

## TEXT - 1 Peter 1:22-25

Introduction: Do you have your 2010 Calendar all set and ready to go? A calendar serves as a great organizational tool that keeps us from having to memorize dates and times for special events and appointments. Someone calls and asks us what we are doing on a particular date and we respond by saying, "Let me check my calendar." Our life would be in such disarray without this handy device. How would we remember when our doctor's appointment is or what time the kid's game starts or when we're meeting our friend for lunch? We write it down on our calendar. Think about all the things you will be writing on your calendars for 2010. So much of it comes and goes without a significant impact on our lives. But it's what we don't write on our calendars that will have the most impact on our lives. Peter's words for us this New Year's Eve remind us of what we as Christians could write down on our 2010 calendars for every day of the year, all 365 days. We check the calendar. AS CHRISTIANS OUR CALENDAR SAYS – 1) Love one another and 2) Trust God's Word.

### I. Love one another

- What is one of the biggest criticisms unbelievers have toward Christians? Probably one of the biggest criticisms they have is that we are so hypocritical. We say we believe in Jesus our Savior. We say we follow God's Word. But our actions aren't always consistent with our words. We lie right to someone's face like they do. We criticize and make fun of people the same way they do. We are just as greedy and selfish as they are.
- As Christians we confess our sins and acknowledge our hypocrisy. The Apostle Peter redirects our lives to match what we believe. About the middle of this first chapter of his letter he says, "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'"
- Peter tells us why we can live holy lives. It is because we were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. Peter continues, "Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God." With faith and hope in God we want to live holy lives as our thanks and praise to God for saving us through Jesus' blood shed for us on the cross.
- Such holy living, Peter reminds us, flows from the fact that Jesus' blood purifies us from all our sins. The result in us as believing Christians who obey, that is, who believe the truth, the truth about our salvation in Christ and therefore are filled with a genuine Christ-like love, is that we show love to each other.
- How do we prevent the criticism by unbelievers who say we are so hypocritical? What does our Christian calendar say about our life today and each day? It says that purified from all our sins by Jesus' blood through our obedience in faith to the truth of the gospel (believing it), we will love one another deeply from the heart.
- Let's say you have a doctor's appointment. At that doctor's appointment you will have numerous opportunities to show your Christian love, to live a holy life. It can be shown in the way you greet the receptionist, the nurse, or the doctor and also by the way you thank them for all they do for you.
- Your calendar says that you're meeting a friend for lunch. There are so many things you could talk about. There is only one thing in Christian love you truly need to talk about and that is your friend's faith. Do they know Jesus as their Savior? Is their faith struggling? Your love for them as a Christian is deep Peter says. Somehow find a way to work into the conversation your faith and hope in Jesus and your concern for their faith.
- The calendar reminds you that your child or grandchild has a basketball game. What a great opportunity to love one another deeply from the heart. You can support and encourage your child or grandchild to use their God-given talents even if it means sitting on the bench by supporting and cheering on their teammates. That's how they can show love for one another. As parents and grandparents you are able to show love for one another by talking to fellow parents and grandparents about raising a Christian family.
- The devil of course would like us to forget to write on our Christian calendars – love one another. He encourages us to reserve that kind of stuff only for special times like about an hour on Sunday, or better yet never really getting around to it at all. But our Christian calendar reminds us that redeemed by the blood of Christ with Christ-like love in our hearts we will love one another deeply from the heart.
- In the Upper Room on the night he was betrayed and handed over to die for our sins Jesus reminded his disciples and us too, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if your love one another."

Transition: We check our new calendar for a specific date in 2010. What does it say? As a Christian our calendar says – love another deeply from the heart. It says that for every day of the year. As a Christian no matter what date we look at our calendar also reminds us to trust God's Word.

## II. Trust God's Word

- As every New Year begins people are filled with hope and optimism, joyfully anticipating breaking out of their slump of misfortune and failure. Maybe 2010 will be the year that all their hopes and dream come true. Maybe that's too optimistic? I think most people would be satisfied with a better year than last year. But is that it? That's all people are hoping for? It just reminds us what little hope people have who do not know Jesus as their Savior.
- Peter gives us true hope in a spiritual reality that has already taken place. We have been born again through the Word of God. The Spirit through the gospel brought us to faith in Jesus and has given us spiritual life, which means we have a relationship with the one true God. Now we have hope, a sure hope. We know that Jesus will make all our dreams come true for a perfect life in heaven with our God.
- Earlier Peter wrote in this epistle, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade – kept in heaven for you."
- But we aren't always filled with such hope and true spiritual optimism. Often times the nagging problems of this life bring us down. Our hope in Christ is at times the furthest thing from our minds. So, Peter's encouragement for this New Year is perfect. Remember, you have spiritually been born again through the living and enduring word of God and you will be in heaven.
- His quote from Isaiah 40 fits in perfectly. All of man's glory and accomplishments are like the grass and flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever. Our excitement and hope for the New Year is not in some temporary bloom of a fading human accomplishment.
- The reality is that in 2010 we will have many failures and various sufferings. It's a sinful world and we are sinners. Our confidence and hope is in not ourselves but in the word of God that offers all the encouragement and hope that we need. Our hope is anchored in the promises that God makes and keeps in his Word.
- What does my Christian calendar say today? It says, "Trust God's Word." We are to trust the very word that was preached to us and that we learned. God's Word keeps our faith burning bright like pouring gasoline on a fire. That's because the Word of God that never fails to fill us with hope and confidence each day.
- We trust our doctor that he will do his best to treat us. We know that there's no magical cure for everything that ails us. But we have something better. We have God's Word that tells us, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." We acknowledge in true faith that God works out or straightens out everything for our good.
- We want to talk to our friend about religion, though this can be a touchy subject sometimes. But real friendships go beyond talking about the weather or each other's kids. It means talking about the hurt and the suffering of living in this sinful world. Not just this friend but all our friends need hope in a world of despair. Later in this same epistle Peter writes, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have. But do this with gentleness and respect." Don't just salt your food, salt your conversation with God's Word.
- It's one of the greatest tragedies to see even Christian parents give their children everything they need with the exception of what they really need. Parents give their kids love and affection, attention, whatever toys and gadgets they want, and cart them around to games and friend's houses. But without Jesus we are giving our kids a very empty life. The grass of this world withers and the flowers fall. Even parents' love and affection are of little help to their children when they stand before Jesus as judge on the last day.
- But we can give them something that endures, that will not fail them in the end. It is the living and enduring Word of God. God's Word offers more comfort than we could ever give. God's Word strengthens their faith in Jesus who can truly help them with life's little problems and with life's gigantic headaches.
- Moses told the Israelites, "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."

Conclusion: Is your 2010 calendar already filling up? Important dates and events are probably already written down, at least for the first few months. It might be a little tedious to write down on our calendars Peter's words for every day of the year. But then when we checked the calendar we would remember what we are encouraged to do every day. Let's check the calendar. As Christians our calendar says love one another and trust God's Word. May God bless us as we do just that making 2010 a great year in Christ Jesus our Savior! Amen.