All Things New – Part Two

# In You

We’re already in the second week of the New Year and I’m guessing that some of you are probably ready to start over already. I know that the year just started, but for many of you the New Year’s resolutions are already forgotten and sometimes it just feels like we need a second chance. In fact, as I was thinking about this, I was reflecting on the reality that we design computers with this great ability to restart, flushing out all the random, unimportant, and temporary data slowing things down. And so, if you don’t like the way things are going, if you don’t like the way the computer is performing, the first thing that you’re instructed to do is what?

You restart the computer, right?

Well, the good news is that if we start going the wrong way, when it comes to God, we’re not stuck on that path. Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived, said that there are things that you just can’t understand, because you just don’t know, it’s a mystery, there’s a process that’s unseen. In Ecclesiastes chapter 11 he said this way,

*“As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother's womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things” (Ecclesiastes 11:5).*

In other words, Solomon said, there’s a process that is going on behind the scenes that can’t be explained, that can’t be identified, because it’s an unseen work of God. And so, there is a process of growth, the process of the body forming, that got started as God breathed life into it.

Today, as you and I come to know Jesus, trusting him as our Lord and Savior, he breathes new life into us. You see, anything God breathes into comes to life, and so, whether it’s dirt, dead bones, yesterday’s resolutions, or last year’s dreams, he actually gives us a brand-new start because he’s making all things new.

In fact, this scripture has been our theme and here’s what the Bible tells us in Isaiah chapter 43. The Lord 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).*

And so, you and I can be reassured that no matter how far we get off the path, no matter how bad things look, no matter how much we’ve messed up, no matter what we’ve done, that God is making “All Things New”. As we come to him through his Son Jesus Christ, walking in Christ, he’s doing a new thing in you and me and all of the old things are gone. In fact, the Bible tells us in Hebrews chapter 8, that God says,

*“I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more" (Hebrews 8:12).*

And so, if anyone is in Christ, if his Spirit is in you, he won’t ever bring that sin up again because it was dealt with on the cross and he has hurled all of our iniquities into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19). In fact, Psalm chapter 103 is just so descriptive, so wonderful, because it tells us in verse 12,

*“As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us” (Psalms 103:12).*

This is incredibly good news because this means that all of our sin, all of our old life is gone, and a new life has begun. All things are brand-new, we have a clean slate in Christ, and very literally we get a second chance at life.

Today, if you find yourself needing a new start, if you need to reboot, the good news is that God is able to do so much more than you ever imagined. He can take your greatest trial, your burden or that tragedy, and he bring something good out of it. In fact, the Bible tells us this in Romans chapter 8, verse 28,

*“That in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).*

And so, you may find yourself in a situation that is so painful or a circumstance that just seems so wrong, but if you will give it to God, he can take whatever it is and turn it into something good, something that fulfills his purpose.

In fact, you may remember the story of Joseph in the Old Testament. How his brothers sold him into slavery, where he was falsely accused of a crime he didn’t commit, and so he was put in prison, but through this whole chain of events God elevated him to second in command over all of Egypt. And so, it was through this series of really bad and painful events in Joseph’s life, that when a great famine came over the whole land, that his brothers come to Egypt looking for food. When they arrived, they came face-to-face with their brother and they humbled themselves before him pleading for mercy. Now, Joseph, after years and years of rejection and many great trials says something that is so insightful. In Genesis chapter 50, he tells his brothers,

*“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives” (Genesis 50:20).*

And so, with great mercy, Joseph reassured them and spoke kindly to them saying that he would provide for them and their children.

This week in America, many churches are celebrating the sanctity of life and we join with them praying for the saving of many lives; because the Bible teaches that each individual is known by God from before the creation of the world. And so, it’s our belief in the Assemblies of God that all life exists for God’s purpose, that each human life is equally sacred, and therefore must be preserved and nurtured. And so, even though there’s much debate on both sides of this issue in our nation, we believe that life as we know it begins at the moment of conception. And one day we’ll be able to look back on this very difficult time in the history of our country recognizing that God can bring good even out of the worst things that we go through in life.

