

GETTING READY FOR A FRESH YEAR AHEAD

REV. LITO VILLORIA

Happy New Year everyone! I want to share with you the devotion written by the Rev. Edmund Chan, Leadership Mentor, Global Alliance of Intentional Disciple Making Churches. He sends this to his international mentees a bi-weekly devotion called Thought for Your Day (TFYD) every Monday and Friday.

What follows is a two-part devotional he shared the past week. This was helpful for Linda and I as we prepare to face 2022. I shared it with my various mentoring groups and a handful of friends. Now, I want to share this blessing to our church family.

Thought For Your Day

Getting Ready For A Fresh Year Ahead (Part 1)
December 27, 2021

Just five more days before 2022!

Are we ready for the new year ahead? Allow me to reiterate four important things to help us get ready for a fresh year ahead.

1. LEARN FROM THE PAST

In his instructive book, *A Resilient Life*, Gordon MacDonald has a chapter titled 'Resilient People Understand The Importance Of Repairing The Past'. In it, he says, "Resilient people face the brutal facts of their mistakes, their experiences, their sins, their blessings. AND THEY LEARN

FROM THEM. That's how they repair the past" (emphasis mine).

In each of our lives, there is pain and brokenness, whether by our own hand or through no fault of our own. We need to unlearn and relearn certain things from our past. And then recommit to set things right. Don't walk around with past baggage!

As I have said, the past is a terrific place to learn from but a terrible place to stay in. Learn from it and move on!

2. RE-PRIORITIZE THE PRESENT

In life and leadership, I learn to pace myself by determining my core priorities.

Pacing yourself is important if you wish to go the long haul. You see, life is not a sprint, it is a marathon run. It makes little difference how fast you can run the 100 meters if you're running the marathon. You can sprint ahead of everyone else in the first 100 meters, but unless you have much more in your reserve and are willing to pace yourself, you probably wouldn't be able to finish the full marathon.

Now, some leaders find it hard to say NO. Their ego, their need to be wanted, or even their noble desire to serve, makes it really hard to say NO.

Get this. The key is NOT in learning to say NO; but rather, in learning

to say YES! Say a BIG YES TO GOD - His leading, His divine appointments, His calling for your life, His direction - and prioritize that! It's easier to say NO when you have said a Big YES to God.

Relax. Don't try and grab every opportunity. Trust God and walk by divine appointment and His leading.

3. REPACK FOR THE FUTURE

Declutter your life. As I've often reminded my friends as we pilgrimage together, there are four things in life to simplify.

To begin with, simplify your PACE. You don't have to run at full speed all the time. Determine your pit stops to renew, refresh and recharge.

Then, simplify your PURPOSE. Don't run around like a chicken with its head cut off. Determine God's gifts and calling in your life and make your vital contribution.

Also, simplify your PRIORITIES. Determine (actually, pre-determine!) what you would say NO or YES to.

Over the years, I have pre-determined to say YES to invitations from my mentees (unless it clashes with a prior commitment, of course) - and that shapes my speaking commitments, which in turn makes it easier (and true) to say "Sorry, UNABLE" to many others. But - WHY the mentees? Because each came by Divine Appointment!

GETTING READY...

And finally, simplify your POSSESSIONS. Don't buy into the lie that possessions make us happy.

Beware lest consumerism consumes us, and possessions possess us! Determine to have a Contributor-Mindset rather than a Consumer-Mindset.

4. REVITALIZE YOUR WALK WITH GOD

We need to revitalize our walk with God to go the distance and finish well.

More about this in the next TFYD!

Have a great week ahead!

Thought For Your Day

Getting Ready For A Fresh Year Ahead (Part 2)

December 31, 2021

Happy New Year's Eve!

Today's the last day of 2021 and tomorrow begins a new page for 2022! So, are we ready for the new year ahead? Are we future-ready?

When I think about being future-ready, I first accept that there are things beyond my control.

An asteroid hitting Earth would be a cataclysmic event but that would be beyond my control. Or, the economic corridor having a global financial meltdown. That's beyond me. Or, the nations having serious crises that might spark World War 3. That's not my fault. These are things beyond my control.

And beyond these epic scenarios, the future might serve personal curve balls that might also be beyond our control - unexpected

health concerns, unforeseen financial woes, troublesome job issues, marriage issues, children issues, etc.

Yet, many of these unimaginable or unexpected things are not exactly beyond the horizon of human imagination, nor the landscape of human experience. They are the stuff of deep anxieties, painful heartaches and broken dreams. Yes, the uncertainty of the future is often accompanied by its dark cousins - the fear of the unknown and the anxiety of the soul!

How then do we get ready for the new year ahead, come what may?

There are no easy answers. No simplistic solutions. No naïve pep talks.

BUT get this. *The key for navigating the future lies not in the illusion of CONTROL but in the reality of CONSECRATION.*

In confounding times, it's always wise to stick to the fundamentals. Anchor in the certainty of God, not the uncertainty of the future!

Jesus said, "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

The premise of our Lord's counsel is in essence: "Don't over-worry about TOMORROW. Take care of TODAY!"

And Jesus gave two perceptive reasons for His wise counsel.

First, we have no control over the future: "TOMORROW will take care of itself". We can't control it. And second, we have to focus and live

well in the present: "For TODAY has enough troubles of its own."

More importantly, our Lord has indicated HOW we should live - not by seeking CONTROL (which we don't have!) but by pursuing CONSECRATION (which we do need!). Remember, CONTROL is an illusion but CONSECRATION is an imperative.

For Jesus said in the preceding verse: "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Hence, we need to revitalize our walk with God as we face the future. Our consecration structures our faith and deepens our capacity.

So, *repair the past.*

Re-prioritize the present.

Re-pack for the future.

And revitalise your walk with God!

Start afresh with God! Renew your devotion to Him.

Keep close to God.

And have a GREAT YEAR ahead!
Have a blessed NEW Year! ✨

GG PRAYER GATHERING

CONTEND FOR THE FAITH

JANUARY 15, 2022
7:30 am - 9:30 am

Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

JUDE 3b

growth group

