

A Happy New Year!

January 1, 2018

Dear Friends:

Another year has passed, and the world hasn't fallen apart – yet. I know ... there were many predicting that it would, or at least that we would be on the brink of Armageddon, but it seems safe to say: **“God is still on His throne ... and He is still in control!”**

Frankly, there was never any doubt about that. The God who spoke the universe into being, and who maintains its existence ... *“the One who made all things and for whose glory all things exist”* (Heb.2:10) ... is the same One who took on human flesh (something we just celebrated) ... lived a perfect life ... took our place on the cross ... died ... rose again ... and now *“sits at the right side of the majestic God in heaven.”* (Heb.1:3) As the Apostle Paul tells us: *“And you will know that God’s power is very great for us who believe. It is the same as the mighty power he used to raise Christ from death and put him at his right side in the heavenly places. He put Christ over all rulers, authorities, powers, and kings. He gave him authority over everything that has power in this world or in the next world. God put everything under Christ’s power and made him head over everything for the church. The church is Christ’s body. It is filled with him. He makes everything complete in every way.”* (Eph.1:20-23)

That’s who Jesus IS.

In light of an ever growing resistance to the Gospel message in today’s culture, and my personal disappointment with a lack of response from my loved ones (who don’t have a personal relationship with Jesus), to the truths of God’s Word, it seems that perhaps the most powerful message we can share with loved ones and friends is simply **who Jesus is.**

Instead of participating in fruitless “discussions” and arguments, I’m making a commitment to engage in a different strategy ... one that was inspired by one of my new favorite authors, Stephannie Gray, the author of ***Love Unleashes Life***. She writes: *“There typically comes a point in a conversation where, if the person seems unconvinced, carrying on seems like it would be futile. I once spoke with a student for quite some time until we got to that point. So **he used** a common line: “Let’s agree to disagree.” But there was something jarring about that. The topic was too important to have such a careless attitude about, and yet it did seem pointless to keep the conversation going. So an idea popped to mind: “Actually”, I said, “Let’s agree **that** we disagree. Let’s agree that our disagreement is a problem. Let’s agree that **if I’m wrong**, I’m spreading lies; **if I’m wrong**, I’m denying the truth of what you are saying. However, let’s agree that **if you’re wrong**, you’re permitting a grave error; **if you’re wrong**, you’re misleading precious lives into a false belief. So let’s agree that we’ll both continue to examine the issue and search for the truth.”*

My prayer for you this coming year is that you might join with me in proclaiming the Jesus of the Bible. The One who loves us ... who died for us ... who cares for us ... who intercedes for us ... who is coming again.

Yours for reaching the marketplace.

Carl