

**Russell Kelfer**

**So What  
Are You  
Doing  
New Year's?**

**# 185-A**

**Series: Miscellaneous Messages**



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# So What Are You Doing New Year's?

So what are you doing New Year's? It's a reasonable question. Back in the dark ages when I was in high school it was a popular song, after the fashion of popular songs back then. Some of you will remember—with the big band sound in the background and what we used to call crooners, singing what was called a ballad—some of you remember. There was one popular song entitled, "What Are You Doing New Year's Eve?" Do you recall it? They wouldn't admit it if they did. How many of you remember that song? Oooh, honesty, honesty, good! Well down through the years I've heard that statement made so many times. At least by people in my somewhat antiquated generation.

What *are* you doing New Year's Eve?

Well, for the Christian that question, moved forward just a few hours on life's calendar, asks a question of life changing importance. Because, for the Christian, the ringing out of the old, and the ringing in of the new symbolize another new beginning, another fresh chapter in your life notebook, another fresh start in your Christian walk. God is about to write a new page in the history of your life and mine. You and I will have a part, a big part, in determining its contents. I believe that the beginning of 1982 may have even greater significance than any other chapter in your life's story or in mine.

You may be listening to this tape late in January, even later, if so, pretend with us it's December 27<sup>th</sup> and ask yourself this question? What are you doing New Year's? Or better still, what are you planning to do with another new year?

Our lesson is entitled, What are you doing New Year's?

I- What is God doing with a new year?

- A- The principle of time
- B- The purpose of time
- C- The power of time

II- What if this should be the year?

III- What would God do if He only had a year to live?

IV- What are you doing New Year's?

## So What Are You Doing New Year's?

Throughout the world this coming Thursday night, millions of people in hundreds of countries, will, in their own way, celebrate the passing of 1981 into the history books. From Time's Square to Timbuktu the proverbial "old man" will limp off the stage of life and a bouncing new baby boy, clad in diapers, will signify the start of a new era of hope. It's no wonder the old man labeled "1981" is limping. He's seen assassinations, riots, depression, and violence erupt from one corner of the globe to the other, but, for one hopeful minute, 12:01 A.M. January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1982, all of the world will stop and imagine that the clouds of unrest that now rest over Poland and Israel and Egypt, so much of South America and Africa, and virtually all of the Mid East will somehow disappear, because a new year has come. Why did God give us new years? Why did God give us months for that matter? Or days? Or weeks? Why not just an unending sea of continuous time in which to live? Why did He give us time anyway?

### WHAT IS GOD DOING WITH A NEW YEAR?

Let's look for just a moment at three things;

#### A- The principle of time

And we will, perhaps for the first time, or maybe for you the fortieth time, see why God made time the way He did. Now assume, and I think you can with me, that there won't be any calendars in Heaven, and, let's assume there won't be any clocks in Heaven either, digital or otherwise. Because there won't be any time in Heaven, there will be no night to divide the day, because there will be no night in Heaven. So time, as we know it, is a specifically designed commodity, by God, for the sake of this brief parenthesis in eternity we call time. Wherein He is revealing Himself to His creation in a special way, and preparing His creation for an endless eternity of uninterrupted fellowship. So what is the principle of time? Time I believe was created by God to divide life into workable segments that we can live with. We read the first record of it in Genesis chapter one verse three, it says;

Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.

God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.

(Genesis 1:3-5 NKJV)

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You all know the story that God did so much of His creative work each day then, He stopped, stepped back, looked at what He'd done and He said, "Hey, that's good." So the next day He proceeded and added to what He'd done the day before until six days had passed, and on the seventh day He rested and completed the first week. In verse fourteen of Genesis one we read,

Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years;

(Genesis 1:14 NKJV)

So God had divided the days into weeks, the weeks into months, the months into years, and ordained them to divide life. Now do you know why? Well, I believe He did it for at least six reasons. You knew that would be coming didn't you?

### B- The Purpose of Time

Let's look at those purposes for a moment. Six reasons God divides life into time, because;

1- Time limits life as we know it and thus creates an appetite for eternity. We're told to work while it's day for the night is coming... when what? ...when no man can work. God gave man night and day to create parameters around which he could know when to work and when to rest. But He also made it clear that time is not a renewable commodity, time runs out and leaves us with nothing but eternity. The body ages, loved ones die, "it is appointed unto man once to die," so the Christian, tasting but a glimpse of glory, knows he is preparing for an inevitable transition when time will cease to be. When only that which is of the Spirit will continue to be of any value. So without time we might not hunger for eternity.

