

What Really Matters

Kickball?

(Psalm 34:8)

So, was Santa really good to you? Santa was really, really good to me and my family. At our house there were clothes, candy, games, golf balls, and even a record player. (Thankfully all of that came after I received A LUMP OF COLE!!!) So after I have surveyed all of the facts I can tell you that Santa is really, really good!

But not everyone can make the same comparison to God. In the past month I heard about four people in this congregation who found out that they have cancer. I know there was some great family distress during this Christmas season. The number of people in the hospital during the last 30 days has reached double digits. Some people here have lost jobs and their financial situation is tenuous at best. At first glance it seems kind of silly to say, "God is good...all the time!"

Around here I am known as "Pastor Brent" and rarely am called Dr. Hinkle. But next week I get to play a professor at Anderson University. In my class I am going to put a pastor on trial for heresy...Rob Bell. Some of his views are unconventional but ultimately I believe that God is using him as a vessel to spread the gospel. Listen in to one of his Nooma videos.



I. What If You Got Everything You Wished For?

What are some things you want to see happen in this new year? Lose weight? Move to a new house? Get a secure job? Earn back the money you lost on your investments?

Get all A's and B's? I hope you have some hopes and dreams for this coming year. We all need that.

A. If this happened you would probably say along with the Psalmist, "Taste and see that the Lord is good!" (Ps. 34:8).

If you could simply wish something and God made it happen, I guarantee that you and I would be out telling everyone, "Hey, come to Jesus! He's awesome. You simply asked him for stuff and he gives you everything you ask for!" TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD!



- B. What might be the problem if you received everything that you asked for?** The problem is that we simply do not always know what is good for us. In fact, many of the things we think are good for us...aren't.

I always laugh at the Garth Brooks song, "I Thank God For Unanswered Prayers." It's a song about a guy who is thanking God that the Lord didn't answer his prayers about a high school sweetheart. The intimation is that this guy in high school simply didn't know what was best for himself. A lot of us are in that boat about not knowing what is best.



II. Are The Scriptures Wrong?

Think about these scriptures:

Matthew 7:7 "Ask and it will be given to you."

Matthew 18:19 "Again, I tell you that if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by your Father in heaven."

John 16:23 "I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name."

- A. We don't get everything we want**—or even everything that we might think is good for us. So does this mean the Bible isn't accurate? The psalmist comes right out and says the following:

8 Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!

**9 Fear the Lord, you his godly people,
for those who fear him will have all they need.**

**10 Even strong young lions sometimes go hungry,
but those who trust in the Lord will lack no good thing.**

- B. God ensures that we will have the good things we need.** God's word never says we will gain everything our human nature wants. We will have those things we need in this world that will bring about good in our lives

- C. This is not just an Old Testament concept.** The apostle Paul tells us in Roman 8:28 that "God works all things together for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." It doesn't say he gives everything we want. He says that all things work together for OUR good when we live according to His purposes.



III. How Is Any Of This Helpful?

You have seen a cool video, you have answered some questions, you have looked at some scriptures...but what does this have to do with us as we start this new year?

- A. Will you trust that there is a bigger picture...something you cannot always see?** I hope this year is great for you. But not everything is going to go your way. Will you trust that God has good for you even when it feels like life is not going your way?
- B. Will you believe that God really is good...all the time?** You cannot have real faith, a real relationship with God if you don't believe this basic thing about God...He is good!