

# New Years Day Service

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Preacher: Rev RJ Campbell

- [ 0 : 0 0 ] Welcome to our service today. Today as we stand on the first day of the year on a new chapter in our lives, it is a time for reflection as well as a time of celebration.
- As we look back on the past year and all that has taken place in our nation and in the world, the plague that caused so much devastation, bewilderment, confusion, actually stepped out onto the unknown.
- So many lives were devastated, loved ones taken away, so much loneliness and heartache during periods of lockdown and restrictions and with so much uncertainty around us.
- However, as individuals we have had some good, some not so good experiences and today we reflect upon the hard work and the goals that we have achieved, the love that we have shared and the feelings of happiness that we have found as well as times of shared sadness and grief.
- I am sure that we could all add to the list as we reflect back on the past year. When we think of last March when lockdown was placed upon us with everything almost coming to a standstill since the restrictions that is still upon us even today.
- [ 1 : 4 3 ] Nevertheless, one of the phrases that we often hear and we say ourselves is, Where has the year gone?
- Time goes past so quickly. And perhaps today we are found not reflecting back on what has been but what may be engaging our minds in what is to come.
- We don't know what sorrows or joy will be in our experiences this year, but there is a common trial that we all face this year, and that is the unknown.
- We will all know what's going on. We will all know what's going on. We will all know change in some way. We will step out into new territory, be found in circumstances and have new experiences. The same pattern will follow this year as previous years.
- We will face strange paths and we shall go through new experiences. We shall travel along new paths that we have never ever seen before.
- [ 2 : 4 8 ] We shall stand in places that we have never been before. And we will embark upon untrodden paths where we have never been before.
- And there is always a danger that we can become anxious and fear the unknown. That that can grip our hearts and our lives.
- And at such times we should look to the Bible. We should look to the Word of God. And we remember that when the children of Israel came after 40 years, wandering in the wilderness to the edge of the River Jordan in order to pass over unto the Promised Land, the Lord said to them, Ye have not passed this way heretofore.
- They stood in a place where they had never been before. And were about to embark upon an untrodden way where they had never been.
- They were in a place where there was danger. And there was danger that they could become anxious and fearful. As the fear of the unknown gripped their hearts.

[ 4 : 02 ]     And the Lord said to them to look to the ark of the covenant. To look to the ark of God. The ark of the Lord went before them.

Now the significance of that is that the ark of God was always in the midst of the camp of Israel. Whether they were resting or on the march.

And we know that the ark of the covenant or the ark of God represented the presence of God among Israel. So they were to pass over into this new territory looking to the ark of God.

Looking to the presence of God. Looking to God. So as we embark on a new year. It would be good for us to look unto the Lord.

And have him in our midst as we march throughout this year. Let us join together in prayer.

[ 5 : 09 ]     Eternal and ever blessed Lord. We give thanks unto thee that thou in thy providence hath brought us to this point in our life.

When we are gathered together within the courts of thine own house. When we have come to worship thee and to acknowledge thee as our God.

At the beginning of a new year. We give thanks unto thee, O Lord. For all thy goodness for us. In the year that has now passed.

That we can truly say as the psalmist said of old. That thou did crown our gear with thy goodness. And we give thanks unto thee, O Lord.

For all the protection that thou hast given to us. When that virus is so prominent in our midst. We give thee thanks, O Lord.

[ 6 : 10 ]     That thou hast provided protection for us. And we pray that thou would continue in thy grace and in thy love. And in thy mercy to continue that protection among us.

We give thanks unto thee, O Lord. That although we are taking the path of the unknown. That there are many things that are hidden from us. There is nothing hidden from thee.

And thou art working out thine own purpose. In the life of our nation and in our own individual lives. And we give thanks unto thee, O Lord.

That we know that thou art the sovereign God. And that thou art working out thy purpose to the glory of thine own name.

O Lord, we pray that thou would be around us and with us and in our midst. And the year that now has begun.

[ 7 : 13 ]     We know, O Lord, that there will be changes in our midst. That there will be changes in our nation. There will be changes in our community. There will be changes in our congregational life.

But we give thanks unto thee that thou art the one to whom we can look. And that thou art the one to whom we can turn with all our problems.

With all our situations. O that we would indeed set the Lord always before us. We give thee thanks for the gospel.

And we pray, O Lord, that as it is being proclaimed. That it may go forth in the power and demonstration of thine own Holy Spirit. In convicting and converting.

And in the upbuilding of thine own church. Bless our homes and bless our families. Bless our loved ones wherever they may be thou knowest.

