



If The Lord Wills, We Shall Live - It was during this same week last year that the world beheld a great tragedy which claimed over 200,000 lives: On December 26, 2004, a massive earthquake struck off the coast of Sumatra, unleashing a tsunami disaster that the modern world had never before witnessed. For that entire week the death toll had to be revised daily as only estimates could be offered in the wake of this massive calamity; and through it all, the entire world was paralyzed with grief and shock as many considered their own frailty, the brevity of life, and even the uncertainty of the future.

Unfortunately, it sometimes takes a calamity like this for people to think this way at all!

Within the human heart there is this great tendency to deny the fact that none of us have the promise of life on this earth tomorrow, or even for the next hour. With that in mind, it is probably the case that those who perished in the 2004 tsunami were probably going about their lives as most people do in the world; there was no sense of imminent danger; in most areas affected the weather was quite beautiful and they were just a few days away from entering into the dawn of a new year. All was well, and life seemed to be quite normal, and yet in one brief moment their lives had ended without much of a warning at all. Now, one year later, life goes on, a new year approaches and within the calm of daily life many are making their plans and New Year's resolutions for 2006 – *just like those who perished just last year*. I can assure you that when it comes to learning the lessons of life, if even through a calamity, we all tend to have a short memory and thus we too often live with the presumption of tomorrow; but such an attitude as this is very dangerous. The Bible warns us about such attitudes, as in the case of this exhortation from James chapter 4:

James 4:13-16: *13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." 14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes*

away. 15 Instead, you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that.” 16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

James reveals the true heart of mankind when he mimics those who say “today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there...” He refers to this *presumptuous living* (of which we are all prone to do) – “*boasting in...arrogance*” and then he calls it all “*evil*.” James wastes precious little time in getting to the very heart of our human weakness - we all tend to live presumptuously, assuming that tomorrow, next week, next month or next year will *certainly come*. However, James corrects such thinking by reminding us all of our frailty as humans, calling us a “vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes.” But James does more than just identify our tendency towards error; he offers us some very important medicine by pointing us to the necessity of having *genuine faith and trust in God*, for he says: “Instead, you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that.’” Yes: *If the Lord wills, we shall live*. Think about that for a moment. That is not the confession of an arrogant, presumptuous person, rather it is the humble cry of one who trusts the Lord and understands that all that we have in life, we have by the gift of God Himself (James 1:17). With this in mind, allow me to break from tradition for a moment and wish you, not a “Happy New Year,” but a “Happy New Day.” You see, while it isn’t sinful to make plans *per se*, it *is* sinful for us to presume upon the Lord that we will be able to fulfill those plans *in the future* (Proverbs 16:9). But instead of presuming in this manner, we ought to say “If the Lord wills, we shall live” and if He grants us another day of life, then we ought to give thanks and use every moment for His glory. So in view of this important truth from God’s Word, I do wish you a *Happy New Day* and offer you the following *New Day Resolution*: “behold, now is ‘THE ACCEPTABLE TIME,’ behold, now is ‘THE DAY OF SALVATION’” (2 Corinthians 6:2). Please remember, you don’t have the promise of tomorrow, and thus I ask you - what will you do with *this day* that has been granted to you as a gift from God? Call upon the Lord Jesus Christ *today* for the forgiveness of your sin and for eternal life and joy in Him. This I *can* assure you, that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord *will be saved* (Romans 10:9-13)! Pilgrim Bible Church, Pastor M. J. Beasley