2- Time limits man to a workable faith. You and I can't believe God for unlimited quantities of time, our faith is too small. So God graciously divided life, years into weeks, and the weeks into days. We read in Matthew 6,

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

(Matthew 6:34 NKJV)

The Living Bible says,

...Live one day at a time.

That's all you can handle. Our precious God knows the limits

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of our faith and asks that we trust Him for today. Tomorrow there comes a new batch of faith; He'll send us manna one day at a time. That way the glory will go to Him!

3- Time reveals a God of order and perfect dependability. We know a God of order because we've seen the orderliness of God. So He could promise us in Genesis 8,

While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease.  
(Genesis 8:22 NKJV)

You and I, never for a moment, doubt the sun will come up tomorrow. You and I, never for a moment, doubt spring will follow winter. We never doubt for a moment, it never enters our mind, because, a God of order and faithfulness has never failed to do so. So my friend when He says He's coming again, pay attention! Because He always keeps His word! And even His coming for us will be orderly. He's a God of order, a God of faithfulness and we know so because He gave us time.

4- Time reveals a God of unlimited compassion. Somehow were time not divided into logical segments the weight of our sins would overwhelm us. And the seemingly endlessness of life would leave no stopping place for new beginnings. So God created morning and then He promised us in Lamentations 3,

Through the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.  
They are [what?] new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.  
(Lamentations 3:22,23 NKJV)

He reminds us He'll never run out of love. Every morning when we awake, fresh from the ever-loving ovens of heaven, come a whole new batch of love.

5- Time develops faithfulness. He gave man work to do every day. He gave His children worship to do every week. He gave His nation ordinances to keep every month. He gave His people feasts to observe every year. He divided life into workable segments so that you and I can know when we're being faithful. If a day goes by and we haven't prayed, we know it! If a week goes by and we haven't come to church, we know it! Every month and every years reminds us to ask ourselves, have you been faithful? We can know, because God gave us time. And lastly;

6- Time gives God a framework for prophecy. Jesus came at the precise hour and day prescribed by the prophets, "in the

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fullness of time," He came. And God's clock moves faithfully along as the sixth week of years dramatically draws to a close. We know what's coming next don't we! We can know how long the tribulation will be, because of time. We know how long the millennium will be, because of time. We know how long Jonah was in the whale and we know how long Jesus was in the grave because of time. Time is God's framework for revealing prophesy to man. So, the principle of time is to divide life, and the purposes of time are to limit life, limit responsibilities, generate faith, demonstrate order, demonstrate compassion, develop faithfulness, and frame history for prophecy. It's worth it isn't it! Time is a good thing. God divided life into segments to generate in the Christian, in particular, that inner drive to make life count. That's why Paul said in Ephesians 5:

Redeeming the time [treasure it, buy it back], because the days are evil [the time in which you live].

(Ephesians 5:16 NKJV)

Therefore, we as citizens of another kingdom, an eternal kingdom, are on tour in this land called time, and are given specific charges to use our time—especially the fresh beginnings, the new beginnings, the new years—to motivate us to walk worthy of Him. So New Year's Day is a Christian holiday in a very real sense of the word. It's a signal to God's children that time is short, and that they, in Christ, have at their disposal a wonderful miracle called...beginning again.

But New Year's Day 1982 is not just a normal January first, for the signs on the horizon of history are all pointing toward the climax of this age. And the dawning of a whole new era is upon us, called eternity. It will be initiated by the rapture of the saints of God, interrupted by a cataclysmic clash between light and darkness known as the tribulation period and then ended by the most dramatic event in the history of man....when the Lord Jesus Himself returns in great power with you and with me, with all the saints, to defeat the enemy and set up His thousand year reign upon this earth. First He'll come for us, and then seven years of terror, as we, in heaven, are joined at last, the head to the body, and we in Christ become one. And then, Lo, He'll come with us, and every knee will bow! And, my dear friend in Christ, *this may be the year!* Doesn't that get exciting?

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### II- WHAT IS THIS SHOULD BE THE YEAR?

We must therefore acknowledge some basic truths as we enter 1982, simple truths, but we must be reminded.

#### 1- He is coming back.

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—

in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we [what?] shall be changed.

(I Corinthians 15:51,52 NKJV)

And in John 14:3 Jesus said,

And if I go and prepare a place for you [what?], I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (NKJV)

He is coming back!

