

Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

Thank you so much for visiting our website! Here is an excerpt of my notes from Pastor A.J.'s sermon, "Don't Waste This Year!"

We pray this Message will bless you the way it blessed us! Please come back again next week for more from "LaKesha's Pen" with another inspiring message from our Pastor.

Yours in Christ,

LaKesha Johnson-Lewis

Don't Waste This Year!

Mark 2:18-22

In **Mark 2:18-22**, the people were looking to poke holes in Jesus' message and in Him being the Messiah. Throughout the first four books of the New Testament you will read how the Pharisees and Sadducees were always looking for a way to discredit Jesus. Even today many Christians face ridicule from those who oppose Christ. Jesus always showed Himself strong and wise as He will even do in the lives of Christians today. Jesus gives them a wise answer and uses the comparison of the old versus the new. In each of these comparisons He explains that trying to mix the old with the new always destroyed the old and that old ways of doing things cannot hold the new. Christ came to do away with the old way of doing things. He came to show that God was doing a new thing and the old method was done. No longer did they have to live a life full of rules and regulations but instead God came in the form of a man, Jesus Christ to tear down the wall of separation and bring us all (both Jews and Gentiles) into a personal relationship with God. As we experience today many people are afraid of change, are you?

What new thing are you putting into the old thing, causing it to burst? What new thing is God doing in your life today? What old thing has God said to you I am done with that and you keep trying to drag it into your future? Don't be afraid of letting it go! You are not alone! God understands that fear will come but instead of allowing fear to stop you from making progress He wants it to compel and drive you into the new thing that He is doing in your life. The only way to overcome fear is found in **Romans 12:2**, you must let go of the world's way of doing things and renew your mind according to the Word of God. God is constantly speaking to you about your life and He will continue to do so until He returns. He may be speaking to you right now about your finances, later on He may begin to speak with you about your health. He may want you to work on your attitude or the fact that you are harboring un-forgiveness. Whatever it is that He allowed you to do previously or not do; this year God is saying "It's time to lay down the old and come up a little higher in your relationship with me and by the way that thing you're carrying can't come where I am taking you!" So don't waste time saying to God "Oh, I will get to it next time!" Or "This is my last time." Just do it! Don't waste your time!

Refuse to keep the mentality of your history while reaching for your future! (Why are you constantly looking back?)

Your history has been designed purposefully by God to make you better not to hold you captive. The power and meaning found in the New Testament would mean nothing without the wisdom and power found in the Old Testament. The Old Testament was used as a set up for the coming of Christ the Messiah. In the same way God has used your past as a set up for Christ to become real and relevant in your life today and in your future to come.

You can't stay in your past! Watch your thinking, past thinking will try to hold you captive from experiencing the new. You may be doing somethings that don't make sense anymore but you are doing them out of habit, because it seems easier to do than grooming yourself into making new and better habits. Don't be a slave to unacquainted actions and useless doings. Paul said it best: ***All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful*** (see **1 Corinthians 6:12 & 10:23**). This statement is so packed full of power that God inspired Paul to write it twice. Sure you have the right to free will, a right to choose.

But what are you choosing? Is it helpful? Is it building you up and encouraging you? Make being the best you your top priority this year! Learn and grow in the knowledge of God and His love for you that He created and designed you for a specific purpose. Learn to love yourself! If you don't love yourself it makes it hard for others to love you!

Don't waste your time on useless thinking! Take from God's example with Abram (**See Genesis 13:14**) God gave Abram a vision. He showed him the land of promise. You have to begin to imagine and see yourself living a life full of the promises of God. Pull out your Bible and look at all the great things He has promised you. (**See Jeremiah 29:11; Romans 8:28; John 10:10; Genesis 50:20; Malachi 3:10; Ephesians 3:20-21**) These are just some examples of the many promises God has made to you. In **Philippians 2:5**, it reminds us to have the mind of Christ. Forget about making New Year's Resolutions. Resolutions are statements with no action behind it. You don't need Resolution you need a new mindset. You have to make up your mind that you are going to have to start doing some things different in 2017. Declare this is the year of new beginnings. This is the year that with God you will eliminate wasteful useless living and you will begin each new day and new task with this question in mind: *"Is this profiting me?"*

See **1st Peter 1:13**, prepare your mind for action!

Yes this year you may still have more coming at you than you have resources. But God's resources are unlimited. Remember He is the creator of Heaven and Earth and all things are subject to Him and He does as He pleases. God is no respecter of persons. (**See Romans 2:11**) What God has for you there is no devil or person who can stop God from giving you the many blessings He has in store for you. The Holy Spirit lives in you and He is your teacher. Learn how to live better.

Change your way of thinking...

Change your way of doing...

Change your life!

If you have not made Jesus your Savior and Lord make this your top priority in 2017! Ask Him to come into your life and save you from the penalty of sin and death, then watch Him do explosive things in 2017! Live and be blessed!