

Accepting the Blessings of a New Year

(By Paul R. Blake; brief lesson to follow the service to appoint deacons)

Introduction:

A. Deut. 33:24-25 - "And of Asher he said: 'Asher is most blessed of sons; Let him be favored by his brothers, And let him dip his foot in oil. Your shoes shall be iron and bronze; As your days, so shall your strength be.'"

1. Gen. 49:20 - "Bread from Asher shall be rich, And he shall yield royal dainties."

2. And yet historically, Asher fared little better than his brothers, and his tribe was no better off than any other tribe. What did prophecy mean?

3. The answer lies in verse 25

a. His shoes, a metaphor for his journey through life, would be tough enough to handle whatever path he took

b. Therefore, God said whatever a day brought him, he would have what he needed to handle it

B. "Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day" is a book about a little boy named Alexander who is having one of those days. It is a day where nothing goes right, and everything goes wrong. He has back to back disappointments. When he wakes up in the morning, he comments:

"I went to sleep with gum in my mouth and now there's gum in my hair. When I got out of bed this morning, I tripped on my skateboard and by mistake I dropped my sweater in the sink while the water was running; and, I could tell it was going to be a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day."

After a terrible day at school, an awful visit to the dentist and an unpleasant stop at the shoe store, Alexander slumps in his chair at the supper table. His troubles continue:

"There were lima beans for dinner and I hate lima beans. There was kissing on TV, and I hate kissing. My bath was too hot, I got soap in my eyes, my marble went down the drain, and I had to wear my railroad pajamas. I hate my railroad pajamas. When I went to bed, my brother Nick took back the pillow he said I could keep, the Mickey Mouse night light burned out, and I bit my tongue. The cat went to sleep with my brother Anthony, not with me. It has been a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day."

In contrast: After a Midwestern tornado last year, a woman hugging her family close after losing her home and everything in it, homeless, insufficient tornado insurance, husband's factory damaged and shut down for repairs... said, "I am so happy!" She had what was important; circumstances were not relevant.

1. It is about deciding what is truly important and being content with that alone; all other circumstances are changeable and do not add to or take from that contentment.

2. Matt. 5:3-12 - Beatitudes - these things are important to contentment. All other things have not the power to add to or take away from peace of mind and happiness.