#### 2- We know that we cannot know the day or the hour.

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”

But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. (Matthew 24:35,36 NKJV)

3- We can, however, know when the signs of coming, flash “soon”! The next verse says,

“But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of man be.” (Matthew 24:37 NKJV)

Luke 21:28,

“Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.” (NKJV)

4- We are in fact commanded to pay attention to those signs and do two things as His coming draws near:

A- We are to look for His coming.

“Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.”

(Matthew 24:42,43 NKJV)

B- We're to prepare for His coming.



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Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season?”

Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. (Matthew 24:44-46 NKJV)

In other words, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is not being faithful to His word if we're not excited about His coming and if we are not dramatically and enthusiastically getting ready for His coming.

Are you ready?

How do we get ready? What do we do when the signs of the times say, “coming soon!”? Do we have a pattern to follow? Ahh, I think we do. First of all we have a pattern of what the unbelieving world is going to do. Paul speaking in First Corinthians chapter fifteen describes the attitude of a man facing death, as if death is all there is. He says,

“what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!”

(I Corinthians 15:32c NKJV)

The world turns to stuffing itself with things, and deceiving itself with alcohol and drugs, for it cannot face the prospect of tomorrow. Ahh, but not so for the Christian, to the Christian the end is the beginning, and the very flashing lights that signal earth's destruction set ablaze a glow of hope. God says, “get excited”. God says, “Get ready.” God says, “Get dressed for the wedding, the Bridegroom is on His way.” And I believe God visited this earth in human form to demonstrate, in ways we can see and understand, how we ought to behave in the light of the shortness of time. For Jesus Christ, the God-man, only had three years in which to fulfill His Father's objectives for His life. Three years to set up His kingdom, train His leaders, impart His principles, demonstrate His power, and transfer the reins of authority to those to whom He was intrusting His Future, three years! And as those years passed and all of human history was being brought under the influence of eternity, His purpose never changed, His principles never changed, even His procedures never changed.

### III- WHAT WOULD GOD DO IF HE ONLY HAD A YEAR TO

LIVE?

My friend, you watch Jesus Christ, the living legend, as He lived out those final twelve months of His stay on planet earth and you will see, *how God would live life if He only had a year to live*. And if we can see what was so important to Jesus that it occupied the bulk of His final year on earth, we ought to have a clear pattern of how to live 1982, which may well be the final year in history. The final year before God breaks through the barriers of time, for the final time, and we experience, at last, our final New Year's celebration—the New Year that will never end. So let's in the few moments remaining take a brief look at how Jesus spent His final time on earth. And let's plan to pattern our 1982 after what He did and how He did it. The problem of time, the subject of our lesson, now enters into the picture. It becomes my enemy because we could look at Jesus until He comes again and never see *all* of His heart those final months.

Because of time restraints we'll only look this morning at three aspects of Jesus' concept of time. As the hands of life's clock moved at a seemingly incredible pace to that midnight hour called Calvary. Three things I could not help but notice about Jesus in His final hours—three things that ought to characterize our lives, in this, which may be our final year, as we know it. Let's look at them.

A- Jesus intensified the time He spent alone with the Father.

He would go away while it was yet a long time before day to be alone with the Father. His disciples would sneak out and follow Him, climbing up to a high mountain, or down into the garden. There they would find Him on His knees talking to His Father. There the crowds would find Him, and when the crowds found Him, He'd stop and minister to them. And yet, still again, while it was yet night, again He would go. For the number one priority in His life was to know the Father's heart, so He could do the Father's will. And His life's final hour descended, and He stood face to face with Calvary, *again* He went to Gethsemane, where, the scripture records, He had been so often. And the nearer the end the more intensely He prayed, that He might do the Father's will no matter what it cost. You and I would justify, there just isn't time to pray like that! The end is in sight, there's so much to be done we'd argue. We know the Father's plan, now we must do the Father's work. So in the hours of our lives when we need so much to be filled with the Spirit, renewed by His presence, encouraged

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by His Word, we end up, in our own energy, trying to fight spiritual battles with physical tools. Only to find ourselves powerless when we need power the most. You want a number one priority for 1982? There it is! *Spend more time with the Father*. Because as the storm clouds darken over Israel and God's hourglass drops its final grains of sand, you know where the church of Jesus Christ ought to be? At Gethsemane! Weeping over sin, seeking to know His will, asking for strength. To pray, "if it be possible that this cup pass from me, nevertheless, Thy will be done". You and I ought not to leave this place this morning, we certainly ought not to leave this year, next Thursday, without a new vow to God for 1982 that commits to spending the quantity and quality of time with the Father that Jesus did. So what are you doing New Year's? How about spending the new year increasingly alone in the presence of God.

