

Happy New Year, everyone. I pray this will be the greatest year of your life!

Blessings and favor always!

Part 1: Build Your Dream and Live the Life You've Always Wanted!

Texts:

James 4:14 (NKJV) - "...for what is your life?"

Jeremiah 24:1-7 (NKJV) - "The Lord showed me, and there were two baskets of figs set before the temple of the Lord, after Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and the princes of Judah with the craftsmen and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon. [2] One basket had very good figs, like the figs that are first ripe; and the other basket had very bad figs which could not be eaten, they were so bad. [3] Then the LORD said to me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?" And I said, "Figs, the good figs, very good; and the bad, very bad, which cannot be eaten, they are so bad." [4] Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, [5] "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge those who are carried away captive from Judah, whom I have sent out of this place for their own good, into the land of the Chaldeans. [6] For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land; I will build them and not pull them down, and I will plant them and not pluck them up. [7] Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart."

3 John 1:2-4 (NKJV) - "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. [3] For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. [4] I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

1 Timothy 6:17 (NKJV) - "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly ALL things to enjoy."

A. On this first Sunday of 2015, something is in the air! This is definitely going to be our year!

1. As we pass the half-way mark of summer each year and approach the fall, I begin seeking God for what He may say to us individually, as a congregation, and as a team for the coming new year.
2. Our church family is excited that it's finally time to build our dream. But our dream is much more than just a new sanctuary. Like our text from Jeremiah, as we stand in the House of the Lord, God is speaking to us about our future. I want to speak about that shortly, and more from the text in Jeremiah next week.
3. The Jewish people believe that at the beginning of their New Year, God causes all humanity to pass before Him as He declares the blessings that will be released over them throughout the coming year.
4. The first of the year is a time of new beginnings. It's God's way of bringing closure and putting away those things that didn't go so well.
5. It's also a time to start over again with more opportunities, new direction and goals, and a fresh Word from God.

B. While at the House of God today, I believe He wants to speak a word to each of us.

1. In many ways, we resemble the people of Israel as they were about to enter their Promised Land.
2. For over 400 years, many generations of Israelites had waited for the fulfillment of their dreams of living in the Promised Land. But the greatest blessing would be the building of their lives in the place they longed to be.
3. I feel that is what the Holy Spirit will do for us this year. He will help us build the dream of the lives we have always wanted.
4. God wants us to live the life we love, as well as loving the life we live. That's how dreams are built! But this is not about a new sanctuary. I'm talking about building the dream of the lives we want to live.
5. By nature, God is a Creator—and therefore, a builder. Satan's nature is to destroy, with no ability to create. As scripture declares, he comes to steal, kill, and destroy. God loves to build, and Satan wants to destroy.
6. While some of us suffered the effects of the enemy's wicked plans last year, that's all over now. In this New Year, we're leaving behind the enemy's work in 2014.....**he didn't succeed!**
7. No one would intentionally choose a life of pain or disappointment; nor would we select options from God as if we're reading from a Pappasito's menu: "For an appetizer, I'll take a divorce. And for the main entree, give me cancer well done, with a side of bankruptcy—and hold the joy. Let's see....for dessert, I'll take putting my kids on drugs with a scoop of vanilla ice cream."

C. All of us have dreams for our lives.

1. Thomas E. Lawrence, who became the famous Lawrence of Arabia, said, "All men dream, but unequally. Those that dream at night in the dusty recesses of their minds awake the next day to find that their dreams were just vanity. But those who dream during the day with their eyes wide open are dangerous men; they act out their dreams to make them reality."

2. For Israel, building the dream wasn't just about a land that flowed with milk and honey. Nor was it about buildings and vineyards, though that's how scripture described their inheritance. It involved much more than that!
3. God had given Abraham precious promises that would in turn be inherited by his descendants, and finally passed to the very people who were now poised on the brink of their destiny.
4. The promises concerned the life they would live, more than the possessions they would receive.
5. True success and fulfillment always revolve around how you live.
6. Nothing has real value unless it makes your life more meaningful and enjoyable.

a. **1 Timothy 6:17** - "trust....in God who gives us **all** things richly to **enjoy.**"

7. Without God's assistance, we could never hope to build a dream that would include family, friends, financial stability, career, or business.
8. **Psalms 127:1 (NKJV)** - "Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain."

D. Since we could never build our lives without God's assistance, it is so important that we have His direction and guidance.

1. I feel the Lord is saying to us, because we are building **His** dream, He is going to build the dream of our lives and make it come to pass. To accomplish this purpose, we must have two things: His wisdom and divine favor.
2. James, chapter 3, speaks of two types of wisdom: earthly, carnal wisdom and godly wisdom from above.
3. The true wisdom that is from above creates access; it enables you to go places you could otherwise never accomplish.

