

*Bethel Community Church Sermon Notes*

## **2004: How To Positively Influence The Year To Come**

Pastor Steve Jones

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> December 2003

### ***Prayer***

Today we stand on the escarpment of our 2003 looking down out onto the sprawling plains of the year 2004 to come.

You may look upon that sprawling vista with hopes, fears, anxiety or excitement at what is to come.

We can't know the details of what is to come. However, we can change the degree to which 2004 will be a good year for us. We have the ability to make this a great year for ourselves. On the flip side we also have the ability to make 2004 a dark year for ourselves.

Here are 3 people whose last year of life was very dark.

- |                                    |   |   |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| <i>Adolf Hitler</i>                | - | Killed himself on April 30, 1945 in Berlin bunker     |
| <i>Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu</i> | - | Executed for crimes against Romania December 25, 1989 |
| <i>Pablo Escobar</i>               | - | Killed by Colombian police December 2, 1993           |

So what can we say about the lives that these people lived and the end that they faced?

Bad luck? What is luck? Luck is nothing. There is no luck.

The experiences of life are either:

### **Circumstances or Consequences**

Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you respond to it.

Most things that happen to us are **consequences** of choices that we have made.

Let's have a look at what God has to say about consequences.

**Galatians 6:7** [ESV Church 1173 Compact 975]

First part of the text we looked at during the sermon, "Where was God on 9/11?"

Today we are going to camp on the second half of the verse.

Point: What you sow (or plant), you also reap.

Note: If you plant wheat, you harvest wheat. If you plant barley, you harvest barley.

Can't change the harvest halfway through!

Application: If you are critical of others, others will be critical of you. If you do not trust, others will consider you as untrustworthy. You reap what you sow.

Second point from **2 Corinthians 9:6** [ESV Church 1165 Compact 968]

Note: If you sow little, you harvest little. If you sow much, you harvest much.

With those points in mind: **3 types of farmer**

1. Sows seed anywhere, no preparation, no cultivation.
2. Sows seed after careful planning and preparation. No cultivation.
3. Sows seed after careful planning and preparation. Year long cultivation and care.

First farmer - No harvest. No investment.

Second farmer - Poor harvest. Poor investment and commitment.

Third Farmer - Bumper harvest. Big investment and commitment.

Which type of farmer are you?

As we look out over the fields of our futures, what type of farmer will you be?

How will you plant your choices in the soil of your year to come? Will you plan for your year? Will you prepare the ground? Will you be committed to your choices to pursue them through to harvest?

Let's review 5 fields that you may have available to plant in this year. Which sort of farmer will you be in each field that lays before you?

**Field 1**

Field of Marriage. [Observations]

**Field 2**

Field of Family Relationships [Observations]

**Field 3**

Field of Finances [Observations]

**Field 4**

Field of Work [Observations]

**Field 5**

Field of Spiritual Life [Observations]

## Challenge

My challenge to you as we step cautiously into 2004.

Before the end of this year conduct a review of your life in these categories during the last 12 months. How did you do? Which sort of farmer were you in each field?

What will your plan be for 2004. How will you plant for the 2004 harvest?

How will you cultivate what you have planted?

How can we know how to plan for a bumper 2004? God tells us in the Bible.

### Home Reading

**Marriage**

Matthew 19:6; Ephesians 5:22-33 (and others)

**Relationships**

Ephesians 4:25; Colossians 3:20 (and others)

**Finances**

Job 42:11; Genesis 28:22 (and others)

**Work**

Colossians 3:22-23; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 (and others)

**Spiritual Life**

Romans 3:23; 6:23; Luke 13:3; John 3:16; 14:6; Acts 4:12; 10:43; Romans 5:1; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 2 Corinthians 5:17 (and many others).

Summary

What harvest will you be thanking God for at the end of December 2004?

Will you have (metaphorically) a bare and empty field or a storehouse filled to overflowing?

Will this be the year that you first meet the Lord of the Harvest?

Your fields are before you. Sow away!

**Pastor Steve Jones**

Bethel Community Church

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