



"If you can see the land, you can keep at it!"

I've got a long way to go, but God promised he would complete the process and, when Jesus comes, I'll look just like him. The New Year is full of hope, because during this year I might look even more like Jesus.

As we begin the New Year, I want to tell you something important about me. It is a good thought as we begin the year, because it's probably true of you too.

It happened when I was doing something else. Frankly, I hardly noticed. I was so surprised when I saw it, I almost didn't tell anyone for fear they would think I was too arrogant and prideful. But then, I had nothing to do with it. It sort of snuck up on me. So I guess I can't be proud of it or anything.

I should have expected it. I had been told about it often enough. It was just that I was getting so cynical and seeing so much of my own sin, I felt that the hope of anything approaching it was silly. I had prayed for it, but the prayer was one of those prayers you don't really think God will answer.

Then I looked and found that...I was starting to look a little bit like Jesus.

I know, I know. You're saying, "Steve, have you lost your mind? Okay, you have a beard and Jesus probably had one, but he had hair too, and you are woefully lacking in that area."

Wait...it's true. I'm beginning to look a little like Jesus. I'm thinking a little like him and loving a little like him. I'm thinking of myself as a servant more than I used to. And, not only that, I'm kinder, more compassionate and a bit wiser...just a little like Jesus.

In 1952, on a foggy morning in California, a young woman by the name of Florence Chadwick dove into the cold water off Catalina Island. Her goal was to be the first woman to swim from that island to the California coast. She was no amateur. She had been the first woman ever to swim the English Channel in both directions.

She began her effort well enough, but the water was very cold. Finally, after

some 15 hours, growing numb with the cold, she asked to be taken out of the water.

Chadwick's comment to a reporter was profound. "Look, I'm not making excuses," she said, "but if I could have seen the land, I might have made it."

If you can see the land, you can keep at it.

It is January and we're looking at another year. I don't know about you, but I'm not altogether happy with doing it all over again. Seems that I just learned to write "2006" and now I have to change to "2007."

I've found that when you're over the hill, you start picking up speed and, frankly, age is a high price to pay for maturity. To be honest, I don't want to go any faster, and I'm not into maturity, at least, more than I've got. So, I greet the New Year with mixed feelings...

...until I realized that I was beginning to look a little like Jesus. He is the "first born" and that means he is the prototype of what is happening to me. I've got a long way to go, but God promised he would complete the process and when Jesus comes, I'll look just like him. The New Year is full of hope, because during this year I might look even more like Jesus.

If you can see the land, you can keep at it.

I'm not going to make any resolutions this year. I can't stand the guilt when I break them. But I am looking a little bit more like Jesus, and he told me to remind you that you were, too. You really can keep on trucking *if you can see the land*.

Oh, he also said that even if you don't look like him that much, he will still love you.

He asked me to remind you. □

—Steve Brown