All Things New

# In Christ

# (2 Kings 6:8-17)

Welcome to all of you today, thank you for joining us. Today we’re beginning a new message series entitled “All Things New” and I believe this is an important topic because many of us know intellectually that in Christ we have been made new but in a very real and practical sense this is a reoccurring challenge in our lives. In fact, some of you right now may be thinking, “I know I’m supposed to be new, but I don’t feel new this morning because of whatever” and you just fill in the blank. Maybe you wrestle with negative or impure thoughts or you’ve got some bad habits you just can’t get rid of. And you’ve prayed about it, you’ve tried, maybe even made a New Year’s resolution or two or three, but no matter what you do it just doesn’t seem to go away. You know that you’re new in Christ, but you don’t feel new, and so it’s like you’re stuck in this rut, stuck in the past, and trapped by all these feelings.

Now it’s important to remember that feelings are legitimate, but they’re not always based upon the truth. In fact, feelings are merely the conclusion, the emotional response of a person’s diagnosis or perception of internal and external stimuli. Therefore, feelings differ from one person to another, and so while we don’t want to discount feelings, just because we feel something doesn’t necessarily mean that it’s true. The point I’m trying to make is that we’re not changed by feeling differently about ourselves or our circumstances, we’re changed by the presence of God.

Now, some of you may not be feeling new, but let me read to you what God says in Isaiah chapter 43. He says in verse 19:

*“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland” (Isaiah 43:19).*

In other words, God is doing a new thing now, you may not see it, you may not understand what he’s doing, but he’s making a way where there is no way. He’s making streams in the desert. And I believe that God is doing new things in your life, in my life, and in this church.

You see, in spite of what you see, in spite of what you’re feeling, God has said that he’s doing a new thing; whether or not you can see it with your senses or not. And so, we want to pray like Paul prayed for the church in Ephesus, *“That the eyes of our hearts may be enlightened” (Ephesians 1:18)*; because this kind of sight doesn’t merely revolve around external stimuli, but it’s linked or connected to internal processing and divine revelation. This kind of sight will help you be alert in your private life, keep you on guard in certain places, and is how God intends to protect you in the next season of your life.

The problem is that many of us don’t recognize where our spiritual enemy is attacking before it’s too late, but if we would ask God to give us insight into the places of our lives where we’re most vulnerable, I believe we could eliminate many of the challenges in our lives. You see, some of us are struggling, we’re wrestling and fighting battles that could’ve been avoided if we’d listened to what was on the inside instead of responding to what was on the outside.

Now, there’s a great illustration of this in the Old Testament book of second Kings that I want to share with you. If you’d like to follow along in your Bibles, I’ll be reading from chapter 6 at verse 8 where it tells us,

*“Now the king of Aram was at war with Israel. After conferring with his officers, he said, "I will set up my camp in such and such a place." But the man of God sent word to the king of Israel: "Beware of passing that place, because the Arameans are going down there." So, the king of Israel checked on the place indicated by the man of God. Time and again Elisha warned the king so that he was on his guard in such places” (2 Kings 6:8-10).*

Elisha, the prophet of God, was warning the king about what God had revealed to him.

In this story, we’re going to discover the people of God coming to see and understand God in different ways, experiencing divine revelation as their understanding of him unfolds in this passage. In the same way, I’m believing that many of you will come to see God in a different way as you’re able to see the fulfillment of shadows that were manifested in Jesus Christ. You see, even now there are many things in our lives that are only a shadow of what God wants to reveal to us so that we’ll be equipped to walk victoriously through this year.

## 1. Forgiven

In Christ, God is making all things new, and so the first thing we need to see, recognize, and stand on by faith is that God’s Word says we’re forgiven from our past. This is a foundational truth to walking in the fullness of God’s grace, because the Bible says that if you’re in Christ, the old has gone and the new has come. In other words, what Jesus did on the cross was complete and sufficient, he satisfied the just judgment of God, and so everything about you is new whether you feel it or not.

