

re:solutions – re:liant

Reconnect – January 2, 2011



Text: Proverbs 30:1-9;

Key Thought: A transformed life starts with resolving to put God in charge of every detail, big or small.

Every word of God proves true. He defends all who come to him for protection. Do not add to his words, or he may rebuke you, and you will be found a liar. O God, I beg two favours from you before I die. First, help me never to tell a lie. Second, give me neither poverty nor riches! Give me just enough to satisfy my needs. For if I grow rich, I may deny you and say, "Who is the Lord?" And if I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult God's holy name. (Proverbs 30:5-9, NLT)

Pre-Intro: Long December (Counting Crowes)

Intro: re(:)solutions

- Well, welcome to 2011! Everyone make your resolutions?



- **Resolution game:** from www.43things.com here are the top 10 resolutions for 2011:

1. [lose weight](#)
2. [be happy](#)
3. [Save money](#)
4. [Fall in love](#)
5. [get a job](#)
6. [Read more](#)
7. [Quit Smoking](#)
8. [run a marathon](#)
9. [move out](#)
10. [get married](#)

Q: What is your favourite resolution? (i.e. the one you make the most?)

Q: Anyone keep a resolution from last year? Or ever? How did you do it?

- Every year we make resolutions – sometimes we keep them (statistics?)
- most times, they are actionables – things to do
- But what if we made resolutions based on who we wanted to BE? To keep a resolution generally involves a whole life change – and that might mean that we need to back up a little farther, from actions, to the mind and the heart – to values
- III. – Conor’s question to Nana in Newfoundland – “What’s your New Year’s revolution?” A: “I do spin in circles a lot of the time”
- That’s where values come in – and that’s what we’re going to be looking at over the next five weeks – a list of five different values that intersect here among us at Reconnect – that we seek to live out as a community – and that I’d like to reimagine for each of us on a personal level, on a family level, etc.

The K-Car – “a nice, ‘reliant’ automobile...” (BNL)



- let’s talk about things or people that we rely on, in our lives – i.e. our ATM or credit cards to work, when we’re at the cash with screaming kids and a boatload of groceries at closing time – or our internet connection – or... batteries for the Wii remote controls... or... your housekey... or your car to start...

Q: One thing you rely on:

Q: Why do you rely on them? Do they ever let you down?

- Relying on something can be tricky – especially since you only notice how much you rely on something once it stops working the way that you expect it to
- And when we’re let down by things, we have backup plans – or we find other things to rely on instead – change the card, (etc.)
- What gets a little trickier is when we have to rely on *people* – or when we realize that we are relying on them – because they have let us down... yikes!
- If you’re anything like me, when someone lets you down, you look for ways to write them out of your script – to make things so that you don’t have to rely on them anymore
- You might still like them, might still be their friend – but it’s a “fool me once, fool me twice” thing

- Unless you LIKE dependence... but we're trained to even dislike the word, aren't we? Who wants to be dependent? We want to be independent... I mean, they call them "depends", after all!
- we HATE dependence – I hate dependence, anyway – when I'm not feeling like I'm being looked after (rest of the time, not so bad)
- we always like to bite hardest on the hand that feeds us
- just when you get used to someone looking out for you or after you, something happens and they don't live up to your expectations – and then they suck
- Dependence goes against our pride – our pride that we could do better, that we deserve better, that SOMEONE should be doing better, somewhere here! Don't they KNOW who I AM?

So why a value called Reliant?



reconnect
Barrhaven Community Church

- With all of that in mind, it would seem strange to hold a value of "reliance" – and even more strange to start off a list of values with that one having prominence
- But reliance is only foolish if what or who you're relying on is unreliable – otherwise, it's smart – because it frees you up considerably to live your life (technology) and enjoy your life (people)
- And when it comes to your spiritual life, well – that's a choice to make, isn't it? And not an easy one...
- Listen to some ancient wisdom from the Middle East, written more than 2500 years ago:

Read/Explain Text: Proverbs 30:1-10, NLT

The message of Agur son of Jakeh. An oracle.

I am weary, O God; I am weary and worn out, O God. I am too ignorant to be human, and I lack common sense. I have not mastered human wisdom, nor do I know the Holy One.

- someone at the end of their rope – trying to do the right things, trying to be someone who serves God, lives right – but weary and worn out and facing the struggle of each passing day

Who but God goes up to heaven and comes back down? Who holds the wind in his fists? Who wraps up the oceans in his cloak? Who has created the whole wide world? What is his name – and his son's name? Tell me if you know!

