

Great Things for God

Ecclesiastes 9:10

Introduction

On May 30, 1792, William Carey preached on of the famous sermons of all time. We have no record of the title or specific content of the sermon, but the outline had two points: Expect Great Things from God; Attempt Great Things for God. Although at first it seemed to have little impact, it soon became the rallying cry that drew Christians in that day to intentional evangelistic efforts and the eventual creation of the Baptist Missions Society.

Here we are at another new year. We're exiting a time of the year where it is incredibly difficult not to get caught up in all of the day-to-day busyness and forget what really matters.

And if you've been in here long at all, you'd be shocked if I didn't have a lesson aimed at change, increasing our impact, and pushing toward God's best for our lives.

Background Passage:

Ecclesiastes 9:10 – **10Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might;** for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going.

There's no vision in death, and no plans in death, and no more chances to do good works in death.

Once you die, your vision is gone. Your plans are over. There's no more chance to do any good. Today is the only day you have to do good. So find something to do and do it with everything you have.

“Before I Die I want to _____”

We began 2013 with a lesson titled, “Before I Die I Want to ____.” I challenged each one of us to define that one ultimate life goal. In the conclusion I said:

“This is not about New Year's resolutions. No one will care what you weighed when you died. Resolutions will come and go. But your life purpose and life vision will be your impact on the world and God's kingdom, and they won't come and go with the times and the seasons.

What do you want people to say about you when you die?

What do you want to do before you die?”

Afterward I heard a number of great visions and ideas that some of you had identified for 2013 and beyond. Now I have to ask, “How did that go?” Are you still pursuing that vision, goal, purpose, or activity?

What happened?

Do Love

Beginning in May, God began leading us to focus on love and how we love each other. This culminated in our 10 week study of the book, *Do Love*.

What practice / activity will you commit to and begin doing that will regularly result in you doing love? Who? Where? What? How?

Remember: at first you may not know for sure what to do or be very good at it, but as Andrew said in *Do Love*, “Any percentage of love is better than zero percent.”

And to quote Mother Teresa from the end of the book, “God so loved the world that He gave Jesus. Today He loves the world so much that He gives you and me to be His love, His compassion, and His presence.”

Write the Story of 2014 Today

I recently was challenged to define my vision for the next year in a way that was meaningful and productive.

Pretend it is December 31, 2014. You are writing a friend with whom you catch up from time to time. You are telling him/her about all the good events and accomplishments in your life during 2014. Imagine what you want your story to be. And then write it down.

Once you have your vision, then it's simply a matter of defining what would need to happen to achieve it.

Take Action!

Daniel 11:32 – And by smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, **but the people who know their God will display strength and take action.**

Take action. Do something! And do something that will make a difference. To me, that sounds like leadership.

Brian Hardin – DAB – “I want it to matter for the Kingdom of God that I was here.” 2 weeks before Christmas 2005, had a dream (literally) about podcasting the Bible. Started on January 1, 2006. Approaching 60M downloads!

Steve Hyde – Asia for Jesus – “I would like to see Cambodia become a great and righteous nation.” Celebrating 15 year anniversary of mission.

- Built two children’s homes: Kracheh – 72 kids, Poipet – 65 kids
- Translated the NT into Khmer
- In last 5 years: 21,035 converts from Buddhism to Christianity, 1,248 new congregations started

Ron Hogue – Nations Training Institute – 2001 – Created four year (100 lessons) training curriculum for church leaders. This Fall, the door opened up for that material to be translated into Mandarin Chinese and read in 5-10 minute videos by Chinese believers. Tens of thousands of Chinese have accessed the government approved web site to download videos for use in house-church Bible studies. Half of the content is already completed, and the rest awaits an additional \$30K funding.

Conclusion:

This is not about New Year’s resolutions. No one will care what you weighed when you died. Resolutions will come and go. But your life purpose and life vision will be your impact on the world and God’s kingdom, and they won’t come and go with the times and the seasons.

What do you want people to say about you when you die?

What do you want to do before you die?

What are you going to do this year?

Once you know the answer to those questions, then it’s time to ask, “OK, so what should I do right now? Today? This year?”

What is the “great thing” you are going to do this year for God?