

PLAIN TRUTH[®]

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Nothing But Jesus



By Greg Albrecht

“For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified”

(1 Corinthians 2:2, my emphasis)

Have you ever considered how many New Year’s resolutions are the same year after year? One person put it this way: “My goal for 2023 is to reach the goals I set for 2022, which I should have achieved in 2021 because I resolved to accomplish them in 2020.”

Most New Year’s resolutions are actually not “new”—they are the same old resolutions, recycled again and again. Most New Year’s resolutions are based on self-improvement, increasing one’s diligence and working harder.

In 1 Corinthians 2:2, Paul makes a resolution—he *resolves* to know

Nothing But Jesus.

Paul did not hammer people with fire-and-brimstone sermons about how evil and bad they were.

Paul did not insist that God is filled with wrath, anger and indignation and will torture and burn forever all who fail to measure up if they don’t start doing the right things and living according to religious rules and regulations.

No, Paul preached **Nothing But Jesus. All Jesus, all the time.**

Paul didn’t preach how-to sermons, filled with pointers about how to be a better husband, wife, parent or whatever. Paul preached Jesus.

Paul did not prop people up with false assurances and insipid platitudes—he assured and encouraged, but he did so with the assurances and encouragement that Jesus gives us.

The encouragement and assurances of Jesus are summarized in Matthew 11:28: *Come unto me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.* Paul didn’t point people to Dr. Phil, Oprah Winfrey or their religious counterparts.

I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

There are plenty of religious salesmen in our world who pose with their pious posturing. There are plenty of religious con artists who preach a big lie—and that kind of message is

exactly what people want to hear, and for that reason it is a message that is supported and believed.

Paul preached Jesus and **nothing but Jesus. All Jesus, all the time.**

I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Paul did not preach the glories of old-time-religion that is “good enough” for you and me. Paul preached that God in Christ is making all things new.

Paul preached the spiritual transformation that God offers you and me, from Christless religion that captivates us and ensnares us, to the new covenant in Christ, which he gave us in his blood.

I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Paul preached **nothing but Jesus**, which is a new way of life, inviting us all to embrace the risen Lord

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Jesus Christ, so that he lives his life in us. Paul most definitely did not preach old-time religion and insist those who follow Jesus Christ toe a denominational party line and earn commendation and rewards from God.

Apart From Jesus, Nothing Is New— Just the Same-Old, Same-Old

Long before Paul resolved to know **nothing but Jesus**, Solomon wrote a somewhat dreary, cynical and depressing book called Ecclesiastes. If ever there was someone who knew the emptiness of making New Year's resolutions, it was Solomon.

The book of Ecclesiastes is depressing because Solomon describes the true realities of a life apart from God. And such a life, while true and accurate, is depressing. Make all the resolutions you will, but apart from God, life itself will not change.

What Solomon reports in the book of Ecclesiastes are facts, but Solomon's cynical observations are not a true prescription for what it means to be a Christ-follower.

Ecclesiastes relates the emptiness and misery of a life lived apart from



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Jesus Christ. Ecclesiastes is an account of Solomon looking back on his life.

Solomon's life was filled with wisdom—he was said to have been the wisest of all men. It was a life filled with building and accomplishment. He constructed a temple for God, among many other vast building projects. Solomon was incredibly rich—with his 1,000 women he had it all and did it all. And at the end of it all, Solomon reflects on his life by saying, in Ecclesiastes 1:9:

What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.

Solomon is merely echoing the truth of New Year's resolutions—most of the people who make New Year's resolutions make the same or similar resolutions year after year.

There is nothing new under the sun, says Solomon. That is a true observation about human history and civilization. We humans have tried it all—we have attempted it all—

the only new thing left for us in the 21st century is to make slight modifications and improvements based on what has gone before.

But for Paul—and for Christ-followers everywhere who resolve to know **nothing but Jesus Christ** and him crucified, Jesus is forever new—forever transforming and forever dynamic.

Jesus is forever, immortal, eternal and therefore transcends what we see *“under the sun.”*

Nothing under the sun lasts forever. However, while he willingly descended from eternity, from above the sun, into our world limited by time and space, Jesus is not “under” the sun. Jesus fulfills the empty longings of Ecclesiastes.

