



It's that time of year again: New Year's Resolutions! Time to put bad habits on hold, to make the new year lying ahead of us full of promise and hope for good times and not bad. Good stuff, but be careful how you make your New Year resolutions so that you don't set yourself up for a fall!

*“And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?... Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you,”*  
(Matthew 6:27, 32-33 ESV).

The world around us recommends making resolutions for the New Year, in hopes of changing our futures for the better. This is a very laudable goal, yet we also know that the world revels in resolutions broken! How long can we last without this type of bad food, or how many days of exercise can be missed before we give up again? Winter time is a tough time to give up comfort foods and get outside to exercise. Failure in resolutions come too frequently, but it's not just because of winter, it's also because we are broken, poor, sinners!

Of all the resolutions we can try to make that will bring about change to you and to me is to include more time with the Lord our God receiving his grace and forgiveness. Sunday services are obviously one of the best ways to do this, as we gather to hear God's Word read and expounded and also receive Christ's own body and blood in the Divine Service, yet this is not the only way we can spend time with Jesus.

Opening our Bibles at home is really and truly a God-sent gift to us in our day and age. In the days of ancient Israel, right up until the Reformation, it was almost unthinkable for God-

fearing people to be able to read the Bible for themselves, let alone own one for their home. All the Bibles in the ancient world were expensive, hand-written tomes. Very few could afford them,

and very few could read them.

But we are not in that day and age. Today, anyone can buy a Bible for their home, in pocket editions, study editions, colour-coordinated editions, and not only that, but our smartphones and tablets all can download free copies of the Bible to read at will!

So that must mean everyone reads the Bible at home, right? Well, I can only speak to my own self and say, I wish we spent more time in the Bible at home. Excuses come in a wide variety of flavours, but the truth is, we all could use a little more time with Jesus and His Word!

To that end, might I be so bold as to ask one and all to make a resolution for 2016 to spend more time with Jesus? Make the Divine Services a priority, of course, but also establish a time for you and your families to spend time with Jesus in His Word. Start in the best place, too: In the Gospels! Start with Matthew, work your way through Mark, then Luke and his second part of his Gospel, the Acts of the Apostles, then go to John's Gospel.

If you can do that, then so many other parts of the Bible will be open to you. Once you see Jesus in those pages, you'll begin to see Jesus all over the place, most especially when you dive into the Old Testament. If you have questions about anything you read, just ask! I'm available to try and answer any of your questions; I may not have all the answers right away, but I will try. And I am sure that any one of our other pastors in the congregation would not mind answering your questions either.

God's peace and mercy be with you for a brand New Year in Christ's love and grace!

Your servant in Christ,  
Rev Joel V. Kuhl, Pastor

