

THREE NUGGETS FOR THE NEW YEAR (2 Peter 3:8)

I. Our lives are not futile.

- A. Many people in today's world see nothing but futility in life and have little or no reason for hope.
 - 1. You see many trying to escape life through alcohol and drug use.
 - a. Nearly 75% of Americans use alcohol in some form and nearly 10.5% are alcoholics.
 - b. 13.4 million Americans are illegal drug users.
 - 2. Others try to escape through suicide.
- B. The truth is, when God is not in one's life, life is futile.
 - 1. That is the message of Ecclesiastes.
 - 2. Vanity, vanity all is vanity until we learn to fear God and keep His commandments.
- C. In reality, our life can have great meaning when we allow it to be used by God to touch the lives of others.
- D. We can find meaning in life by giving our love and service to others (John 13:34-35).
- E. When we are an example to others, we can help them get to heaven.
- F. If we pay attention to the opportunities God gives us we can lead fulfilling, joy-filled lives (2 Corinthians 4:1).
- G. When we seek that which does not perish our lives have great meaning (John 6:27; 2 Corinthians 4:17-5:1).

II. Our failures are not final.

- A. You failed God at times in 2010 didn't you?
- B. I know I did.
- C. We are human and we fail God from time to time and we are not the only ones who have done that.
 - 1. Abraham was not careful with the truth.
 - 2. Jacob stole his brother's birthright.
 - 3. Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it.
 - 4. David was an adulterer and murderer.
 - 5. Peter denied the Lord and later was a hypocrite.
 - 6. Paul was a persecutor.
 - 7. John Mark deserted the mission field.
- D. These failures were not fatal.
 - 1. Each of them rebounded.
 - 2. They lived lives for God and were great tools for God after these sins were committed and while others we don't know about were committed.
- E. Have you stopped to ask why they weren't fatal?
 - 1. It is because of the nature of the God we serve.
 - 2. Over forty times in the Old Testament we are told that the mercies of God endure forever (Psalm 106:1; 107:1; 100).
 - 3. He demonstrated His great love and mercy at the cross.

4. He had Jesus teach us about it in the parable of the Prodigal Son.
- F. All the ones we mentioned earlier, with God's help, overcame their failures and lived effective lives for God and we can as well.
- G. Think about the failures of the past years and see how far you have come from them.
 1. We didn't get this far on our own.
 2. If we haven't gotten far from them, it is because we have not allowed God to help us.
 3. We can change that this year.
 4. We can have a renewal in our relationship with God and start becoming the Christian He wants us to be.

III. Our death is not final.

- A. How do we feel towards death?
 1. We exercise, diet and go to doctors to try and postpone our deaths.
 2. We need to remember that we are only postponing the inevitable (Hebrews 9:27).
 3. Ecclesiastes 9:2.
- B. Some view death as the end.
- C. When we view death through the eye of faith, we see it is not the end, only the beginning.
 1. Philippians 1:19-24.
 2. This can only be through the resurrection of Jesus.
 3. Paul may have understood this like no other (1 Corinthians 15:20-26; 50-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
- D. Listen to John 3:3-5.
- E. Someone summarized that passage this way: "If a man is born once, he must die twice; if he is born twice he must die only once."
- F. Death is simply the beginning of the next and final phase of our lives.

From a sermon by Mike Greene