

Sunday Sermons – CSI Church, Toronto  
Thursday, January 1, 2015

## Accepting the Word and Becoming the Temple of the Living God

Ecclesiastes 12:9-14

Psalms 119:33-48

II Corinthians 6:14-18

Matthew 13:1-9

*“Fear God, and keep his commandments; for that is the whole duty of everyone.”* (Ecclesiastes 12:13 - NRSV)

I am pleased to wish all who are gathered in the Sanctuary a very happy, joyful and prosperous New Year filled with God’s presence and blessings. This is, of course, a season of decision making (and also breaking). May the Holy Spirit guide all of us to make right and effective decisions, and make it happen in our life in relation to the Almighty.

The verse for our Motto is a verse from the *Epilogue* (conclusion) to the Book of Ecclesiastes. The authorship of the Book of Ecclesiastes is attributed to King Solomon who asked God Wisdom when a chance was given. This is a sermon written by Solomon in 935 BC. The reading of the book will not be meaningful without the conclusion, where the evaluation of life is given by Solomon. The important verse from the conclusion forms the thought for us for this year, our 2015 Motto.

**Fear of the Lord:** “Fear of the Lord is the beginning of the wisdom” (Ps 111:10). The term ‘Fear of the Lord’ does not depict a phobia. People are gripped in many kinds of phobia now; from the simple to the complex. The Bible reminds us “not to fear” or “fear not” almost 365 times. Fear of the Lord should be emerging from a respect to our Master Creator, a willingness to obey Him and a commitment to follow Him daily in our life. It is respecting a higher authority with heartfelt love. We need to fear God from the bottom of our heart, with heartfelt love. Fear of the Lord should increase in us health and wholeness unlike the state of any phobia. ‘Fear God’ is a call continuously given by all the prophets and most of the Psalmists. Let us learn to fear God, our Creator and sustainer in the year ahead.

**Keep His Commandments:** A command is to be obeyed, and it is for the good of the person who is called to obey it. Rules and regulations are primarily for safety and not for enslavement. The 10 Commandments given by God were for the welfare of the people who were chosen as a light to the nations. The Jewish leaders in turn used them to harness the people. The Word of God is the basic guideline for the people of God. We cannot live fruitfully without knowing and following the Word of God. The Bible should form the basis of our life. We need to **know**, we need to **follow** and we need to **live** the Word of God. Psalmist in Psalm 119:36, 37 & 40 says *“Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your Word. How I long for your precepts! Preserve my life in your righteousness.”*

*“This Book [the Bible] is the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding; its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler’s map, the pilgrim’s staff, the pilot’s compass, the soldier’s sword, and the Christian’s character. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.”* *“Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. Follow its*

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*precepts and it will lead you to Calvary, to the empty tomb, to a resurrected life in Christ; yes, to glory itself, for eternity.”*

**The Judgement:** We are mostly not at all comfortable with the word ‘judgement’. But the Bible reminds that we need to face that inescapable occurrence at the Lord’s timing. Ecclesiastes 12:14 reads “*For God will bring every deed into judgement, including every secret thing whether good or bad.*” Solomon, who drifted away from the path of God in his later years, turns back and understands the vain state of his life without God. Internal or Spiritual content matters a lot in our faith journey. External pomp and show will vanish soon. We need to fear God and keep His commandments, and we need to think seriously about our judgement by God. Judgement may not necessarily be punishment but can be commending. It all depends on what we have performed in our life with God-given resources. Can we be the *good soil in which the Word of God sprouts* (Matt 13:8) and the fruits of the Spirit are seen by the world? King Solomon says not to fear judgement, but God.

**Temple of the Living God:** The believers are called to be the Temple of the Living God. Our God is yearning to be with us in all walks of our life - God who truly wants to live with the people. Lev. 26:12; Jer.32:38; Ezek 37:27 and many other passages repeatedly remind us that the almighty looks forward to live with us constantly. Our bodies and life-situations are to reflect the presence of the Omnipotent God. We need to walk with Jesus in all our ways till our end, the very last breath. We need to bid good-bye to all acts and thoughts which will dishearten our Creator and Redeemer. Let us not be a cause of depression to our Saviour, who gave His own blood and life to redeem us. The price He paid is immeasurable..

In the New Year, let us learn to **Fear God, and Keep His Commandments.** Let us face the **Judgement** Throne boldly by living as the **Temple of the Living God.**

May the Lord Almighty bless all of us and strengthen us to live a meaningful and fruitful life. Once again I wish God’s blessings to all of you in the New Year. Let the New Year be filled with Peace from God, and guidance from the Holy Spirit.

***Now may all honour and glory be unto God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. AMEN.***

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