deceived into thinking that they can commit these sins and be teachers and preachers, and God will usher them right into heaven.
 - b. But Paul said, "**and that is what some of you were,**" not "what some of you **are**!"
 - 1) One could not be washed, sanctified, and justified from his defilement and continue to commit such acts.
 - 2) Let us resolve not to defile ourselves, but to keep ourselves pure and holy even as our Lord did before us.

III. Let us Resolve To Preach Christ To A Lost World

- A. As Paul proclaimed the testimony of God, he said: "**For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified**" (1 Cor. 2:2).
 1. Like Paul, we need to determine now that we will preach Christ (Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15). "**For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord**" (2 Cor. 4:5).
 2. Many people have the idea that preaching Christ means preaching only the facts about Him, rather than His doctrine or teachings.
 - a. But preaching Christ is the same as preaching the word or the gospel.

b. This is made clear in Acts 8:4-5: "Therefore, those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. Then Philip, went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them."

B. Philip preached the same thing - those who were scattered preached!

1. In verse 35 of the same chapter, it says, "Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him."
2. One cannot preach Jesus independent of the Word!
3. Also, we note that those involved in "preaching Jesus" preached water baptism.
4. Since Philip was doing the preaching on this occasion, it stands to reason that he introduced the matter of baptism because the Ethiopian asked about being baptized as soon as they came to sufficient water.
 - a. Preaching Jesus, which includes preaching water baptism, is preaching salvation to lost souls.
 - b. This is true because Jesus died to save lost souls, shedding his precious blood on a Roman cross, and we are baptized in that blood (Rom. 6:3-4).
 - c. Additionally, it was Jesus Himself who commanded baptism as a means of salvation (Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:46-47; Acts 2:38).

C. Church growth, whether numerical or spiritual, requires active engagement in sharing the message of Christ.

1. People rarely attend church services in the absence of community outreach.
2. The directive "**Go into all the world and preach the gospel**" highlights the need for proactive engagement beyond waiting for individuals to come to church.
3. Let each of us resolve now to "**preach the word**" to the extent of our ability. (2 Tim. 4:2).

IV. Let us Resolve To Forget The Past And Press On Toward Heaven

A. Paul wrote: "**...forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus**" (Phil. 3:13-14).

1. We must not dwell on the past.
 - a. We must put it behind us and move on in our service to God.
 - b. I don't mean that we are just to forget the sins of our part -- we must learn from our mistakes and correct sin.
 - c. It is easy to let past church problems hinder us in our service to the Lord's work.
 - 1) They can warp our concept of faithful brethren and make us bitter and cynical, if we allow it.
 - 2) Perhaps we have received mistreatment from brethren; will we allow such to cloud

our thinking and hinder us from faithfulness to him?

- d. Personal sin can hold us up; thus, we need to always repent when we know we sin, ask God's forgiveness, and then move on in his service.

B. Eric Liddell was a strong favorite to win the 400-yard dash at the 1923 Triangular International. However, 15 yards after the start, he lay sprawled across the track infield, the victim of a tripping accident. Undaunted, "The Flying Scot" picked himself up and resumed his race. With the finish line drawing near, Eric Liddell drew upon his utmost reserves. As the stunned crowd watched, he crossed the tape three yards ahead of his nearest competitor, the man who had tripped him.

1. In many ways, the Christian life is like a foot race.
 - a. We sometimes encounter adverse track conditions.
 - b. Competitors may occasionally jostle us as we run.
 - c. At times, we might even trip and fall.
2. No doubt, all of us have probably stumbled a time or two along the way.
 - a. We have said something we should not have said; we have failed to do things we know we should have and could have done.
 - b. Instead of heading toward the goal, we find ourselves flat on our faces!
 - c. Brethren, this will happen.
 - 1) It happened to the best of God's servants.
 - 2) But, when it does, what will we do?
 - i. Do we stay down?

- ii. Do we bemoan our situation, or do we get up, like **Eric Liddell** and double our efforts?
- d. If you have fallen in the past, get up, dust yourself off, and get back into the race.
 - 1) Don't let failures of the past hinder your progress in the Lord.
 - 2) If you will repent and confess them, resolving not to do them again, God will forgive you, and you can then have a clear conscience and move forward in your life for God. (1 Jn. 1:7, 9).

Conclusion:

- A. We have emphasized the need for Christians to make firm resolutions, to make deliberate decisions to improve our conduct and service to God.
- B. The sermon emphasizes the importance of determination and the consequences of half-hearted efforts in spiritual growth and service.
- C. Let us:
 - 1. **Resolve to watch our speech.**
 - 2. **Resolve not to defile ourselves.**
 - 3. **Resolve to preach Christ actively.**
 - 4. **Resolve to forget the past and press on.**
 - 5. **Resolve with determination.**
 - 6.

Invitation

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