NEW FOCUS

Happy New Year

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Brothers and sisters in Christ, I hope you are not discouraged. I hope you are facing this new year with peace and faith in Christ. Our Saviour tells us, "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me". Whatever it is that weighs upon on your mind or tries your spirit, may the Lord God give you grace to trust in Christ and strength to carry you through your trial.

In his message to the Ephesians the Apostle Paul pictures the Lord's people as a building made up of individual believers, like you and me, fitted together, located by design, and gathered to serve a high and holy purpose.

Perhaps to mitigate the discouragement the apostle knew would affect the Lord's people through the ages he tells us this building is growing. There is something alive here. We are a holy temple that is being raised up and nurtured by God Himself. There is growth, enlargement and progress in the church of Jesus Christ whether we see it or not. We are a building dedicated to the worship and glory of God. It is our delight and privilege to be a part of something wonderful that is growing up to the honour and glory of God.

But look at the reason for these blessings. We are not building something ourselves, we are being built into something bigger than any one of us, a union, a body of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice how Paul describes this, "we are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ". We share the same foundation as did the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New. They had one common foundation and one common salvation which was Jesus Christ their Lord and we are united with them and with each other upon the same foundation.

It is the gospel of the Lord Jesus that unites us, the doctrine of free grace, eternal election, imputed righteousness and particular substitutionary atonement. We love the gospel of grace. We love the gospel that tells of mercy granted, forgiveness bestowed, and faith that endures; endures because it is Christ's faith given to His chosen people by God Himself according to His sovereign purpose.

Christ is the cornerstone of our faith, of our lives, our worship and our testimony. Our fellowship with each other is because of our fellowship

with Him. Because we are united to Christ we are united with each other. We may be miles apart, time zones away, born of different nationalities, languages and cultures but none of that matters when we come together around the word of God and the gospel of God.

Being in Christ we are heirs of glory; safe, secure and certain of heaven. We are fellowcitizens on earth with His people, in His body the church. Whatever 2022 holds for us personally, and for the church and the world in general, God is in control. He is building His church, and gathering His people upon the foundation that is Jesus Christ and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

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