Pastor’s Pen: A No Regrets Life

A little boy went to see his favorite Aunt. When he arrived, his aunt asked him what he wanted to do. He said, “I love your pancakes, and when we have pancakes at home, I only get to eat three. So, while I’m here at your house, I want to eat as many pancakes as I want.”

The next morning there was a pile of pancakes on his plate, and the little guy started eating as fast as he could. By the time he had downed his tenth, his pace had slowed considerably. In the middle of his eleventh pancake, he came to an abrupt halt. His aunt asked him, “Are you ready for some more?” With a look of pain on his face he answered, “Oh no, I don’t want any more. Right now I don’t even want the ones I’ve already eaten!”

Those are familiar words of regret. “I should have…” you fill in the rest of the sentence. “I should have quit, I should have stopped, I should have controlled myself, I should have moved slower, I should have…” I read an article recently about the one thing most people regret at the end of their lives. This particular subject is actually perfect for the beginning of a new year. Keep reading, and I’ll explain what this regret is.

Jeremiah 29:11-13 “For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. 12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.’” NIV

This is a popular passage, quoted often, because we all love to hear that God has a good and secure future planned for us. If you read the rest of the chapter and get the full context in which it is given, you’ll see that it was not given to people who were living on easy street. They were in the midst of a great trial, and great tribulation was coming. But, in the distant future, 70 years, God was going to restore them. But for the immediate future, war was going to overtake them. Soon, they would be overcome by regret for the choices they made that brought the Lord’s discipline down upon them.

Here’s why talking about regret is a good idea in January: because the most common regret people have toward the end of their lives is that they didn’t act on dreams and aspirations they had. Blame it on procrastination, fear, lack of resources, and an infinite number of other excuses, but it still ends up as the #1 regret 76% of people asked have. So, it’s January, not the time to look back and point fingers, but look ahead and plan your future year. That’s what planning does, helps you avoid regret! That’s what Solomon was talking about in Proverbs 4:5-6, “Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my mouth. ’Do not turn away from her (wisdom) and she will guard and protect you; Love her, and she will watch over you.’” Wisdom teaches us to plan, which can “guard and protect” our lives. So, it’s time to act on and plan for the dream or aspiration you have for your life. Please repeat the following sentence as many times as are needed: “No more putting it off!”

The really cool part is that the Holy Spirit wants to help you and give you courage to make your way out of the comfort zone that has you glued to your security blanket. In Acts 20, the Apostle Paul was facing a brand new move in his ministry that was definitely outside his comfort zone. In fact, everywhere he went he heard well-meaning believers try to detour him from his plan. This was his response, “And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardship are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.”

Obviously it wasn’t going to be easy, it wasn’t going to be painless, but it was going to fulfill the
Pastor’s Pen Continued

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dream God had given him for his life. And, nothing else mattered to Paul! Nothing! Three things awaited him:

1. Uncertainty. Dreams and aspirations, especially when they are given by God, virtually always involve uncertainty, risk taking, and walking by faith. But the Holy Spirit “compelled” him to go! If the Holy Spirit is guiding you, you need to go for it and not allow “uncertainty” to stop you.

2. Hardship. He knew that pain and prison were awaiting him, but he wasn’t allowing even them to stop him. Wow! He was determined to listen to and obey the Spirit above every other voice.

3. Mission. He kept his eye on the mission for his life: “testifying,” telling more people about Jesus. He uses the familiar analogy of running a “race” like we see in some of his final words in 2 Timothy 4:7, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

What better way to finish your life than to really live it and fulfill its mission! That’s a no regrets life. Start living it before you regret it!

Ignite Youth Group

by: Pastor Jon

What is your vision for this new year? Maybe you see the new year as just a time to get a new calendar, but it is also a good reminder to look at how you’re living your life. Every year we mess up, and 2018 was probably no different for you. So, now is a great time to let go of the failures of the past and ask God, “What goals do you want me to accomplish this year? What mission are you giving me to fulfill?”

What is your vision for 2019? You might dream of becoming the next Lebron James, but if you never pick up a basketball, that’s not vision—that’s just a desire. Vision is the art of knowing where you want to go, planning the steps you need to take to get there, and then following through.

“Write my answer plainly on tablets, so that a runner can carry the correct message to others. 3 This vision is for a future time. It describes the end, and it will be fulfilled. If it seems slow in coming, wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed” (Habakkuk 2:2-3, NLT).

Just like in Habakkuk’s day, God is working his plan through our lives today. Ask Him to give you a new vision for 2019—he promises to fulfill the purposes revealed in His Word. He tells Habakkuk to write the vision down, so it can be shared and remembered. Once God gives you a vision, write it in big bold letters so you’ll see it every day and remind yourself of what He has shown you.

Look to Jesus this year for a new vision for your life—then post it up somewhere and take the first step to see it happen!

Upcoming Events: (for youth in grades 6-12)

Jan. 13: Youth Band Practice, 12-2:30 p.m. – for any teens interested in playing/singing. Lunch included.
Feb. 10: Pizza Ranch & Tundra Lodge Trip, 12-7:15 p.m. – register and pay by Feb. 6th.
Mar. 8: Night Skiing Trip, 2:00-10:30 p.m. – register and pay by Mar. 3rd.

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Bible Connections

by: Bob Lee

Current classes:
Prayer – Glennie Zdzieblowski – Room 110A.
Finishing New Testament Names of Jesus and will be starting Parables of Jesus – Jeanette Froelich – Conference Room.
New members class - Pastor Carlson and Bob Lee (Starts January 6, 2019 – In Pastor Paul’s Study.
Through the Bible – Jesus’ Ministry – Matt Young – Room 201A.