[ 8 : 09 ]     And we pray, O Lord, that thou would meet with their needs out of the riches of thy grace. Through the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray, O Lord, that thou would remember those who are ill.

May thy healing hand be upon them. And those who mourn. Today we pray, O Lord, that thou would speak their comfort. And that thou, O Lord, would comfort those who may reflect upon the months that have passed.

And the many changes that they may have seen in their homes and in their families. O Lord, we pray that thy blessing may rest upon them.

And that they would know that the God of Jacob is our sure refuge. And may we place our trust upon thee. And whatever may confront us in the months that lie ahead.

O Lord, we pray that this would be the year of thine own right hand. The year in which thy people would be revived. And the year wherein there would be an awakening among us.

[ 9 : 15 ] When we would see many coming to repentance. And putting their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray, O Lord, that thou would continue with us as we come to read thy word.

And as we come to meditate upon thy word. O Lord, open our hearts to receive it. And may we be instructed and encouraged and strengthened through thine own word.

And all that we ask for the forgiveness of our many sins. In Jesus name and for his sake. Amen. Now let us read the word of God.

As we find it in the gospel according to Luke and chapter 12. Luke's gospel and chapter 12.

And we'll read at verse 13. And one of the company said unto, Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me.

[ 10 : 19 ] And he said unto man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? And he said unto them, take heed and beware of covetousness.

For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he speaketh a parable unto them saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentiful.

And he thought within himself saying, What shall I do? Because I have no room where to bestow my fruits. And he said, This will I do.

I will pull down my barns and build greater. And there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years.

Take thy knees, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.

[ 11 : 22 ] Then who shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth a pressure for himself, And does not reach toward God.

May the Lord bless to us the reading of that portion of his word. And as we look for his help and blessing, We shall reflect upon the parable that we have just read.

The principal lesson of this parable is the foolishness of going on in life without God.

The context of this parable is that a man had died and his two sons were squabbling over the money that their father had left behind.

And one of the sons said to Jesus, Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me. Yet Jesus refused to get involved.

[ 12 : 26 ] Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? And then Jesus warned the people. He said, Take heed and beware of covetousness.

For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. Jesus warns the people and warns me and you to be aware of covetousness.

This brings before us, of course, the tenth commandment which says, You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, nor his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbour's.

In the Gospel of Mark in chapter 7, Jesus listed covetousness or greed, along with many of the sins that comes from within.

There, in that list, it concludes adultery, theft, and murder. All that which makes a person unclean. Paul reminded the Ephesian church in chapter 5 that greed or covetousness is equated with immorality and impurity.

[ 13 : 47 ] So he says that these things must be put away. But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be once named among you as becometh saints.

According to Scripture, a covetous or a greedy person is an idolater. For covetousness is idolatry. And James warns that people kill and covet because they cannot have what they want.

Ye lust and have not. Ye kill and decide to have and cannot obtain. Covetousness, therefore, is basic to the commandments against murder, adultery, stealing, and lying.

We may think that these things are horrendous. Murder, adultery, stealing, and lying. But Scripture places covetousness on the same part.

Covetousness is a strong desire to have that which belongs to another, even if it leaves that person washed off.

[ 15 : 04 ] There are many examples for us in the Bible of covetousness. Achan admitted to coveting a robe and silver and gold. So he stole them, which was a sin against the Lord.

Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, coveted the property of Naaman. So that he lied to get what he wanted from Gehazi, the leper. And he himself was struck with leprosy.

Proverbs warns us that a covetous person brings trouble to his family. He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house.

Therefore, covetousness is the root of all kinds of sin. So that Jesus here gives the warning, And beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

In other words, possession do not add life to us. J.C. Ryle says, the more his money increases, the more of his time is generally consumed and eaten up in thinking about it.

[ 16 : 20 ] If a man's life does not consist in the things that he possesses, what then does a man's life consist of? Well, the Bible says to us in John chapter 17, And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. The life. So this is life. To know Jesus, and to live for him, as Paul says, for me to live is Christ.

Our possessions can give us pleasure, but nothing of the things of the world can give us life. Our possessions of this world are temporal.

And in fact, they can pull us away from finding true life. For true life is finding satisfaction in Jesus Christ.

Nevertheless, this is the essence of life for many people today, to be successful and to possess as much as they can and to be rich.

[ 17 : 39 ] To enforce this warning about wanting more than we have, Jesus told his disciples this parable of a rich man who had a good harvest.

He had everything this world had to offer him. This farmer enjoyed that and he is looking forward to more.

