

GET IN LINE FOR TWO-THOUSAND-NINE

Our theme for this year: GET IN LINE FOR TWO-THOUSAND-NINE.

You might interpret this as: If your life is out of line, then you need to get in line. This is a valid application.

But more in line with our intent is to think of getting in line, as to board a bus or a train. Get in line to go to Heaven in 2009.

We might like to think that most everyone is going to Heaven when we die--but the Bible simply does not teach that.

Jesus said, (Mat 7:13-14 KJV) "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: {14} Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

The word here is STRAIT (not straight) It doesn't mean straight like a string pulled tight. It means like being in a strait... in a hard place. It suggests cramped, or restricted.

So not everyone is going to Heaven. On another occasion, Jesus said, (Luke 13:24 KJV) "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

One meaning of STRIVE is to FIGHT. Another more fitting meaning is to WORK AT SOMETHING. SEEKING suggests a more casual approach. You may not make it if you only casually seek it... you need to put forth more effort to make sure you go to Heaven when you die.

The apostle Peter wrote: (2 Pet 1:10 KJV) "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."

People die every day. Even young people die. Automobile accidents, contagious diseases, food poisoning, even cancer and heart attacks strike the young as well as the aged. We want to make sure that when our time comes, we have reservations in a better country. We want to get in line to go to Heaven... we want to GET IN LINE IN 2009!

Why are we adopting this slogan for the year 2009? Mainly for the purpose of making it easier to talk about the issue.

It is hard to talk to people about death and the life beyond. We think it is morbid. We have conditioned ourselves not to think about it. We use all sorts of diversions to keep from facing the issue. We watch TV, play video games, attend sporting events, keep music in our ears all day, work crossword puzzles and everything else you can think of to keep from having to face the issue. Yet it is there... and we need to face it!

We all will have to face eternity, and our lot in eternity depends upon the relationship with God we have enjoyed during the time of our lives on earth. After we leave this world, there will be no time or opportunity for preparing for eternity. We will be there !

The Apostle Paul wrote: (2 Cor 5:8-11 KJV) "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. {9} Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. {10} For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. {11} Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men..."

Many times we need a "door opener" to talk to people about their souls. And now we have a door opener. We can begin by saying, "***Our church has this theme of GETTING IN LINE IN 2009. --Getting in line for Heaven. It does make one stop and think, doesn't it?***"

We desperately need to talk to people about their destiny.

The story is told of a father who was talking with his son about his soul and eternal destiny. He said, Son, what are you planning on doing when you get out of school? The son said, Well, I think I will pick a good college, hopefully get a scholarship, and get a good education to help me get out into the business world. The father said, That's good, son... Then what? The son said, well I will try to find myself a good job... one that I will enjoy, and that has good benefits and paid vacations. That's good, son, said the father... but then what? The son said, sooner or later I will find the right girl, settle down, buy a nice home, and have a family. That's real good, said the father... but then what? Well, the son said, I will practice good ethics, do a good job, and hopefully work my way to the top, and one day I might just be the president of the company! That's great, the father said... but then what? Well, then, said the son, I will start making plans for retirement. I will have some IRA's and retirement plans so that when I retire, I won't have anything to worry about. That's great, said the father... but then what? Then I will enjoy my retirement, said the son... I'll have time for hunting, fishing, maybe some golf and traveling... all those things I've always wanted to do but never had the time. That's fine, the father said, but then what? Well I guess I will eventually grow old and die, the son said. The father said, YES, SON... AND THEN WHAT???

And that's the question we all need to stop and think about... without waiting till the time is at hand.

The wisest man of the ages--King Solomon--wrote: (Eccl 12:1-7 NIV) "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, "I find no pleasure in them"-- {2} before (***depicting the infirmities of old age:-E.B.***) the sun and the light and the moon and the stars grow dark, and the clouds return after the rain; {3} when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men stoop, when the grinders cease because they are few, and those looking through the windows grow dim; {4} when the doors to the street are closed and the sound of grinding fades; when men rise up at the sound of birds, but all their songs grow faint; {5} when men are afraid of heights and of dangers in the streets; when the almond tree blossoms and the grasshopper drags himself along and desire no longer is stirred. Then man goes to his eternal home and mourners go about the streets. {6} Remember him--before the silver cord is severed, or the golden bowl is broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, or the wheel broken at the well, {7} and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it."

The person who lives this life without preparing for eternity is really very foolish. (Luke 12:16-21 KJV) "And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: {17} And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? {18} And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. {19} And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. {20} But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? {21} So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

(Mat 6:19-21 KJV) "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: {20} But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: {21} For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

(Mat 16:26-27 KJV) "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? {27} For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."

To evangelize and witness to people about the Saviour and their need for salvation has become very unpopular in the society in which we live. It is often considered downright offensive. Our theme for the year: GET IN LINE IN 2009 will help open the door to evangelize.

There is a song (You Never Mentioned Him to Me) that says,
When in the better land, Before the bar we stand,
How deeply grieved our souls may be
If any lost one there, Should cry in deep despair:
You never mentioned Him to me.
You helped me not the light to see,
You met me day by day,
You knew I was astray;
Yet, you never mentioned Him to me.
O let us spread the word, where'er it may be heard,
Help groping souls the light to see,
That yonder none may say, "you showed me not the way,"
"You never mentioned Him to me"
A few sweet words may guide a lost one to His side,
Or turn sad eyes on Calvary;
So work as days go by, that yonder none may cry,
"You never mentioned Him to me"

Jude said, (Jude 1:22-23 KJV) "And of some have compassion, making a difference: {23} And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."

The Apostle Paul made no bones about his evangelistic mission and intent. (Rom 10:1 KJV) "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."

When before King Agrippa: (Acts 26:27-29 KJV) "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. {28} Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. {29} And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."

(1 Cor 9:22 KJV) "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

He told the Corinthians: (2 Cor 5:20 KJV) "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

We need to be impressed with the urgency of getting in line for Heaven... Now!

(2 Cor 6:1-2 KJV) "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. {2} (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, **now** is the accepted time; behold, **now** is the day of salvation.)"

Our president has adopted the theme in education: NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND. They want no child to be left behind in education.

The postal service has adopted the theme: NO LETTER LEFT BEHIND. They will send a letter carrier to drive forty miles cross country if a letter gets delivered to the wrong post office.

BUT WHAT ABOUT NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND WHEN IT COMES TO ETERNITY?

We spend countless dollars and endless time to prepare our children for an occupation in adulthood. But when it comes to preparing for eternity, most children get left behind even (sad as it is to say) by most Christian parents!

\$UCCE\$\$ is measured by the dollar mark in our society, rather than by being ready for eternity. How our priorities will change... one minute after death! Jesus said, (Luke 16:19-31 KJV) "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: {20} And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, {21} And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. {22} And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; {23} And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. {24} And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. {25} But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art

tormented. {26} And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. {27} Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: {28} For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. {29} Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. {30} And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. {31} And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

QUESTION: Which of these two characters would you rather your children grow up to be: the rich man, or the beggar? Before you answer... think of the whole story!

May our theme: GET IN LINE IN 2009 cause us to stop and think of our own status... AND open the door to talk about it with our family members and neighbors.

If you are not a faithful Christian, you are NOT in line!

1. PLACE YOUR FAITH IN CHRIST (John 8:32)
2. REPENT OF SIN (Lk 13:3)
3. CONFESS CHRIST (Matt. 10:32,33)
4. BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST (Gal. 3:27)
5. REMAIN FAITHFUL TO THE END (Rev. 2:10)