

AND GOD SAYS . . .

Sponsored by the Melrose Alliance Church

Happy New Year! This is the popular greeting we use to welcome in the New Year. But what is it that we mean by this greeting?

Do we mean that we will be happier than last year? Do we mean that things will go better in our lives? Do we mean that we will be more successful in accomplishing our goals? Do we mean that our relationship with others will improve and flourish? Or is this just a generic greeting that we have not given much thought to? I suspect it is maybe the latter.

But in order for things to be happier than last year, it necessitates that something(s) in the coming year must change. For many I would suspect that they are hoping the conditions or the people around them will change. Husbands want their wives to treat them better and vice-versa. Children want more respect from their parents. We think a raise in salary or a better job will make us happier. And the list goes on.

Yet happiness is not really about our circumstances but our attitude toward our circumstances. It is really our attitude toward our circumstances that keeps us from being happy.

For example, the disciples after being beaten because they were teaching people about Jesus, went away “rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name” (Acts 5:41). The point I am trying to make is that increased happiness is more about changes in us than changes around us. Read Matthew 5:3-12— it is the section of scripture called the “Beatitudes.” Each verse begins, “Blessed— which can be translated “happy”— are the poor in spirit..., the meek..., the humble, etc.” Every one of these verses is about the character of the man, not the circumstances he is in that results in happiness.

This change comes about when we turn to Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. The apostle Paul declares in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” Friend, it is Jesus who can change your life so you can truly know happiness and then really have a “Happy New Year!”