Now, it is interesting that his prosperity does not seem to have come from his own hard labour. Note what it says, the ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentiful.

His prosperity or his great harvest was something that was gifted to him.

Remember how in the Bible we find that God chastised his covenant people often by not giving them crops to grow.

[ 18 : 45 ] In Jeremiah we read, they have sown wheat, but shall reap thorns. They have put themselves to pain, but shall not profit.

For the Lord was angry with them. Therefore, the ground did not produce. That was chastisement that the Lord put upon his covenant people.

And there are many places in the Old Testament where we find that. But here, the ground of this certain rich man brought forth plentiful. It was gifted to him.

A gift from God. Verse 17 identifies his dilemma. He thought within himself, saying, what shall I do?

Because I have no room where to bestow my fruits. His biggest problem now was storage. This farmer kept accumulating, gathering and hoarding more and more, until finally he did not have enough space to keep it.

[ 20 : 01 ] And the farmer comes up with a solution. That the best way out of his dilemma was this. This will I do. I will pull down my barns and build greater.

And there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. Now, there is nothing wrong in having a good harvest and investing.

But this man's greatest problem was that he charts his own course for the future. And in all his plans, he left God out.

He lived for the here and now. And had no thoughts of eternity or afterlife. What we notice in this parable is the frequency of the first Persian words like, I, me and my.

He was totally and absolutely taken up with himself. He was incapable of thinking about anyone else or anything else.

[ 21 : 10 ] He was so much in love with himself. I, me and my. And then this man spoke to his soul.

And he said, And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years. Take thy knees, eat, drink and be merry.

He wanted to live what some would call the good life. He thought that his goods was a security for the future.

His attitude sadly was, let us eat and drink and be merry for tomorrow we die. The farmer promised himself much.

He had good intentions. But in all his plans, he left God out. Then Jesus gives us God's perspective on the situation.

[ 22 : 18 ] God said, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. Then who shall those things be which thou hast provided?

God said to him, Thou fool. Now think upon that phrase. Think upon these words.

Think upon what is happening here. It is not mere man that is saying, Thou fool. But God. God said, Thou fool.

Why did God call this man thou fool? Well, there may be several reasons. For instance, this man promised himself many days.

The Bible speaks to us of the swiftness of life. James, the Lord's brother, wrote a letter under his own name in the New Testament.

[ 23 : 28 ] He speaks of those who say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city and continue there a year. And buy and sell and get gain.

And James warns. And he says that such a thought. By saying with us, Ye know not what shall be on the morrow.

For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

Maybe it was because of how anxious he was of accumulating wealth, giving it all his time and forgetting about God. In Psalm 49 we read, For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish Persian perish and leave their wealth to others.

Their inward thought is that their houses shall continue forever and their dwelling places to all generations. They call their lands after their own names.

[ 25 : 01 ] Nevertheless, man being an honour, abideth not. Maybe the reason that God calls this man thou fool was that he was like the man of Psalm 14.

The fool who hath said in his heart, There is no God. Maybe he did not believe in the existence of God. He certainly did not acknowledge God in his daily life.

He did not prepare to meet God. He gave not one thought to God. This man promised himself many days and years.

But God said, This night thy soul shall be required of thee. So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not reached out God.

The practical points of this parable, I suppose, are very simple. Don't be a kind of fool who lives for this world and gives no thought to God.

[ 26 : 11 ] Remember that life is short that any day may be your last. Your future belongs to God. And be ready to meet God.

Be sure that you have a restored relationship with God through his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Like the children of Israel, let us embark on a new year, looking into the Lord and to have him in our midst, in all our plans, as we march on throughout the year.

Obviously, time is one of our most precious possessions. We have done nothing to deserve it. We have done nothing to earn it.

We have done nothing to purchase it. It is all a gift from God. And the gift of time is equal to each person.

The rich and the poor. The educated and the ignorant. The strong and the weak. Every man, woman and child has the same 24 hours every day.

[ 27 : 20 ] Another important thing about time is that you cannot stop it. There is no way to slow it down. There is no way to turn it off. There is no way to adjust it.

Time marches on. And you cannot bring back time. Once it is gone, it is gone.

Yesterday is lost forever. And tomorrow is uncertain. We live in today. We may look ahead at our full year.

But we really have no guarantee that we will experience any of it. We will lay up treasure for ourselves.

Or will we be reached out God. The God who has been so generous to us in his long suffering. In his love.

[ 28 : 19 ] In his mercy. In his gospel. In his invitations. There is a text there that is very commonly preached upon on such a day as this.

From the book of Jeremiah. And the text reads like this. The harvest has passed. The summer has ended. And we are not saved.