- sounds like the book of Job here – this is wisdom, this is an oracle from God – a wise saying, something that is straight from God, but may need to be meditated on, may need to be chewed over to get full value from it
- God is greater than the weary and worn out – He doesn't get tired, He doesn't fade as the day passes, He doesn't get grumpy without lunch, He doesn't fall off the wagon
- “What is His son's name?” – a riddle, a challenge – some might be tempted to see a reference to Jesus here – but in ancient times, a son of a god was someone who obeyed them perfectly (which is one of the reasons why we call Jesus “God's son”, BTW), who lived up to their expectations, who walked with them, who honoured them in their life, who had a very strong relationship with them
- Is Agur saying, “Show me someone who is getting this right, this serving of this incredible God?”
- We dunno... but he's already said that it's hard... and so maybe he's making the point, again, that “this is really tough – to get this life right, for someone to ever be called a son by God...”

Every word of God proves true. He defends all who come to him for protection. Do not add to his words, or he may rebuke you, and you will be found a liar.

- God is reliable – His word proves true – they would have had a good part of the Old Testament – the Torah, the teaching (“the Law”) – and not only His word, but His actions are true, as well
- In fact, He's so good that you need to be careful how you attach yourself to Him – because we don't “show up well” next to Him in pictures

O God, I beg two favours from you before I die. First, help me never to tell a lie.

- First “ask” – truth – make me truthful, make me trustworthy – and that's hard, isn't it?
- Why do we lie? We lie to “grease our social wheels”, among other reasons! We lie to save ourselves time explaining things that don't matter... we lie to avoid speaking uncomfortable truth to people (“Does this make me look fat?” “Are you mad at me?” “Did you want that last cookie?”) – we lie and lie and lie and lie, and it's hard not to do it, when you try to put a stop to it (GREAT New Year's Resolution, BTW!)
- But God is truth – and true through and through – and if we want to stand with Him, if we want to rely on Him, have a relationship with Him, well, truth is necessary – to be truthful with Him, with ourselves, and in love, with other people

Second, give me neither poverty nor riches! Give me just enough to satisfy my needs. For if I grow rich, I may deny you and say, “Who is the Lord?” And if I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult God's holy name.

Proverbs 30:1-9, NLT

- second favour might be even tougher than the first! And it's sort of an “are you suuuuuuuuuuuure?” moment for Agur...
- our world is all about the money – if we stopped spending, the global recession would kill us! our economy is based on us continuing to spend money instead of saving it, and for the most part, some of the time, that kinda sorta works

- “Do you want to be rich? Of course, we ALL do!” – that’s what the late night infomercial used to say, and I believe it!
- But there’s no greater testimony in our lives for those around us than these two things – and I think maybe number 2 even more so – because we rely on money more than ANYTHING else, don’t we?
- If the money holds out, we can do whatever we need or want to do – it doesn’t buy happiness, but it does manage pretty good with everything else, right?

radical reliance?

- Here’s what our website has to say about this value of reliance – which by the way is one of our shared Reconnect values:

Reliant: "Realizing that true fulfillment in life comes from an intimate, transforming relationship with God, an understanding of who He is and a commitment to what He desires"

Looks like: Devotion to the Bible

We believe that the Bible is given by God to us, our culture and our world. As such, we desire its wisdom and teaching to shape our understanding of God, determine our values and guide our practices. As God’s faithful people have done for thousands of years, we want to let it speak to us, through careful and reasoned interpretation, rather than simply using it or manipulating it to say what is comfortable or easy. As we do this, we will be transformed by God’s power working through it.

Looks like: Passionate worship and prayer

While worship means giving God proper recognition in everything we do, it can be expressed specifically when together we direct our full attention and desire away from ourselves and towards Him. In doing so we recognize His greatness and our complete dependence on Him. Prayer follows naturally as we tell Him our feelings, dreams, desires and needs, ask for His wisdom and guidance, and listen for His direction and leading in our hectic, selfish lives.

- the Bible stubbornly maintains that having a relationship with God – a transforming, committed relationship that affects the rest of our lives – is the key to experiencing true success and joy in the rest of our lives – to “getting everything else right”
- Proverbs – 3x – “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”
- No matter your degrees, or your IQ points, or your mad video game skillz, it comes down to having an ever-increasing space for God in your life – yikes!

What does reliant look like on a personal level?

