

THE YEAR AHEAD

Which Will You Choose: Door #1 or Door #2?

I. GOD'S CALL TO FOLLOW HIM

Gospel Text: Mark 1:14-17

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." ¹⁶ Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men"

OT Text: Jeremiah 3:19-25

¹⁹ "I thought to myself, 'Oh what a joy it would be for me to treat you like a son! What a joy it would be for me to give you a pleasant land, the most beautiful piece of property there is in all the world!' I thought you would call me, 'Father' and would never cease being loyal to me. ²⁰ But, you have been unfaithful to me, nation of Israel, like an unfaithful wife who has left her husband," says the LORD.

²¹ "A noise is heard on the hilltops. It is the sound of the people of Israel crying and pleading to their gods. Indeed they have followed sinful ways; they have forgotten to be true to the LORD their God. ²² Come back to me, you wayward people. I want to cure your waywardness. Say, 'Here we are. We come to you because you are the LORD our God.... ²⁵ Let us acknowledge our shame. Let us bear the disgrace that we deserve. For we have sinned against the LORD our God, both we and our ancestors. From earliest times to this very day we have not obeyed the LORD our God.'" (NET)

II. THE STORY OF OUR PLANET: *God Calling Out to the World to Be Reconciled to Him*

2 Corinthians 5:19-20:

¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

III. YOUR STORY IN 2018: *God Calling Out to You*

A. He will call you by his Word

Psalm 130:

⁵ I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; ⁶ my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning. ⁷ O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. ⁸ And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Isaiah 50:

⁴ Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. ⁵ The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I turned not backward.

B. He will speak to your heart as you meditate on Him

Psalm 63:

⁵ My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, ⁶ when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night; ⁷ for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.

Psalm 143:

⁸ Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love, for in you I trust. Make me know the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul.

C. He will offer you guidance and direction *and* discipline

Isaiah 30:

²⁰ And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher.

²¹ And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.

Psalm 94

⁹ He who planted the ear, does he not hear? He who formed the eye, does he not see?

¹⁰ He who disciplines the nations, does he not rebuke? He who teaches man knowledge ¹² Blessed is the man whom you discipline, O LORD, and whom you teach out of

your law, ¹³ to give him rest from days of trouble, until a pit is dug for the wicked.

¹⁴ For the LORD will not forsake his people; he will not abandon his heritage;

IV. HOW WILL YOU RESPOND?

A. Door #1 – The men & women of Jeremiah's day

Jeremiah 13:

¹¹ ... so I made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to me, declares the LORD, that they might be for me a people, a name, a praise, and a glory, but they would not listen.

Psalm 81:

¹¹ "But my people did not listen to my voice; Israel would not submit to me. ¹² So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels. ¹³ Oh, that my people would listen to me, that Israel would walk in my ways! ¹⁴ I would soon subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes. ¹⁵ Those who hate the LORD would cringe toward him, and their fate would last forever. ¹⁶ But he would feed you with the finest of the wheat, and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you."

B. Door #2 – Those who want to follow Jesus

Mark 1:

¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." ¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹ And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰ And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

Matthew 19:

²⁷ Then Peter said in reply, "See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?" ²⁸ Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰ But many who are first will be last, and the last first. (see also Mark 10:28 and following)

IV. CHOOSING THE RIGHT DOOR

A. The Disciples followed Jesus, not somebody else

1. Practice hearing Jesus' voice

2. The Deceiver can seem quite persuasive

B. Respond just as soon as you know you've heard – don't dither

C. Trust God to deal with the unknowns

D. Be honest about where you will opt-out

E. Have a plan to fulfill your responsibilities

F. Know God's plan is to make you fruitful

John 1:

⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John 10:

¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

Revelation 3:

[Jesus says,] ²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. ²¹ The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. ²² He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."