4. Have you ever been restricted from a place for not having proper access? It happened to me just yesterday. While viewing an email about family trees and genealogies, my surname was mentioned in such an intriguing way, I decided to click on the link. That brought up more interesting data. Now that they had my full attention, the only way to go forward was another hyperlink. But when I clicked this time, the words "Access Denied" came on the screen. I couldn't get to the good stuff unless I bought a membership.

5. Have you ever experienced "access denied"? The word I have for C.T. today is to expect *supernatural* access! We will go places this year we didn't know existed—much less the ability to get there.

6. **Joke:** Boudreaux Joins the Olympics

It was time for the Olympics and Boudreaux and two of his friends wanted to sneak into the Olympic Village. Soon they spotted a big, hulking guy with his athletic duffel bag, bulging biceps, and a size 19 neck and heard him say to the guards: "I'm Angus McPherson....Scotland....Shotput."

When the security team searched his bag, they saw a huge shotput ball and waved him right through. He was given room keys—plus meal coupons for Pizza Hut, McDonalds, and Häagen-Dazs food court.

So these three guys say to themselves: "Cool. We can do this." The first one sneaks outside, slices all the branches off a tree limb, comes back to the security guards and says, "Chuck Wagon....Canada....Javelin." The guards inspect his "javelin" and hand him a bulging envelope with an athletic pass, room keys, meal tickets, and everything. Obviously, this was a pretty lax security (probably pre-9/11).

The second guy goes down an alley, pries loose a manhole cover, marches up to the front gate and announces himself: "Dusty Rhodes....Australia....Discus."

“Welcome to the Olympics, Mr. Rhodes!” So the two guys who managed to sneak into the inner sanctum begin to loiter around the gate, waiting to see if their third buddy, Boudreaux, can talk his way in.

A couple of minutes later, Boudreaux walks up to the front gate with a huge roll of barbed wire painfully tucked under his arm.

“Who are you?” the guards ask.

“Boudreaux,” he says. “Louisiana....USA....Fencing.”

7. It's better to have wisdom and favor than money. Acquire wisdom and favor, and you can always get money. People who equate blessings with receiving things have usually never had much in life. Instead of assessing the real cause for their misery or correcting the dysfunction that has held them back, it seems easier to blame unhappiness and problems on a lack of resources. Never do they consider it could result from a lack of heaven's assistance and wisdom.
 8. They take it for granted that problems are the result of their predicament rather than their predicament is the result of their problems. Nor do they realize that people with resources also struggle with dysfunction. In fact, those who seem to have it all are often more miserable than others.
 9. Because we need access to God's favor and wisdom this year, in the month of January I'm asking you to fast two days a week and spend time praying and seeking God every day of the month.
- E. In 1 Timothy 6:17, Paul exhorts believers not to be one- dimensional.
1. We're told to put our trust in God, who wants to bless **every** part of our lives—not just give us 'things'.
 - a. As Paul mentions, God is more interested in blessing us than we are in receiving and He gives us **all things** to enjoy!
 - b. Where do we get our blessings? From God! He **gives** them to us by providing ideas, wisdom, and divine assistance—and then opens doors that enable us to be successful and fulfilled.

2. True wisdom keeps you from believing that resources alone will satisfy. Somehow, those who have never enjoyed much of this world's goods think that accumulating things will make them happy. They fail to notice that those who have all the toys one could hope for but have forgotten God, are very miserable people.
3. Those who believe that finances alone will make them happy are some of the most discontented people in the world! They have worked hard, neglected their family, acted without scruples to become wealthy, and then discover how miserable they are within.
4. But please understand that possessions are very helpful in the daily struggle to exist. Still, finances are but one of the seven areas that comprise the sum of your life.
5. To understand and develop all seven areas of life is vital to success and happiness since they are interrelated. Life is not one-dimensional.
 - a. It's hard to be fulfilled and live the life you've always wanted if you still struggle in any of these areas.
 - b. To struggle in just one area can adversely affect the others. If you are hurting in two or more areas, the quality of your life can definitely be affected in a negative way.
6. The seven areas of life are:
 - a. Physical
 - b. Spiritual
 - c. Cognitive
 - d. Social
 - e. Emotional
 - f. Financial
 - g. Family
7. Doing well in one component does not necessarily fix what is broken in the other six. Adequate finances may eliminate the struggle to survive, but it won't repair the problems in your marriage or with your children.

- Those who have "things" may be miserable if their families are fractured; nor can possessions fix the emotional component of your life.
7. Financial stability is important, but 'toys' are never a substitute for the spiritual or social components. Friends who are attracted by possessions are not real friends; nor will 'things' buy health or intelligence, which is the cognitive aspect of life.
 8. Having good friends cannot solve health issues.
 9. Obviously, the ideal is to flourish in every area of life—family, finances, health, and so on. That's what God intended for us and what John referred to in 3 John.

