

New Year's Reflection: *Rebirth & Renewal*

Titus 3:3-7

The Promise of a New Year

- A new year gives us hope of a new beginning
- We set out to make changes that often fail to follow through on
 - Because we do not have the power to change *some* parts of who we are

The Old Self (v. 3)

- Paul describes what our lives look like when we try to live them our way
 - Foolish: Lived like there was no God (Ps 14:1)
 - Disobedient: Lived in rebellion
 - Deceived: Lived like our actions had no eternal consequences
 - Enslaved to passions & pleasures: Let our appetites become our masters
 - Malicious: Acting wickedly
 - Envious: Wanting what others have, even if that means they lose it
 - Hating others and being hated by them
- Verse 3 starts with “That was then”
- Verse 4 begins with “This is now”
 - We no longer need to be characterized by this diabolical list
 - Change can happen

The Catalyst of Change (v. 4-6)

- **But** when God our Savior shows up
 - With kindness: Goodness toward us
 - With love (*philanthropia*) = love for humanity
- He saves us from our sins and ourselves
 - Not because of our actions
 - Rather, despite them
 - But because of His mercy
 - Showing compassion on us while in our wretchedness
- Through the washing of rebirth
 - Washing: symbolizing baptism
 - To be lost in that which one is immersed
 - Rebirth: To be born again or anew
 - See John 3 (Jesus & Nicodemus)
- Renewal = a fresh start
- Birth is a passive act for the child
 - Traumatic, but passive
- The “labor” is done by the mother
 - In this case, the Holy Spirit
 - Who is given when we trust in Jesus (v. 6)

The Effects of Rebirth (v. 7)

- If know Jesus, we have been justified (made right before God)
 - By His grace (free gift)
 - His work, not ours
 - The only work He asks of us is to believe (John 6:29)
 - An utter dependence on Him
- Then, we get a new identity, a child of God
 - We are reborn to become heirs of His life
 - Eternal life

So What?

- Do we need a new start?
 - God offers it to us through Jesus
 - He works it out in us through the Holy Spirit

Meditation Verse: *Titus 3:5-6*

If you want to know more about starting a relationship with Jesus, please talk to Pastor Jeff or any of the Elders.