

## **“HAPPY NEW YEAR!”**

***“Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”***

***Psalm 90:12***

What is it about starting a new year that so catches people’s imaginations? Other than turning the pages of a calendar, nothing really changes from December 31st to January 1st. We’re still the same people we always were, so, what’s the big deal?

Perhaps it boils down to everyone’s need to “clean the slate,” make a new start and have a renewed sense of hope for the future. By saying goodbye to the past year, we are mentally putting to rest our past failings or disappointments, and looking to the future with the prayer that things will be better - that *we* will be better. Each new year serves as a mile-marker on life’s road, with new experiences, new sights, new opportunities. It also serves to remind us that we’re one year closer to our eternal “destination.”

How are you approaching your destination? Which road are you taking; the wide road that leads to destruction, or the narrow road that leads to eternal life? It’s not your failings or triumphs, joys or sorrows, hopes or disappointments that determines your destination. Rather, it’s in Whom you put your trust that does.

If you’ve been living for and trusting in yourself, then no matter how much success you’ve had, you will end up forever lost. But by trusting in the One who was born for you in Bethlehem, laid down His life for you on the cross, and rose again victoriously from the grave -- Jesus Christ -- then no matter how many disappointments and failures you’ve had, you will still reach your heavenly home rejoicing in God’s love and mercy forever. Through the precious Gospel of Christ, God will work in, and through the joys and sorrows of your life, giving you the strength to deal with them and bringing about the changes that He desires for you.

So, as we begin a new year, among the different resolutions you make and the hopes and dreams you may have, resolve this year (and stick to it) to grow closer to your Savior through regular participation in Word and Sacrament. Then, living daily in thankfulness for His love and forgiveness, look for ways to make a positive difference in the lives of those around you.

Though your life may not turn out exactly the way you had hoped, with Christ you will always end up at the right place.

God’s blessings for a happy and prosperous New Year!

Pastor Lueke

*“Our God, our Help in ages past, our hope for years to come; our shelter from the*

*stormy blast and our eternal home.”*