F. What we need is God's wisdom!

1. The Bible contains the wisdom of heaven—which amazes me!
2. **Psalm 19:7 (NKJV)** - "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;"
3. I'm also amazed at how many of these teachings and principles have been "borrowed" by those outside the church, such as Tony Robbins and Les Brown, and taught as 'success principles.' And of course, they really do work—even when applied by those who don't know God!
4. Equally amazing is how many in the church fail to understand these principles that were meant for believers. Seems like those outside the Kingdom are 'reading our mail.'
5. When believers fail to use God's wisdom or see life from His perspective, unbelievers assume that happiness is all about money.
 - a. It's also difficult for many in the church to understand how God wants us to be blessed in **every** area--not just spiritually.
 - b. Some openly oppose all teaching about prosperity. They believe we should struggle to get to heaven and if, (that's a big 'if') we're lucky, we will be among the chosen few who make it.

- c. Because of their open hostility to financial blessings, many view prosperity as a distraction; but more often, a seductive force for evil.
6. Still others stoically accept their status in life. They declare that in God's sovereignty, we are where we're supposed to be. While I believe that He is sovereign, I also believe, as every good parent wishes to accomplish for their child, that God involves us in the process rather than 'giving' it to us.
 - a. For example, when a parent decides to give their child a car, but with certain qualifications, they're trying to teach the importance of earning our way without an attitude of entitlement.
 - b. God does the same for us. After promising to bless us, He then adds, "**If** you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land!"
7. Whether or not we receive the promise does not reflect a lack of sovereignty on His part. To the contrary, when He adds conditions for the fulfillment of a promise, it **demonstrates** His sovereignty.

G. My view about finances.

1. Some look at finances as the key to happiness; some believe finances are inherently carnal; while others believe we should stoically accept whatever happens because God chose it to be that way.
2. I believe that God delights in blessing and elevating our lives. By so doing, He enables us to become a living testimony of His greatness.
3. When a devoted believer acknowledges the Lordship of Christ and thoroughly enjoys life, it greatly impacts those who don't know Him and supports the fact that living for Christ is the greatest life imaginable!
4. This is my word for you: God is going to give you a testimony this year so that you won't have to talk about what happened to someone else. It will be your **own** incredible testimony!

5. I agree with Apostle John in 3 John 1:4 (NKJV) - "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."
6. What John said about 'walking in truth,' links with verse 2: "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers." Speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John **clearly** states that God wants to bless every part of our lives—not just the spiritual aspect. He wants to fulfill our dreams!
7. It pleased John to know that the spiritual children he had mentored were in alignment with principles that would enable them to be successful—both in the spiritual and natural realm.
8. John understood that the Gospel message is holistic. God wants us to be blessed in every area of our lives.
9. Since this is what everyone you know is striving for, the person who experiences a blessed life is powerful beyond belief! Their influence can be used to advance the Kingdom of God.
10. Unless your life is blessed in all seven areas, your influence will be diminished and your testimony less impacting.
11. Simply stated, people will not want what you have if it's more of the misery they are already experiencing.

H. This is why God wanted to establish and bless Israel in their own land.

1. Israel was intended to be the envy of all nations; they were to wonder about Israel's secret and then commit their lives to Him.
2. Six times (four in the Old Testament and two in the New), God said that His people would be His "peculiar" treasure.
 - a. This is an unfortunate translation since the definition of 'peculiar' has changed through the years. Today, it means 'odd'; but when translated in 1611, it meant *very rare, precious, or valuable*.

- b. **Deuteronomy 14:2 (KJV)** - "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a **peculiar** people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth."
 - c. I've seen this scripture used as an excuse for a person's eccentricities. But that is not the meaning, at all.
 - d. 'Peculiar' (Hebrew - Cgullah) means: a closely guarded treasure, wealth, special.
 - e. God doesn't want His people to be weird, but to be blessed. He wants the world to see how blessed we are in every way, and then give their lives to Him as we have done.
 - 3. A vital part of Israel's dream was for God to help them build the life they had always wanted. They were to become the model for how life should be. And that's true for us as well.
- I. Here is the good news: to build the life Israel had always dreamed of was exactly what God also wanted! He **wanted** to bless them in every possible way.
- 1. God had given Abraham precious promises that would be transferred to each generation of his descendants, and finally to the very people who were poised on the brink of their destiny.
 - 2. Their promises were more about how they lived than the possessions they would receive.
 - 3. A really successful, fulfilled life is more connected with enjoying life than anything else.
 - 4. 'Things' have value only when they make life more meaningful and enjoyable.
 - a. **1 Timothy 6:17 (NKJV)** - ". . . not to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy."
- J. So I conclude by saying, "This is our year to "Build the Dream!"

1. I'm not referring to the new sanctuary we will soon erect, but building the dream of how we want to live!
2. As Paul declared, God wants us to trust Him while He gives us ***all things richly to enjoy.***
 - a. That includes the desire for a fulfilled marriage and a happy family.
 - b. It involves the desire for a successful career, business, and finances.
 - c. It's about the good impact you want God to make in the lives of others.
3. 'To build the dream' means to build the life you want to live—with God's help!
4. In 2015, we will continue to teach principles that will help you do exactly that!