

5 Means of Grace for the New Year - Psalm 1

Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

Happy New Year! Welcome to 2023. Have you already broken your resolutions? The turning of the calendar is a natural time to think through life and, well, turn over new leaves. How about as a church we dedicate ourselves to making 2023 a year of discipleship. In other words, let's dedicate ourselves to the things God uses in our lives to grow us in godliness and shape us into the image of Jesus. As followers of Jesus it should be our desire to be more like Jesus everyday, and to help us move in this direction God has given us so many gifts designed to facilitate our growth. We call these things means of grace because they are disciplines, activities, and life events God uses to impart His grace in life. By referring to them as means of grace, we are reminded that all that we have and all that we do in life that honors God flows from Him, given to us through His Spirit in us, and flowing back to Him in praise. Yet, we partner in this growth through these means. For New Year's Day we are going to have our Elders share the things God has used to shape and grow them. These five things are not the only means of grace for our growth, but they are key ones. If you missed the service let me encourage you to go watch the live-stream on our YouTube channel. But here are five things God uses to grow us as we humbly follow Jesus.

Walking in the Word - To be honest, it all starts here. The clearest marker for spiritual growth is our personal and corporate intake of God's Word. God has chosen to reveal Himself in the Scriptures and it is through the text and story of the Bible whereby God most clearly speaks to us. Reading the Bible is so much more than an exercise in the scanning over words. The Bible is an invitation to a conversation where God is the first speaker, but He invites us in to know Him, hear Him, and talk with Him. Daily rhythms of Bible reading, study, meditation, and memorization will take you deeply into the experience of Christ and will mold you. For some, this means starting the New Year with the goal of reading the whole Bible in 2023 might be a good goal. For others, a chapter a day or a shorter devotional type of reading might be a good place to begin. The key though, is that regular time in the Word of God will be the most significant aspect of your growth this year.

Community - We were not designed to do this faith journey alone. Lone Ranger believers don't stand. Life has a way of bringing events and challenges that will leave you helpless and in need. If you haven't already forged deep relationships with other Christ-followers, it will be difficult to lean in to them in the hard times. I have learned in this past year that God actually mediates His presence through the community of faith that is the church. At Genesis this means we need to be in a Community Group, and not just as an occasional attendee. Regular participation in the Christian community will shape you, give you people to love and serve, and help you live on mission.

Difficulty and hardship - No, you should not make it a New Year's resolution to have an awful, pain filled 2023. This means of grace is not something you plan, yet, it is something that comes to all of us. Scripture never promised flowers and puppies for the whole of the Christian life. Actually, Jesus Himself told us we would have suffering, hardship, difficulty, and even persecution. Rather, Jesus also promised that He would be with us in the most difficult of times, and that God will use suffering and struggle as a means of grace to shape us into the image of Jesus. So we are called to respond to these things in worship and praise, knowing that God is sovereign and purposeful in our difficulties.

Living on Mission - God is a missionary God, sending His Son to save us. But did you

realize that God has also sent the church into the world as an extension of His mission to save people and do the work of justice in the world. Living on mission involves our lips and our hands. It means that we share Jesus with people, spreading the Gospel to family, neighbors, friends, and co-workers. And it includes our service to people, caring for the poor, loving our neighbors, and working to make the world more like the Kingdom of God.

Prayer - Our final means this week is prayer. Prayer is the other half of the conversation, our lifting our voices to worship Jesus, confess our sins, and share our needs. Nothing can invigorate your prayer life more than connecting the two aspects of the conversation together. Consider praying the Word. A good place to start is in the Psalms. Just read a Psalm, then go back through it and lift up the people, needs, and issues that come to mind as you put the Psalm into your own words.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Proverbs 1	Proverbs 2	Proverbs 3	Proverbs 4	Proverbs 5	Proverbs 6	Proverbs 7

Reading from this past week: Psalm 1

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Acts 21:1-26

Family Worship

Song - *The Goodness of God*

https://youtu.be/AWxqd_Mc8ZI

Gospel Project

Unit: The People Return

Story: God delivered His people

Big Picture Question: Can God be trusted?

Answer: Yes, God cannot lie or ever be wrong, so we can trust whatever He has said.

Scripture: Ezra 1

New City Catechism

Question #1: What is our only hope in life and death?

Answer: That we are not our own but belong to God.

Verse: Romans 14:17-18

Scripture

Psalm 1

- Who are the two types of people in the Psalm? How does the Psalm contrast these two paths?
- What are the activities of the righteous person? What activities and disciplines can help you journey this direction?
- Look over the five means of grace in this family worship sheet. Which of these disciplines or activities needs your intentionality as we begin the New Year?

Prayer

*That as we begin 2023, it will be a year of discipleship and mission for yourself and for our church.

*Pray for the city of Eureka.