

Colossians 3:15-17 Do Everything in the Name of the Lord Jesus! New Year's Day Jan. 1, 2015

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Grace and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

God's Word to bless us in this New Year is written in Colossians 3:15-17

These are Your Words heavenly Father to give us a blessed new year in the name of Christ. Your Word

Dear Redeemed in Jesus, our Savior,

Every year people make New Year's resolutions. Some people resolve to check more items off their bucket list that they've always wanted to do. Others resolve to get in better shape or to lose a few pounds or quit smoking. Others resolve to do something more meaningful like telling people about Christ or helping people in need. As Christians, we all desire to live more godly lives. We want to honor God as our heavenly Father and His Son who gave His life for us. But, how often do we actually accomplish our resolutions? How many of us as Christians at the end of 2015 will be able to say, I've made real improvements with my walk with Christ as my Savior? Paul has encouraging words to help us in our lives by faith. He said,

Do Everything in the Name of the Lord Jesus!

To do everything in Jesus' name we need His loving leadership. Just as parents can set the tone of love in the home, God sets the standard of love for us. John wrote, *"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."* (1 John 4:10) In love, God established peace through Christ. Paul wrote earlier, *"He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."* (Colossians 1:13-14) Through faith in Christ we receive His forgiveness and peace is ours from God. Paul describes this in our verses. *"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace."* (v.15) Without Jesus, people have no peace and it shows in their unhappy lives. *"There is no peace, says my God, to the wicked."* (Isaiah 57:21) But, once we have God's peace through Christ, we can better understand how to live at peace with others. When a band is warming up before a concert, people are playing all kinds of notes. But, for the concert, the director bring everyone into harmony.

Paul tells us to let God's peace rule our hearts. The word "rule" comes from a verb which means to serve as an umpire. A commentator wrote, "Christ's peace settles things. It determines the outcome. Strife and rivalry are removed from Christian relationships because the Christ gives people peace with God." In Christ's peace, it becomes, Not "What do I want" or "What do you want", but what does Christ want? Paul wrote the Corinthians that all Christians form the body of Christ, which should peacefully work together like an eye and hand. Christ is the head and we all have a part in His work as He directs us to do what is good for His body, the Church. With His peace we are ready to serve others in this new year!

The love of Christ gives us a reason to be thankful. It's not easy to be thankful when we feel that life has deprived us of something good. I think of the children of Israel when they wandered in the desert. At first they complained about not having enough food, so God sent them Manna. After a while they got bored with Manna. They wanted the food variety they had in Egypt. The same happened with their worship of God. They went from true worship to idolatry never satisfied with what God offered. Do we ever feel let down by Jesus? If so, we're expecting the wrong things from Him. We need to remember that without Him we would be accountable to God for every sin we ever thought or done. We would suffer forever for our sins rather than have them forgiven. We would have no loving God to turn to for any help. But Christ gave His life for us. He offers us is the gift of life. We earn nothing but get everything by faith in thanks for His name.

Second, to do everything in Jesus' name, we need on-going instruction. Our verse states, "*Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.*" (v.16) The word "dwell" means that God's Word is to live in us, not as an occasional guest, but as a permanent resident. God wants His word to be like a family member who we constantly consult. God's Word is given to fill every corner of our lives. It is said that learning gives freedom and opportunity. How much more God's Word gives us! God assures us that Christ made us His children. We are not slaves to Satan or to sin any longer. Christ sets us free to serve our God! With His truth we admonish those going astray and we encourage others to seek God.

Paul also instructs us to sing *psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs*. I'm not sure exactly what the differences are with those types of songs, but they are all based on the truths of God's Word. They are Christ-centered. Singing has always been a part of the Lutheran Church. Martin Luther once commented that music is "a lovely gift ... which is a precious, worthy and costly treasure given to mankind by God." Listening to or singing Christian songs will lift up any person who is feeling down. There are many things which we know we can't take to heaven. But singing is one that we can use in heaven. Our singing at home or at church is a foretaste of heaven when we will raise our voices with the angels to honor Christ with songs of thanks and praise.

Third to do everything in Jesus' name, we depend on Him. Paul wrote, "*Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*" (v.17) Paul covers just about anything in his "whatever": eating, drinking, walking, sitting, working or being at school, and any other situation. So many people do not know the love of Christ. They can't read our minds to learn of Him, but they are can understand the love of Christ in what we say and do. To do something in the name of Jesus means to show our loving relationship with Him, to be in harmony with His will, and to trust in Him to daily forgive us and help us do His will. When we forgive or show kindness to people, they understand Christ's forgiveness better. When we honor God's Word at home and at church, we honor Christ's name so all will benefit!

The more we study God's Word the better we know Jesus' precious name. In the Old Testament, a good king once had the temple repaired for use. While fixing it, his men found the Word of God. When the king read it, he found out that the people's actions had made God furious. The king warned the people of God's impending judgment; they repented and the country was spared from disaster. As we live by faith and call on Christ's name in truth who knows how it will spare us from heartache and shameful sin and even save us from losing our faith and going to hell.

So, we may not complete all our New Year's resolutions. But, there is one we can't leave out: that God would help us better understand the Name of Jesus to motivate us with His love and to move us to thank and praise Him in word, song, and action. Through Christ we have peace that begins with God and moves to our hearts so we and the people around us are blessed. Christ will help us to grow in God's peace and in the knowledge of His love. We have the greatest reason for our New Year's resolution: Christ has given us His saving name to bless us now and forever! Amen.