The Bible says this very clearly in Ephesians chapter 1:

*“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace” (Ephesians 1:7).*

And so, no matter whether you feel forgiven or not, God’s Word says that if you’re in Christ, you’re forgiven. Romans chapter 8 takes it a step further and says:

*“There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).*

And so, if you’re in him, if you’re in Christ, if you’ve been forgiven, and if God doesn’t condemn you, maybe it’s time you started walking in his grace like never before?

You see, some of the battles you fought last year were because you were in places that you were never intended to be. And so, we need to be careful about where we go, because certain places cause us to become more vulnerable to guilt, shame, covetousness, envy, and feelings of condemnation. But God in his grace wants to protect you from all that, he wants to deliver you from that place.

That’s what we see happening here in second Kings, there were certain places where the enemy intended to attack the people of God, but the king of Israel had somebody on the inside who was leaking information to him. The Bible tells us in verse 11:

*“This enraged the king of Aram. He summoned his officers and demanded of them, "Will you not tell me which of us is on the side of the king of Israel?" "None of us, my lord the king," said one of his officers, "but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom" (2 Kings 6:11-12).*

Now, some of you are likely thinking that it sure would be nice to have somebody on the inside who could see into the future and warn you not to go there or don’t do that. But the truth is that Jesus promised that he would send the Counselor, that his Spirit would live in those who believe, and he said in John chapter 16 that when,

*“The Spirit of truth comes; he will guide you into all truth….and he will tell you what is yet to come” (John 16:13).*

And so, if you’re in Christ, his Spirit is in you telling you not to go there, don’t think that, or don’t do that. And if you’ll seek him and lean into him, the Holy Spirit will show you where you need to be on guard, because you do have that guy on the inside. In fact, there may be some of you here, if you’ll just give him the opportunity, you may be surprised how much more he has for you. You see, in Christ, God has completely forgiven you, and number two, the second thing he does is that he releases us from the darkness.

## 2. Released

Yet, there are many who are groping blindly in the darkness not realizing that they’ve been set free. In churches all over the world there are people believing that they’ve been forgiven, but they can’t stop thinking that way; or looking, tasting, touching or talking in ways that are inappropriate for the people of God. Many of us are burdened by the choices that we’ve made or the choices that other people have made, and those choices cause us to tremble under the weight. The load is too much and we feel like we’ll never be free, but in Christ we’ve been released. Jesus said in Isaiah chapter 61:

*“The Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners” (Isaiah 61:1).*

Now, intellectually, most of us know that our identity is defined by the price God paid for our forgiveness through Christ, but that’s exactly where a lot of us get tripped up. You see, we have this knowledge, this awareness of the things of God, but when we go home, we’re faced with the same temptations. You’ve got the knowledge, but you go home, and you find yourself tempted again. And so, your frustrated, your enraged by your circumstances, because you can’t stop doing whatever it is.

Elisha was giving the king information about where the enemy was going to attack, and I wonder if the Spirit of God is trying to tip you off, he’s trying to give you information about the spiritual attack ahead of you, but you keep going to those places and you’re defeated time and time again. Well, this is exactly the kind of situation that the king of Aram found himself in, he was at war with Israel, but time and time again his plans were spoiled. And so, when he discovered that there was a security leak, he was furious, and he determined to get rid of this guy. The Bible says in verse 13 that he released his officers saying:

*"Go, find out where he is so I can send men and capture him." The report came back: "He is in Dothan" (2 Kings 6:13).*

You see, the moment you begin to fulfill the purpose for which God created you the enemy will dispatch his officers. There are some of you who’ve had things happen to you that have made you question the call of God on your life. Others of you, maybe a few of you, the reason that you’ve had some of your problems is because you’re such a problem to the enemy. You see, because of the light you carry within you and the calling on your life, you yourself are a threat to the kingdom of darkness.