- Every time we pick up a Bible, every time we mutter a prayer over a sick child, every time we set aside 15 or 20 minutes in a day to focus on God and spend time with Him, every time we make a choice that doesn’t seem to be in our best interests, but goes along with His – that’s reliant, because we are trusting that He will bring about an outcome that we can’t – that He will protect us, that He will promote us, that He will help us persevere, that He will make our lives meaningful and useful and productive

The opposite of reliant?

- Pride – no-one else can do it as good as I can, I don't trust anyone else enough to let them in, I will help people but not let anyone help me – they aren't good enough to be around me (OR: I'm not good enough to be around them) – either one is toxic, especially when you say it out loud – independence – but no one is truly independent – no-one is truly an island, no matter what we'd like to think with the onset of technology and self-sufficiency and the need to see other people less and less – but you still need people, everyone does
- It takes **resolve** to be reliant on God – the sticky part of the word “resolution” – or re:solution, as we've been saying... it takes being “resolute”

Key Thought:

TAKE IT HOME:

A transformed life starts with resolving to put God in charge of every detail, big or small.

... Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord,
“Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions
to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything,
I will pay back four times the amount.” Jesus said to him,

“Today salvation has come to this house,
because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.

For the Son of Man came to seek
and to save the lost.”

Luke 19:1-10, NIV2010



A transformed life starts with resolving to put God in charge of every detail, big or small.

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”

Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” **Luke 19:1-10, NIV2010**

Conclusion: short-sighted? (J.C. Ryle)

- What can I do to help you serve God? Not just like the idea of Him... not just be open to Him... but to get you to give Him your all? To put your life in His hands?
- Intro: J.C. Ryle – bishop of Liverpool, England back roughly 150 years ago – passionate about true faith that made a difference in people’s lives, especially those who weren’t “churchy people” for church

Ryle’s questions: (from 100 years ago) (chapter 1 of Practical Holiness) – from 1878! (133 years ago)

- 1) **Do we ever think about our souls at all?** “Thousands... I fear, cannot answer that question satisfactorily. They never give the subject of religion any place in their thoughts. From the beginning of the year to the end they are absorbed in the pursuit of business, pleasure, politics, money, or self-indulgence of some kind or another. Death, and judgement, and eternity, and heaven, and hell, and a world to come, are never calmly looked at and considered. They live on as if they were never going to die, or rise again, or stand at the bar of God, or receive an eternal sentence! They do not openly oppose religion, for they have not sufficient reflection about it to do so; - but they eat, and drink, and sleep, and get money, and spend money, as if religion was a mere fiction and not a reality... they do not take the trouble to have opinions. A more senseless and unreasonable way of living cannot be conceived; but they do not pretend to reason about it. They simply never think about God, unless frightened for a few minutes by sickness, death in their families or an accident. Barring such interruptions, they appear to ignore religion altogether, and hold on their way cool and undisturbed, as if there were nothing worth thinking of except this world. It is hard to imagine a life more unworthy of an immortal creature than such a life as I have just described, for it reduces a man to the level of a beast. But it is literally and truly the life of multitudes... (Ryle, Practical Religion, 3-4)
- 2) **Do we ever do anything about our souls?** “There are multitudes in England who think occasionally about religion, but unhappily never get beyond thinking. After a stirring sermon, - or after a funeral, - or under the pressure of an illness, - or on Sunday evening, - or when things are going on badly in their families, = or when they meet some bright example of a Christian, - or when they fall in with some striking religious book or tract, = they will at that time think a good deal, and even talk a little about religion in a vague way. But they stop short, as if thinking and talking were enough to save them. They are always meaning, and intending, and purposing, and resolving, and wishing, and telling us that they “know” what is right, and “hope” to be found right at least, but they never attain to any *action*. There is no actual separation from the service of the world and sin, no real taking up the cross and following Christ, no positive *doing* in their Christianity. (4-5)
- 3) **Are we trying to satisfy our consciences with a mere formal religion?**
- 4) **Have we received the forgiveness of our sins?**
- 5) **Do we know anything by experience of conversion to God?**
- 6) **Do we know anything of practical Christian holiness?**
- 7) **Do we know anything of enjoying the means of grace?**
- 8) **Do we ever try to do anything good in the world?**
- 9) **Do we know anything of living the life of habitual communion with Christ?**
- 10) **Do we know anything of being ready for Christ’s second coming?**

Response: prayer (song from the band already done)