

# FAITH CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY

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"From the Pastor's Desk..."

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## REMOVE THE OLD AND REPLACE WITH THE NEW



One of the unique things about a New Year is that it often seems to provide the opportunity for change. I was awakened recently with the words of an old song that we use to sing in church. The lyrics went like this:

*"I'll tell you the best thing I ever did do. I'll tell you the best thing I every did do, was take off the old robe and put on the new. The old robe was dirty, all tattered and torn, the new robe was spotless and never been worn. I'll tell you the best thing I ever did do, was take off the old robe and put on the new."*

Now for those who are wondering why we would sing a song like that in church, was because the old robe represents an old garment of sin, and the new garment represents the garment of righteousness.

*"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." Isa 61:10*

In the Gospel (Luke 15: 11-32), Jesus told the story of the prodigal son who went out and wasted his substance in riotous living, but finally returned home apparently looking pretty bad, because the first thing that his father did, was take off his old garment and replace it with the new. Do not doubt the young man's clothing was stained from the filth and grime of where he had been. He needed to be washed and changed. So it is when we come to Christ.

What stands out in the above passage of scripture are the words, "for He hath clothed me with the garment of salvation." In other words, the Lord had brought about this change. He provided the garments which needed changing. He made possible the things which we could not afford. He saw the need for a change of garments. Therefore, the best thing I ever did do was take off the old robe and put on the new.

Matthew Henry commented on this verse saying, *"Some make this the song of joy and praise to be sung by the prophet in the name of Jerusalem, congratulating her on the happy change of her circumstances in the accomplishment of the foregoing promises; others make it to be spoken by Christ in the name of the New Testament church triumphing in gospel grace."*

### THE NEW YEAR

I wonder in this New Year what is it that God wants to change in our life. Men often times seem to grow accustomed to wearing old things, longer than most women do. We seem to become attached to old shirts, old shoes, old coats, and even old hats. Women, on the other hand, seem to be the very opposite...they like to change, and they change often. Why? Because women identify themselves with what they wear. In fact, a new outfit has been known to change the very mood and temperament of some people.

If a man criticizes a dress a woman is wearing, she may take that comment more personally than a man generally does if his wife makes a negative comment on what he is wearing. Don't ask me why because I am not sure I cannot answer that question...that is something that only a woman can explain. I just have observed that through the years. So men need to be more cautious and sensitive in how we respond when rendering a comment when asked our opinion on what our companion is wearing.

***The question is how are we going to respond to the Lord if He suggests that there are some things*** He wants to change in our behavior, personalities, careers, and so on. We may like the way things are. We may even have grown too accustomed to the way things are in our life which desperately needs to change. We may not even be aware of what in our life is hindering us from making progress in our relationships with people, on the job, or in reaching others for Christ. We too may have some garments that need changing. Therefore, the question is: Can we adapt to such changes?

*It isn't that we resist change in itself because we all have a tendency to change things in our life. We change cars, we change careers, we adapt to changes in the style of clothes we wear, the kinds of food we eat, and even the places we live. Some people make changes even when they are not needed simply because they become bored by the routine of their daily activity.*

## **YEAR OF CHOOSING NEW LEADERSHIP**

***This year as Americans we will be given the opportunity to change some of the leadership in our country.*** I hope that we will see a change in the way our country is now headed, because if there is no change, or little change, it is very possible that the forces of evil that are now at work will bring this nation to the point of moral bankruptcy and Spiritual disaster. These changes need to start in our communities, our state, as well as in our nation. But it will not happen unless we as individuals take personal responsibility in bringing about this change.

***We need to talk change, vote for change, and pray for change.*** We need to become a participant that enables the change. We do this by becoming active and involved in what is happening around us. We have been given the call from the Lord Himself to be a light to them that are in darkness as well as to be the salt of the earth. In other words, adapt to the situation where you are and make the changes that are necessary. Be *salt* where there is the lack of seasoning, and be *light* in areas where darkness exists. Be a *voice* that cries in the wilderness, "*prepare ye the way of the Lord.*"

***Will we succeed? Who knows?*** But unless we try there is one thing evident: change will not come. I don't like what I see that is happening around us. I don't believe that God likes it either. I am determined to continue to write new books to encourage people to change their views on subjects that I feel are detrimental to their faith.

I know it will cost me money and maybe friends or favor with some, but I have a deep concern that if change does not take place in our churches, institutions of learning, and civic leadership and in the homes of America, we will see the complete destruction of our civilization. We must change and it must begin somewhere...may God grant us His strength to begin anew in this New Year.

*I am not saying that what you or I do will make a historical mark on history. But if you or I can at least light a candle, strike a spark, and ignite one heart, maybe that one will strike a spark in another. Who knows the possibility of what can happen? Many a wild fire started with a simple spark. May God begin that spark within each of us in the New Year.*

*It was Theodore Roosevelt that wrote, "It is not the critic who counts, not the person who points out where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the person who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; errs and comes up short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the devotions, and spends himself or herself in a worthy cause; who at best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and at worst, at least fails while daring greatly; so that his or her place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory or defeat."*

***So to each of my readers I wish you a very Happy New Year.*** I pray that you will begin to make some obtainable goals that will enable you to be more dependable upon the Lord, more helpful to those around you, and more creative in finding ways to serve your Lord and Master. Enjoy this New Year and get ready to expect God to work the miraculous upon your behalf. Amen!