

A Few Thoughts for the Hunkered Down

Tuesday, January 19, 2021 (B)

Thank God for Goals

Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there.... So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this fruit, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way. I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ. —Romans 15:25, 28-29

I was recently gladdened to hear of a bold goal being set—something of a New Year’s resolution—which renewed in me a sense of joy and hope. It is no secret that I am not a big promoter of habitual goal setting, and I am no fan of New Year’s resolutions as they consistently prove themselves empty. I may, however, be guilty of overstressing this caution, for there times when goals play an important role in life and in leadership.

The goal I am referring to is one set by our about-to-be president, Joe Biden, as he promised to deliver 100 million vaccines to the American people in the next 100 days. Setting such goals is a part of what leadership is all about. While credit should be given to those who oversaw reaching the bold goal of developing a vaccine in such a short period of time, we are now onto a new phase in the war and a new set of goals has been much in need. Thank you, President-Elect Biden.

Once the vaccine was developed it was handed over to the care of state governments, who proceeded to do what government bureaucracies do. While the overarching need is for distribution, bureaucrats are given to seeing only the rules immediately before them. The positive work of advancing a cure gets lost in the lesser concerns of not daring to break any of the rules and protocols which might jeopardize one’s employment. Higher up the line we often find officials who dare not project any reasonable goals, let alone bold ones, for fear that these marks not being reached may someday imperil their status before the voters and their peers. Officials become focused upon protecting themselves and their futures rather than upon leading and serving a greater good. All we get are excuses when what we really need are a few rays of hope. Mr. Biden has stuck his neck out and called for a bold goal to be reached. This is how leaders are to lead, and to give encouragement and vision to their people.

“But,” many will ask, “can he make good on the promise?” And with this question many will count down the days, ready to cast scorn upon our leader if the goal should not be met. Not all goals are met, and this is not necessarily a failure. Many months ago, I mentioned Paul’s goal of reaching Spain to spread the Gospel. I do not believe

that he ever made it to Spain, and though his plans to reach Rome were realized, they were not fulfilled in the way which he had first hoped. Paul set bold goals, and not all these goals were met. Was Paul a failure? Heavens no! Oh, that we would be so bold in our plans! The future did not always take the course which the Apostle expected, but God did great things as Paul pressed on in faith.

Let us pray for our soon-to-be president and for the leadership which our nation needs. Let us pray for an end to this miserable plague, and may we *all* learn the type of leadership which dares to set goals, take risks and give encouragement.

Blessings,

Pastor Jim

Almighty God, who in thy wisdom hast so ordered our earthly life that we must walk by faith and not by sight; grant us such faith in thee that, amidst all things that pass our understanding, we may believe in thy fatherly care, and ever be strengthened by the assurance that underneath are the everlasting arms; through Jesus Christ our Lord. —Source unknown