Perhaps you know the verse. And sometimes when we are familiar with a thing, we do not look at it properly. there is a danger that we can import into that verse our own cultural context where the order of events in the summer months of May, June, July then the harvest period from August to the end of October we would say something like this the summer has gone the harvest is nearly past and still people are not saved you see in Israel things were different in Israel there were two harvests there was the spring harvest and the summer harvest in the spring barley and wheat and other cereals were harvested then later came the harvest of the grapes the figs and the olives and that's why we have that way the harvest is past the summer has ended and we are not saved the spring harvest has passed the time of summer harvest has ended and we are not saved the point is this that one season of opportunity or hope after another has passed and we are not saved

Jesus said what does it profit if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul what was he saying there well he is saying this you ought to be concerned about your soul are you concerned about your soul are you concerned about where you will wake up in eternity and can I ask why have you not been saved in a year that has gone by some of you have lived for many years you have done many things but when you look back over your life you may feel time has escaped you and you have accomplished very little maybe you promise yourself great things and today after 40, 50, 60 plus years you say to yourself well

I have accomplished so little of what I promised myself and the older we get we have those feelings that we have accomplished so little of what we had promised ourselves now is the time wherein we must make a sober assessment of where our lives are going time is running out you cannot assume much more time now is the time to act today is the time to act the Bible always speaks to us regarding your salvation in terms of today today is the day of salvation look to Jesus Christ now find strength in him now do not leave it any longer there have been many missed opportunities think of how many sermons you have listened to good books that you have read perhaps good conversations that you had and you may have been resolved perhaps to live for God and yet here you are on the first day of a new year and yet that resolution has never come to pass you are resolved to live for God and yet it has never come to pass how many more opportunities will there be now is the time to act now is the time to look to Jesus

[ 33 : 06 ] Christ now is the time to find strength in him do not leave it any longer at the beginning of a new year think what some of you have experienced in a year that has passed yes you have heard sermons calling you to Christ you have heard exhortations to repent and to come to Christ but will there be more of these opportunities we are walking the path of the unknown can I ask you today does it bother you that you are entering into a new year and you're still not saved think of the number of the years that you have known the gospel and you had the intelligence to understand the gospel and yet you are not saved are you promising yourself another opportunity well how many opportunities came and went and you're still not saved and maybe today you are promising yourself that there will be another opportunity but remember my friend we are walking the path of the unknown a year has finished there is a lot of things that have been concluded isn't there a lot of things have ended remember this perhaps your life is nearly concluded yet you have never concluded the matter of your soul's salvation perhaps you have looked at many things over the past year and yet you have forgotten the matter of your soul's salvation perhaps you have diligently and carefully seen to all matters over the past year and yet you have neglected the matter of the most immense importance your own soul are you one who is still not saved well that is the question that we leave with you at the beginning of a new year what is your relationship with God you have wasted many years as you go into a new year will you waste another opportunity and perhaps waste another year and more solemn even waste your own soul if you are saved today give thanks to God rejoice and pray for others to be saved also oh will you lay up treasure for yourself will you be rich toward

God the God who has been so generous to us in his long suffering in his love and in his mercy he's given you another opportunity he is calling you today and he's asking you to come to put your trust in him and to be saved not to follow the example of the rich man that we have in the parable who promised for himself great things but to whom God said thou fall this night thy soul shall be required of thee this night you are going to appear in my presence this night you are going to be accountable to me

I have given you good things good things in life I have given you a good harvest and yet you have forgotten me dear friend God has given us good things in life both the things that are temporal the things of this world the things of this life he has given us homes he has given us families he has given us friends he has given us work he has given us the comfort of life and yet in the midst of it all have you forgotten God have you forgotten God may the Lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray O eternal and ever blessed Lord as we come to a new chapter in our lives we pray that we will always set thee before us in all our plans that we will always look unto thee we pray

O Lord that thou would bless thy word to us that it may indeed be applied to us by thy spirit that it may give us not only a time to think and a time to reflect upon it but O Lord that it would lead us to action that it will lead us to take that part of our responsibility that thou has laid upon us and that is to repent and to come to Jesus Christ and to put our trust in him and to follow him we pray O Lord that thou would remember us in thy mercy and thy grace and in thy love in coming days and coming months and that throughout this year that it may indeed be a year wherein we will be assured that we have been restored into fellowship and communion with thee through thy son the

Lord Jesus Christ we ask O Lord that thou will continue with us that thou would forgive us for all our shortcomings and for all our sins and may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever more Amen