When the king heard where Elisha was, the Bible tells us in verse 14:

*“He sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night and surrounded the city. When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh, my lord, what shall we do?" the servant asked. (2 Kings 6:14-15).*

The king of Aram made an attempt to capture the man of God, he surrounded the city. Elisha’s servant seeing that they were surrounded, panicked wondering what to do. And I wonder if there are some of you here today who are struggling, you’re trying to do what’s right, you’re trying to obey God, but you feel like you’re surrounded and you’re wondering what to do. If you’re in that place and you’re feeling like giving up I want to assure you that the blessing of God is not proven by the absence of problems. You see, Elisha was giving the Word of the Lord to the people of God, he was warning them of an ambush and he was doing exactly what God wanted him to do, but he found himself surrounded by the enemy. And so, I just want to encourage you not to let the problems you’re facing cause you to doubt the presence of God, because number three, the Lord will strengthen you to do his will.

## 3. Strengthened

And so, when you find yourself disillusioned by life and disappointed because you’re surrounded by obstacles, remember that God has promised to never leave you nor forsake you. Elisha’s servant woke up to discover that they were surrounded by the enemy. As he came face-to-face with reality, he began to experience feelings of panic, and as he asked what to do, Elisha said,

*"Don't be afraid, those who are with us are more than those who are with them" (2 Kings 6:16).*

There are some of you here and your spiritual enemy has sent his officers looking for you because you’ve become a problem for him. Some of you are on the verge of breaking generational curses, you’re changing your family line forever, and you don’t need to be afraid because the Bible tells us,

*“The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).*

And so, when you find yourself disappointed by false expectations, disillusioned by your circumstances, and driven by your emotions, you need to stop and listen to what the Spirit of God would say. You see, what the enemy says about you is irrelevant, because God said that he’s making all things new. And you’ve been forgiven of your past, released from the darkness, and you’ve been strengthened against the enemy’s attacks. In fact, you’ve got somebody on the inside and the Holy Spirit’s going to show you where you’re vulnerable to attack and help you avoid some of the battles you fought last year. And even now God is going to open your eyes so that you can see just how big of a problem you are to your spiritual enemy.

Look at what Elisha does for his servant in verse 17:

*"He prayed, "O Lord, open his eyes so he may see." Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha (2 Kings 6:17).*

You see, the Holy Spirit will show us things in the spiritual realm. We have the inside scoop because we have the Spirit of God living inside of us revealing to us the schemes of the enemy as the Bible says:

*“God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries…" (Daniel 2:47).*

And so, just like the king of Israel, we’re going to avoid some of those battles by staying away from some places, because we’re not unaware of the enemy schemes. We’re going to let go of the need to prove things to ourselves or to others, and even trying to make up for things in the past. Instead, we’re going to put on the new self, our new nature in Christ, so that when we go out, when we leave church today, we’re going to be different; not continuing that cycle, that downward spiral of habits that we can’t break and those fears that we can’t seem to escape.

Knowing that God is making all things new, now it’s up to you and I, because what really needs to happen for you to change is what the Bible tells us in Romans chapter 12.

*“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind…” (Romans 12:2).*

And so, that means that you do things differently than the world, you create new habits, renewing your mind. In other words, you’ve got to do things differently and you’ve got to do them differently for a longtime until those pathways in your mind that are causing you to do the things you don’t want to do are redirected in a new and positive direction. Whether it’s an addiction to pornography, or a substance, food, gossip, or even judging people who struggle with pornography, substances, food, or gossip, but you actually become new in Christ and as the Bible says you,

*“Put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator” (Colossians 3:10).*

Every day and in every moment, you put on the new self, because as you are walking in Christ, living in Christ, the Holy Spirit does the renewing. And so, in Christ we’re not just made better, but by God’s power we’re made brand-new, because he’s renewing us, and he’s making all things new. Let’s pray together.

Pastor John Talcott

Christ’s Community Church

303 West Lincoln Avenue

Emmitsburg, MD 21727

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(301) 447-4224

[www.cccaog.org](http://www.cccaog.org)

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