Rotation classes – Esther shows students how to take a strong stand for what’s right when facing serious opposition.
Pre-Adolescence Class - Mike Clark & Chuck McDer- mid for boys and & April Young, Teri von Brevern & Christine McDermid for girls.

We will be looking for you.
Kids Blast is coming up February 22nd – 23rd! What is Kids Blast you ask? Well Kids Blast is for kids 3rd-6th grade. Kids have time connecting with God, learning more about themselves, and learning to share Jesus with others; plus they get to have a ton of fun while doing it! Kids Blast is in Wisconsin Dells at the Kalahari! Our speaker this year is Kyle Jorris, and he has a love for working with children and seeing them grow in the Lord. There will be fun workshops for the kids to do, along with amazing worship. The cost for children is $56 per child and for a sponsor is $45. We need your registrations by January 22nd, please turn them in to Skyler Simpson or myself by then or there will be a late fee for late registration. There is a water park that the children will get to have fun at before the conference even starts! We will be leaving on Friday and returning on Saturday. The information will be coming out soon so get ready! Also we are looking for sponsors to go along. If you would like to come on this fun trip please let Skyler Simpson or Amber Carlson know!

We have done two musicals this year! One called “The Power Of The King”, which was done at the main campus, and the other one called “Star Search”, which was done at the North Campus. All the kids put a lot of hard work into it, and they both went really well. Thank you to all of the volunteers who helped at both musicals! This wouldn’t have gone as well without all that you have put into it.

We are going to be starting on Bible Ninja! We look forward to the children learning all about the Bible and we will be talking about the different characteristics of Ninja! The lessons that we will be going through are Quick, Strong, Stealthy, and Wise. This is one that we hope the children will have fun with and remember for a long time to come. So get ready to become a Ninja! “Having respect for the Lord leads to life. Then you will be content and free from trouble.”

Dads, grab an apron! In February, we are hosting the Father/Daughter Graham Cracker House Building on the 16th. This is always a fun bonding event. The finished houses will be displayed in the back of the foyer for monetary voting with all of the proceeds going towards missions. Do you have a New Year’s Resolution yet? How about committing to pray for our Girls Ministry? More volunteers are always welcome! Thanks again and God Bless!

Every year our Men’s Ministry sponsors a Wild Game Banquet as a means of reaching out to sportsmen & women with Christ’s love and fellowship. In 2019 it is on February 2nd with guest speaker Randy McPherson. Also on display will be replicas of huge trophy whitetail mounts from the Northern Division of Trophies of Grace. These huge bucks measure over 200-265 inches. Again this year is a bucket raffle for some great large prizes including: (1) LEM #8 Big Bite Grinder, (1) 1000 .22 Shells, (1) Savage Axis .243 w/scope, (1) Hub Blind, (1) Matthews Z-3 70# w/28 or 29” Draw, (1) Missions MXB-360 Crossbow in Lost AT w/scope, (1) CharlesDaly 12 Gauge Shot Gun HD Advantage Timber Camo, (1) Golden Boy .22, (1) Apple Creek Management Hunt and (1) Women’s Prize: (1) 1 Night Stay At Lodge Kohler - Green Bay and Gift Certificate to Krolls Restaurant.

Admission is free and the seminar is at Oconto Falls High School. Doors open at 4 p.m. Please bring a dish to pass for the Wild Game Potluck Dinner which starts at 5:30 p.m. The featured speaker is at 6:30 p.m. If you would like more information or would like to help with the banquet, please see Bob Engel or Paul Kostreva, and invite a friend! ©
Women’s Ministry

Did you make a new year’s resolution? Do they really work? In reading an article from Billy Graham he goes on to say that the Bible doesn’t mention making resolutions at the beginning of a new year—but it does urge us to examine our lives regularly, and to seek God’s help to become better persons every day. The Bible says, “Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord” (Lamentations 3:40).

Did you ever ask yourself why you found it so hard to keep the resolutions you used to make? One reason may have been that they weren’t realistic, or you had no clear plan for reaching them. Many New Year’s resolutions, I’m afraid, are little more than a “wish list”—a series of things we’d like to change about our lives, but little more. They also may be very self-centered, with little thought about whether or not they are God’s will.

Another reason, however, why we fail to keep our resolutions is because we seek to reach them in our own strength instead of with God’s help. But we are spiritually and morally weak, and we will never be the people God wants us to be unless we turn to Him for the help we need. The psalmist wrote, “My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth” (Psalm 121:2).

As we begin this new year, pause right now and ask God to show you what He wants to do in your life during this coming year. Resolve to grow closer to Christ every day, and with the help of His Holy Spirit to “pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness” (1 Timothy 6:11).

Women’s Ministry helps with many outreaches through the year. Some of these ministries are designed to invite ladies to come and hear about Jesus and how they can also have Him as their personal Savior. We will be planning these outreaches on February 16th at 10 a.m. in the Hospitality Room. We hope that you can join us and be part of our vision and ministry. Thanks to all the women of the church for helping us “Reach out to connect (women) to God and others.”

Royal Rangers

“So we must not get tired of doing good, for we will reap at the proper time if we don’t give up.” Galatians 6:9

Jesus was a great example of how we should serve others.

Royal Rangers are to serve others. The Rangers will be serving others as we sell soda at the Wild Game Banquet on February 2nd as a fund raiser, but this is also a lesson in serving and how to treat our customers. We will again be having a Valentine Banquet at 6:30 p.m. on February 15th. Come and enjoy a free meal to celebrate Valentine’s Day, both couples and singles. The boys will be greeting you at the door and serving your food.