

How about a New Year without excuses.

Excuses cannot redeem us from what angers God. Only Jesus redeems!

Luke 14: 15 - 24: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.' "Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me. "Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'

"The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.' "Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.' "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'"

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We hesitate to admit what we did wrong in God's eyes. *Excuses try to justify being unfaithful. And we all have excuses for not desiring God's will.*

But we do not convince God with our "good reasons" for being disobedient. God sees through all our excuses. God knows our real attitudes and plans.

You cannot con God - not even with the best apologies, because the Word of God is searching our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

Our excuses are excluding us from God's fellowship and rob us from living the Kingdom life and from God's blessings. God will not help us as long as we try to convince him to sustain our apologies.

But, **God listens to repentance.**

Jesus Christ came to show us that forgiveness is available; that God is merciful and gracious when we come to him *with penitence and a new commitment to serve him in future, wholeheartedly, with love and obedience.*

"We need to quit making apologies, fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God." (Quoting Wesley).

Just imagine how blessed the new year will be if we change our excuses into regret, our defenses into seeking forgiveness and our desires into a prayer for a new life in Christ and in his Church?