

New Year's Eve/Day Service

ReStart

Happy New Year! Hope you had a wonderful Christmas as well.

2011 lists/Best of 2011 (Best songs, movies, books, tv shows, sports moments, celebrity scandals, etc.)

Pastor Matt's Best of Faith Center 2011

1. JJ Heller Concert (July)
2. Kids Karnival (October – 2500+ people)
3. Youth Camp (Largest group of 200 Foursquare Churches)
4. Men's Retreat (First one in many years – 75 attending). Women's retreat.
5. Gary Loop's Excellent Adventure to visit "Train Town"
6. Narnia Musical -- Amazing
7. Facility Improvements
 - a. New Library
 - b. Stage improvements
 - c. New Nursery
 - d. New roof on the arcade and paint enhancements on the outside
8. Internships were started: Summer and Year Round
9. Mission Trip to Haiti (March)
10. Israel (October)
11. Christmas weekend services
12. Salvations/Outreach/Baptisms/Changed Lives

Causes me to wonder what is in store for 2012? (Jan. Heather Lane, Feb. Darrell Evans, Mar. Margaret Feinberg, April Easter, of course the elections and the end of the world – not necessarily related to each other)

With the New Year many will make new promises, commitments or resolutions to themselves to do certain things. Every year, about 40 to 45 percent of people in this country will make resolutions for the New Year. That's great. But only about six percent of those people will keep them! At times we wish we could go back in time and start over. A restart would be nice. A new year is a time to start over.

Promises:

Tonight my wife is “doing a wedding”. A wedding is one of the most binding and formal of all promises that we make to each other. We make promises and commitments as a way to assure someone that something is going to happen.

We make promises to banks, to our bosses, to our friends and we make promises to God.

Matthew 5:33-37

Jesus said, in Matthew 5 “³³ ‘Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.’ ³⁴ But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; ³⁵ or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. ³⁶ And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. ³⁷ Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

Here Jesus is raising the bar. He is establishing His standard, and in doing so He is making it difficult for us. His law is not easy to keep. When you start having to “really promise” to do something, it indicates that you are not a person of your word. When you have to cross your heart and promise to God, what is your word normally worth? How many times have you counted on someone to do something, only to have them drop the ball?

Not only has this happened to us, but we have done this to others as well.

Jesus expresses a “Christian value”: Be a person of commitment. Be a person of honesty. Follow through. Keep your word, especially when it hurts.

God keeps His word to us: His promise to forgive us. His promise of eternal life.

In His word we find these promises clearly expressed.

All around this room on the trees, are promises from God’s Word. Today, later in the service, you will be invited to take one off the tree read it, claim it, and keep it.

To show you an example I would like Niles and Nicole to come and get one off one of the trees. Niles, would you choose the promise and Nicole, would you read it?

God's Word is a love letter written to us. It is the best selling book in history. It is the most beloved book in history and the most feared and hated book in history.

I can think of no better way to describe my approach to this book than to say that I have a relationship with the Bible.

I love this book.

Love this book!

Why? Psalm 119 gives us many reasons why we can love this book.

Psalm 119

176 verses long.

Each section begins with another letter of the Hebrew alphabet and is followed by 8 verses, each of which begins with that letter of the alphabet as well. All 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet are used, signifying the complete nature of the word of God.

9 words are used to describe the Word of God: laws, statutes, decrees, command, commands, commandment, law, ways, etc.

Why love this book?

(Read key verses and make key emphasis from Ps 119).

- Vss. 1-8 Obedience to the Word makes a person happy and blessed (vs. 111)
- Vs. 11 The knowledge of the Word can keep one from sin. It shows us what is right. It provides us with objective truth in a world that has become increasingly subjective and lets its feelings and arguments rule. Vs. 80
- Vs. 24 The Word of God is our counselor (\$0/hr.)
- Vs. 28 The Word of God helps us persevere when facing trials (repeated 50-52, 92)
- Vs. 32 Obedience to the Word of God sets us free (vs. 45)
- Vs. 36 The Word of God keeps us focused on the right things
- Vs. 72 The Word of God is a treasure (people have died for it, smuggled it, memorized it, etc.)
- Vss. 86/89 The Word of God is dependable
- Vs. 98 The Word of God makes us wise (vs. 130)
- Vs. 104-105 The Word of God reveals God's path for us
- Vs. 114 The Word of God is a source of hope
- Vs. 144 The Word of God is eternal (transcends time and culture)
- Vs. 165 The Word of God gives a person peace and stability

Here is what Psalm 119 is all about:

Love this book! (SLIDE)

(the Bible). Let us be people of the book.

For all these reasons.

How? How do we tap into these benefits?

By reading it. By meditating upon it. By studying it. By obeying it.

We can ***love of the word of God*** (16, 30, 54, 70, 127, 140, 159, 167)

We are supposed to ***make a commitment to obey the word of God*** (17, 34, 60, 100, 106, 129),

We should ***hold onto the word during times of difficulty*** (51, 61, 83, 87, 95, 109, 110, 143, 157, 161).

If we neglect the Word, we are missing out on a treasure of wisdom for our lives.

Our Father is a keeper of promises. Not one word of his promises has failed. His promises are immutable, unstoppable, and totally reliable. No one who has ever really trusted in what he said has been disappointed.

Trust what you have heard God say to you. If you're unsure you really heard him, get some confirmation from those you trust around you. Get real confirmation of those words; too many have been led astray by believing words that were not confirmed, words that ultimately were just their desires.

But live your life on the promises of God. This world is becoming more and more confusing. Good is bad and bad is good. But God's Word never fails. It will not pass away.

Bottom line: hold on to what God says. It is the anchor of your soul, the stability of your day, the light at the end of every tunnel. People who trust in him all the way to the end will not be disappointed—in this life or the next!

In 2012, fall in the love with the Bible!

In 2012, fall more in love with the author of the Bible. Let God mentor you in 2012.

In 2011 I set a goal of reading through the Bible in a year.

I went to a website: www.youversion.com. I signed up for one of the reading plans.

Today I read day #321 in the Bible in a year plan. I'm 30 days behind, but that's not bad.

Make a commitment to a plan for Bible reading and prayer

Today you will be given a journal that looks like this.

If you don't have a pattern of personal Bible reading and study, than I would recommend this one to you. (turn to pg. 7)

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The Lord is the creator of “new beginnings” and together we look forward to the new things that Jesus has in store for Faith Center (you) during the coming year!

As we have communion together, let's let go of our failures and receive a fresh dose of His mercy!

As we look back, let us be willing to **stop** doing things that hold us back and let us **start** doing things that will give us life.

Let's be diligent as people of God's Word and let's allow Him to mentor us.

Promises and communion

- **Grab a promise off the tree**
- **Come forward and take the bread and the cup**
- **Be seated and read the verse**
- **I will then lead you in prayer as we receive communion together.**