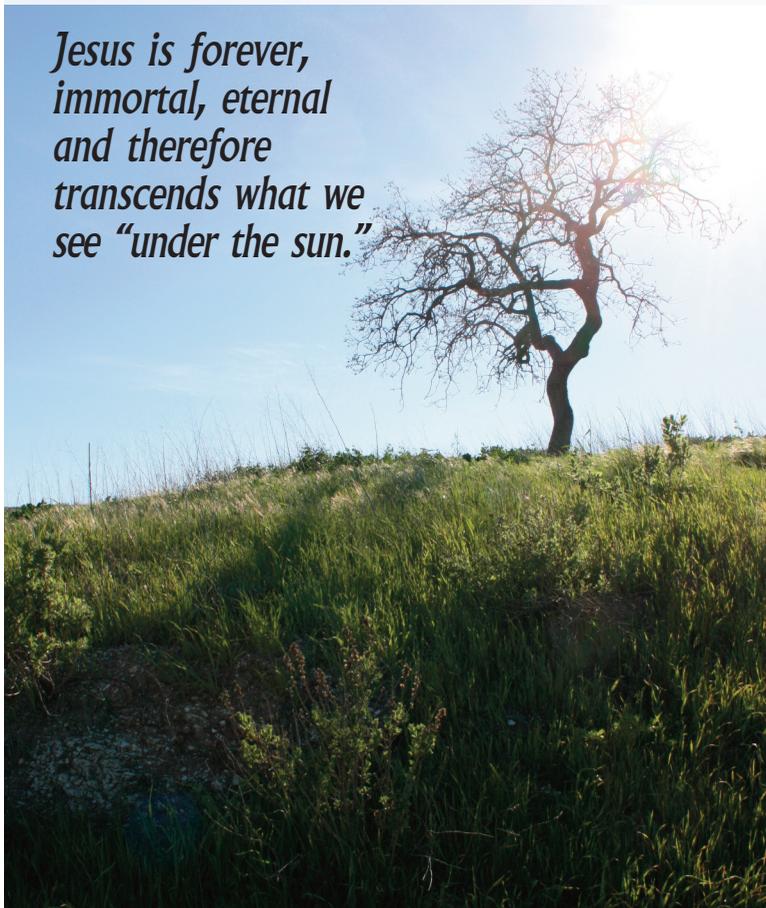
Jesus created the sun. He is the S-O-N of God. He is the Light of the world, the light of all light, the one who alone can give life to the dead. Jesus is making of you and me a new creation—and that new creation is new because it does not derive from the world that is “under the sun.”

Thoughts for This New Year

As you approach this New Year and all the unknowns that it has in store for us, here are three suggestions to keep in mind:

1) **The Past:** When we resolve to know **nothing but Jesus**, then we live for him now and the past has no hold on us. When we resolve to know **nothing but Jesus**, he wipes

Jesus is forever, immortal, eternal and therefore transcends what we see “under the sun.”



away the shame and guilt of our past.

2) **The Present:** When we resolve to know **nothing but Jesus**, we resolve to pick up our cross and follow him. When we resolve to know **nothing but Jesus** we are assured that he is with us and in us as we face the present dilemmas, challenges and struggles of our lives.

3) **The Future:** As we look to the future, we resolve to remain centered in Christ, knowing **nothing but Jesus**. Our Christ-focused resolution comes from our faith and trust that he will empower us and fill us with confidence to reject fear and embrace hope.

Our hope does not lie in human wisdom, logic or eloquence. Our hope lies solely in Jesus Christ. Because we know the Father through the Son, we hear the hope-filled invitation of Jesus, as he gave it in Matthew 11:28: *Come unto me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*

Fear is the opposite of hope—fear looks out at the horizon and can see only disaster and heartache. Hope in Christ enables us to see through the fog of fear, through the Light of Jesus we see hope.

Because we live in Christ and he lives in us, we live with hope, not fear. As we **resolve to know nothing but Jesus** we know that this present world is not all there is —God has so much more in store for you and me!

“What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived—the things that God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9). □

THE HUMAN RACE IS
POSITIVELY ADDICTED TO
KEEPING RECORDS AND
REMEMBERING SCORES,



IF GOD HAS ANNOUNCED
ANYTHING IN JESUS, IT IS THAT
HE, FOR ONE, HAS PENSIONED
OFF THE BOOKKEEPING
DEPARTMENT **PERMANENTLY.**

-ROBERT FARRAR CAPON

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