

Last Monday I asked you “Are you ready for Christmas?” and now here a week later I want to ask “Are you ready for the New Year?” Although our celebration of Christmas might only now be a memory, Jesus, the real Christmas, is ready to escort us into the New Year. Our verses this week give evidence of that so let’s look closely at them.

Matthew 1:20-21

As we looked at our verses last week, we saw how God interrupted the wedding plans of Mary and Joseph with plans of His own. Our first verse this week continues that thought as we see an angel of the Lord speaking to Joseph and telling him “**...do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.**” I love how the Lord will reassure us when our hearts are humble to what He has to say. Joseph and Mary laid aside their own plans and humbled their lives to God’s plans, as crazy as they seemed, and God brought Jesus into the world for us all.

Our second verse this week, verse 21, is a very clear statement of why God did this work. It says, “**She will give birth to a son and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.**” As I look at this and I consider what tomorrow holds, it causes me to be thankful. Tomorrow is the first day of a new year, 2008. So... today many a human mind is conceiving plans for the new year, plans to prosper, plans to correct some bad habits, goals to shoot for. We all look forward to a new start but what really holds us back from all that is good in our lives? Sin does. Who is the only one who can save us from that? “...give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.”

This week as you memorize this verse, may I encourage you to walk into the New Year with the promise and the assurance that Jesus is the only one who can save you from your sins! Not only can He save you from being guilty of them so you can go to heaven, He can transform your life for the New Year so you don’t live according to the pattern of sin now. Many people will walk into the New Year with resolutions that are focused on self restraint and effort. Although commendable, it often times produces little results. Jesus alone can save us from sin.

So what sin is plaguing you in your life as we end this year of 2007? Is it bitterness, unforgiveness, indulgence in something, self centeredness, disrespect, pride, anger, greed? The list can go on and on. Jesus is the only one who can transform you. Don’t make a plan on your own. Allow Jesus to rescue you from that sin. Ask Him to give you a plan, to give you a verse of scripture to hang onto, a person to be accountable to. Ask Him to shine light on what that sin really looks like so that you will see it in all its ugliness. Ask Him to remind you of that daily. Ask Him to transform you! (see Romans 12:1-2)

We are a frail humanity walking into the year 2008 and God has sent Jesus to save us from our sins. I want Jesus to escort me into this New Year and I know you do too!

Yesterday in our Bible Study Class at church, our wonderful teacher (my husband ☺) challenged us to write a poem to the Lord as we ended our class. Over the last several days I guess God had been preparing me for that task because I had been pondering God’s greatness and my own frail condition so when I started to write, the words just flowed. In closing I want to share them with you, encouraging you to “call His name Jesus, because He can save you from your sins as you walk into 2008.

*How can I express my thanks?
How can I see Your visions for me?
How can I express Your holiness, in all my frail humanity?*

I'm at a loss, counting the cost, pondering daily.

*I'm grateful, in awe, overwhelmed, scared and unsure.
I doubt, feel unworthy, not ready and insecure.
I see my failures, I meet them daily, many times winning, many times losing.*

Your power overcomes my humanity, yet often I succumb.

*Daily I ponder, daily I wonder, daily I lift up my life,
Hoping to see your greatness expressed beyond my humble state.
O Jesus, be real in me beyond my wildest dreams as I walk into this year of 2008.*

May the blessings of Jesus be on your life in 2008,

Sharon Thomas