The second thing I could not help but notice about Jesus' life as time was running out was that:

B- He invested the entire time when He was not with the Father, with people. You and I would have thought with such a world-wide evangelistic challenge before Him He would have formed committees, formulated a budget, drawn up plans for headquarters building, printed materials, drawn up job descriptions, increased the size of His staff, laid out His strategy step by step. After all time was short. But it seems to me the more immanent the cross the more intense His involvement with people. If it seemed as though He had only one goal in life, it's because He did, it was people. And He gave Himself to people and He did it in three ways.

1- He poured His life into a few. There were multitudes to reach, but He didn't start with the multitudes. He lived with, prayed with, taught. He loved, rebuked, encouraged. How many? Twelve. Because He knew the answer to winning the world was training the twelve. And if everyone in this room this morning would agree with God, that until He comes, you'll pour your life into discipling those He has placed around you, or into being discipled and having another one's life poured into you, we would not have to wonder if the *great commission* was going to be the *great omission* of our generation. What are you doing new years? Allowing your life to be multiplied? Jesus did, and so must we. But while Jesus invested the bulk of His time in twelve men and He poured His very soul into them, He did not form and

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exclusive club, with membership based on performance, in a sort of spiritual Olympics. True, He poured Himself into a few.

### 2- But He made Himself available to anyone who needed Him.

Lepers, Pharisees, Samaritans, an adulteress, a blind man, a lame man, little children, a rich young ruler, a centurion, a thief on a cross, the dregs of this life, the kings of this life. They were all the same to Jesus. And wherever He went, power went out, and He gave Himself to them. My friend, that's the balanced Christian life. He poured His life into those He chose, He gave His life to whomever needed it. But He never gave it *all\_away*. Because you cannot give away an endless stream of living water. What are you doing new years? Are you going to make yourself vulnerable and available to people, to your neighbor, to your fellow employees, to your fellow Christians who need help? Are you going to retreat into your own little world instead, your world of recreation and affluence and self-serving accumulation of things? Are you going to spend what may be your final year in committee meetings, or in living rooms, in hospital rooms, in jails, in nurseries and Sunday school classrooms, teaching, sharing, loving, giving? Jesus gave Himself to people—first to the few, then to anyone who needed Him. He not only poured Himself into the few and gave Himself to the many.

3- He took upon Himself the form of a servant. And it was as a servant that He became a disciple maker. If your expertise in making disciples has created in you the badge of an expert, if you're a captain giving instruction to a bunch of privates, if you're a pastor or teacher talking down to an unfortunately less spiritual flock, you don't have the mind of Christ. Condescension was the Pharisees' program. Jesus served. He hugged little children, washed disciple's feet, touched lepers, cooked meals, served meals, went to the house of publicans and sinners. He became a nobody so everybody could be somebody in the presence of the Father. He did not get a lot of thank you notes either, He got a lot of hate mail. But He kept on serving. He was the Father's slave, that we might be the Father's sons. So what are you doing new years? Are you going to get your hands dirty so someone's heart can become clean? Will you move furniture, fix meals, make calls, visit hospitals, care for babies, or are you beyond that? Don't ever progress beyond that. Because when you progress beyond the role of a servant you progress beyond Jesus. Jesus' first priority was time with the Father, then time with people.

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### C- He left the results to God.

There stood out to me this week one last truth about Jesus as the pages of the calendar of His life draw quickly away, and that was He left the results to God. Now you and I would have hit the panic button. He was not about to win a plaque for the most baptisms, nor was He up for the pastor of the year award. Jesus had totally obeyed the Father, but by man's standards all He had to show for it was a straggly band of rejects who forsook Him and fled when the oven of testing reached broil. He had no flourishing church, no impressive statistics, and no financial blessings to indicate God's approval. The crowds were getting smaller not bigger. Those He came to win, His own people, called for His resignation and finally for His crucifixion. Still He continued on course. He had no room for retreat, no last minute change of plans. Jesus left the results to God. If we view His life in that light I'd like to share in closing five things. Five things that we learn about Jesus and the manner in which He left the results up to God, first of all, He demanded performance from those He called but;

1- He never made performance a condition for His love. Have you noticed that? He said,

If you love Me, keep my commandments. (John 14:15 NKJV)

Do what I say! But when Peter forsook Him and fled, He prayed for him, waited for him, forgave him, and commissioned him to feed His sheep. It isn't wrong to expect obedience, it's wrong to make obedience a qualification for love. And even as His final hour approached and those He was trusting with His whole kingdom forsook Him and fled, He quietly trusted the Father and continuously loved His own. Yea, He loved them to the end, Secondly He;

2- Even amidst tears, He trusted. Gethsemane didn't turn out the way it might have. Jesus prayed,

"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me;"  
[take this cup] (Matthew 26:39 NKJV)

It wasn't possible. So Jesus had to drink that cup, and even amidst the tears He trusted. This year may hold a Gethsemane for some of us. We don't know. But millions today are in the presence of the Father because Jesus in Gethsemane added;

"...nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."  
(Matthew 26:39 continued NKJV)

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Can you learn to pray like that?

