

Are you Ready to Make an Impact?

Resolving to be Unshackled from American Cultural Christianity
(Pastor Jim Anderson at the 2019 Holy Spirit Conference at NHLC)

I. There is no impact without Resolve!

Resolution – *def.* the act or process of reducing a complex notion into a simpler form.

Resolve – something resolved (simplified) to the point of determination with fixed purpose.

An example of resolve:

"I hope to see the day when I can make slavery see my influence. That shall be the end object of my life. It and myself are enemies. I am feeble: it is strong, yet I am right and it is wrong. Natural, eternal truth is with me; error is with it. Thus we stand!"

-from the diary of William Herndon (1856)

Two big questions:

1. Have you resolved to make an impact for the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus before you die?
2. If you have, do you have a clear plan for how to accomplish this "main object of your life?"

Spoiler Alert: God has already given us His recipe for living a life of great impact.

II. Setting the Stage

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ." Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

Acts 2:36-41 (NASB)

Three things to note:

1. Peter resolved the confusion of the past 50 days into a clear statement: *God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ.*
2. The Holy Spirit was present & active. *When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart.*
3. Three steps involved in conversion: *"Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*
 - Repentance (a heart change)
 - Being baptized (a costly step of risky obedience)
 - Holy Spirit in-filling (a supernatural and transformational encounter with God)

Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

John 3:5 (NASB)

III. A Lifestyle of Kingdom Impact:

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. Acts 2:42-47 (NASB)

1. People need **conversion** (the “new birth”) not just indoctrination
2. People need **evidence** not just information
3. People need to be taught to **obey** not just given knowledge: (See Luke 24:44-45)
The Apostle’s teaching was the teaching of Christ. They conformed to this teaching.
4. They were **committed to the fellowship** not just to *having* fellowship
5. They were **devoted to “relational” praying** not just pious repetitious prayers. (Read from “Utmost for His Highest”)
6. **The supernatural was normalized** not rare and historic. (Note how the deacons and others were soon praying for healings, etc.)
7. **Their material values were transformed.** They were generous not materialistic. (This represents the transfer of one’s sense of security from self to God)
8. **Their relational values were transformed.** They did life together and prioritized relationships not just perfunctory religious observance.
9. **A personal, pervasive, practical trust in God** emerged not just a theological concept of God. They lived lives of joy and thanksgiving that were noticeable to outsiders
10. **They opened their community to outsiders.** There was an irresistible automism to the growth of the Christian community.

IV. How do these kind of changes happen?

1. Key Change Principle: *Scrape the old paint before repainting!*

2. Over time: It normally will take 3-5 years to change deeply rooted systemic beliefs, values and philosophies in an organization. These changes are difficult because they swim upstream against deeply held American cultural values like individualism, materialism, self-determinism, etc.)

3. Places to start:

- Re-teaching the Great Commission: It was given to individuals, not an institution.
- Creating communities in on-going home-based mini-congregations that function like extended families rather than short-term small groups that function like classes. “Dig your (relationship) well before you’re thirsty!”
- The supernatural must be normalized and accompany the sharing of our testimonies *Philip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them. The crowds with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing.* Acts 8:5-6 (NASB)
- Re-rooting the generosity of time, spiritual gifts, natural talents and material resources in the concept of biblical “Stewardship” rather than “Ownership”