

Not Resolutions but Opportunity

By Vicar Filipek

Brothers and Sisters,

Here we go again. It is almost time to welcome in a New Year. You know what that means? Failure. That's right I said it. With the excitement of a New Year comes hope, expectation, resolutions and failure. Don't get me wrong, I am not being pessimistic and my glass is not half empty; I am simply being honest.

How many years of your life have you experienced failure? If you are anything like me, you will notice that every day of every week, of every year of your life you have failed at many things. My guess is that you already have a few New Year's resolutions. Chances are you, like me, have failed in previous years to complete your New Year's resolutions. You tell yourself that this year is different because you are motivated. You are going to conquer your resolutions. You know what? You and I are going to fail. Before you get mad at me and call the church office and tell Pastor Willig what a heartless and horrible Vicar you have, let me explain.

When it comes to New Year's resolutions, they are most likely based on something you already know; something you have already experienced in the past. Thus, You are focused on the past and not on the future. In doing so, you have already set yourself up for failure. And when you and I fail to complete our New Year's resolutions, we begin to feel that failure in the way of worthlessness, depression, and guilt.

As you have probably guessed, I am not crazy about New Year's resolutions, because in a sense all they do is make you strive to be a better person. Now that's not all bad. Sure you are working hard at becoming a better mother or father, son or daughter, student, worker, friend, spouse, Christian or whatever else you want to be better at. You are trying to be a better you. But here is the problem with that, no matter how hard we try, you and I will eventually fail. We will fail because we are sinners. And when we fail, we will experience guilt, worthlessness, failure, depression, etc. because we know that we are sinners. Despite our best efforts, we fail again and again.

But guess what 2008 holds for you? Opportunity! Yes failure, but more importantly, opportunity.

Opportunities are revealed by God and stem from the newness granted in Christ Jesus. 2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

Opportunities come from outside yourself. Opportunity comes from Jesus Christ. For you have been made new in Christ! You are a new creation! You are not a failure; you are victorious because of Jesus! Only Jesus can change you and make you a better you. That is what He has done. You are now a saint because of Him.

Therefore, this year is a year of opportunities in Jesus' name. Opportunities are better than resolutions, because opportunities focus on the future.

Opportunities look ahead. Opportunities don't focus on you the sinner, but on you the saint, the new creation in Jesus. So go ahead, do something you were planning on doing, like joining the gym, but not as a resolution to lose weight. Join a gym as an opportunity to meet new people, build relationships with them, and share the message of Jesus Christ, and you will probably lose weight in the process. You see, this is just one example of opportunity. Opportunities keep you motivated and looking ahead.

Because you are a new creation in Jesus, God gives you many opportunities throughout the year. You don't have to worry about being a failure, because you are already victorious in Jesus. You are free to live a life of opportunity in Jesus, for His glory. It makes you live your year differently when you live a life of opportunity. How does that saying go? Out with the old; in with the new. How about out with the resolutions, and in with the opportunities, God's opportunities. What a great year 2008 is going to be in Jesus' name, glory, and opportunity.

Happy New Year of Opportunity, in Jesus Name,

Vicar Filipek