3- He accepted rejection and ridicule as a natural part of the cost of discipleship. You and I don't fully understand what that means. He said that the disciple is not above his master if they hated Me (Jesus the Master), they'll hate you.<sup>1</sup>

Christians in Russia understand, Christians in Poland understand, Christians in China understand. Perhaps as the angels of God lift their trumpets to calls us home *we* may even come to understand rejection as He did. But even in rejection He left the results to God.

4- He did not seek evidences, He simply remained faithful. He left the earth with no visible tangible evidence of success, yet with no apparent frustration about what the world calls failure. For His confidence was not based on results, His confidence was based in the Father. Satan in the wilderness had offered Him a shortcut and guaranteed Him visible results. Remember in Matthew chapter four? He can do that for people, he can do that for you, he can do that for the church. Jesus chose the slow and awkward ways of the Father and left the results to Him.

5- He did not alter His game plan. When the battle raged and no victory seemed in sight, He did not alter His game plan. He could have said, "Lord, I've waited long enough Father, and I've done it your way, and there's nothing going on, let Me show you what I can do." He could have, but the darker the clouds, the closer He stood by the Father, and to the end His message was

For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will,  
but the will of Him who sent Me. (John 6:38 NKJV)

He said,

I can of mine own self do [what?] nothing: (John 5:30 NKJV)

The Father Who dwells in Me, He does it all.

So you and I know how to spend this. We're to live it as if it were the last. Cause it might be! The signs point to it. The Spirit encourages us, seeing that these things come to pass, what manner of Men and what manner of women are we to be? We're to live this year the way God lived His last year on planet earth. Giving ourselves to spending time with the Father, giving ourselves unreservedly to people, and lovingly leaving the results to Him. If this year holds a cross, *then a cross is the most beautiful*

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1 John 15:20

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*gift God could give us.* For it means He cares enough to give us what He gave His Son. This may well be the year He comes again. I pray that it will be, don't you?

It may be the year He calls me home, or you, either way, this could be the last. Ought we not to live it as Jesus did? For is not the last year the best year for a Christian?

### SO WHAT ARE YOU DOING NEW YEAR'S?

So what are you doing New Year's?  
What plans have you made thus far?  
Planning on buying another house  
Or maybe a shiny car?

Maybe you're planning to make your mark  
At last, to be better known,  
Or is it the top of your goals for the year  
To make sure your investments have grown?

What are you doing New Year's?  
Planning to live the good life  
Doing whatever it takes to succeed,  
Avoiding rejection and strife?

Satan can give you that kind of year  
If those are your goals you can know,  
That you can come to December next  
With wood, hay, and stubble to show.

But you'll have nothing eternal  
Nothing that really will last,  
You can just watch your life go by  
Till another year has passed.

Or you can study Jesus  
As that ugly cross appeared  
In view, with awe the life He lived  
As death and anguish neared.

The hours He spent with the Father  
So often, yet long before day,  
He'd steal away to a quiet place  
Where He could watch and pray.

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And He gave His life to people—  
He poured it into a few,  
Then He opened His life to the many  
That they might be transformed too.

And He took the form of a servant  
And humbly accepted His call,  
Then added, "Wouldst Thou be great My Son?  
Then thou must be servant of all."

Then as Calvary's crisis beckoned  
He prayed, "Thy will be done."  
He left the results to the Father,  
For He and the Father were one.

So were our Savior's final months—  
No banners of triumph unfurled,  
He simply did the Father's will  
And thus He changed the world.

This could be the year of His coming  
The year when His trumpets sound,  
This could be the year He calls us home  
Where naught but His glory surround.

So what kind of New Year will you have,  
Will you by His coming be blessed?  
Live it as though it were your last,  
And it surely will be your best.

Let us pray,

*Father,*

*We pray that as we approach a new year we may approach it  
with the mind of Christ. That we may give our time to Thee and  
our lives to people, and trust the results to You.*

*To Whom praise and honor and glory, alone belong.*

*Amen*

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