## 1. CREATED FOR PURPOSE

You see, even now, God is doing new things in you because number one, he created you anew in Christ for his purpose. But the reality is that we have a spiritual enemy, the devil, whom Jesus calls the father of lies, who is whispering lies to us over and over again causing us to doubt our self-worth. And yet, our value isn’t based upon what we he says or what we do, but upon the very fact that we were created in the image of the living God. Therefore, when you struggle with feeling like you don’t measure up or feeling like you’re just not good enough the truth is that you are exactly who God created you to be.

This is important to understand because some of us have come to believe the lies of the enemy without realizing how much God believes in us. Many of us have a deep longing within us for somebody to like us, somebody to follow us, somebody to believe in us, because we just don’t believe in ourselves. And so, I want you to open your heart so that you can hear what the Spirit of God is saying to you today.

*“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful; I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” (Psalm 139:13-16).*

Now, you may know that intellectually, but I want you to receive that in your innermost being and understand that God knew you before one day came to be. He saw your unformed body in the secret place and he created you for a purpose. In fact, the Bible tells us that,

*“We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10).*

Another translation says that we’re God’s masterpiece, created anew in Christ Jesus, and that spiritual truth applies to all of us. You are God’s masterpiece and all of the skills, the talents, and gifts that he’s given to you are to accomplish the good works which he prepared in advance for you to do.

Now, I know that there are some of you who are likely thinking, “Well, you don’t know me because I’m certainly not a masterpiece.” But let me just remind you that the God who created you, the God who knows you intimately, created you for a purpose and said that you are fearfully and wonderfully made. And so, in Isaiah chapter 45, every objection to your worth, every argument about your purpose is dismissed by your Creator who poses a question in the form of a simple illustration. In verse nine God asks:

*"Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?” (Isaiah 45:9).*

And I pray that the truth of God’s Word would resonate deeply within you, because even though your enemy is whispering lies, you can trust the fact that you’re created anew in Christ for his purpose. And therefore, you are exactly who God created you to be. In fact, in Isaiah chapter 43, God said,

*“I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name, you are mine” (Isaiah 43:1).*

*And so, if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:29).*

## 2. CHOSEN INSTRUMENT

And then, number two, in Christ you are his chosen instrument and this truth should impact all of us in some way on a very personal level, because many, if not all of us have experienced some form of rejection in life. Most of us have faced the pain of feeling like we’re just not good enough, or that we don’t match up, and so, to acknowledge that you’ve been created for purpose and that you are God’s chosen instrument is liberating. In fact, you are exactly who God needs you to be whether you feel worthy or qualified or not because the Bible tells us in first Corinthians chapter 1 that:

*"God chose the foolish things of the word to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things, the things that are not to nullify the things that are" (1 Corinthians 1:27-28).*

And so, you may lay your head down at night, tossing and turning, feeling like you’re not enough, maybe even wondering why you’re here, and you’re just wrestling in your mind with all of these different thoughts, but the truth is that God chose you because you’re exactly who he created you to be.

You see, you may feel like you’re the underdog, the one that everybody else overlooked, like David and Goliath, but God doesn’t see you that way. The Bible says in first Peter, chapter 2:

*“You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God” (1 Peter 2:9).*

And this is so good, because we all love stories about the underdog, stories like the young shepherd boy taking down the giant Goliath. We love it when God empowers somebody who everybody else overlooks, but we often exclude ourselves as a likely candidate even though the Bible says that we are included in Christ.

You see, when it comes to those who’ve been chosen, we often prefer to think of those great heroes of the faith. In our minds we like to set those great men and women of faith up on pedestals, like majestic idols, presented as some kind of unattainable standard that we could never hope to achieve. But one of the things I love about the Bible is that it doesn’t allow us to create idols of the men and women of God. In fact, it is inclusive, and God levels the playing field telling us,

*“If you keep yourself pure, you will be a special utensil (or instrument) for honorable use. Your life will be clean and you will be ready for the master to use you for every good work” (2 Timothy 2:21).*

And so, purity is important, the apostle Paul says, you keep yourself pure, you be a chosen instrument, not because you’re so great, but because God is so good.

Hebrews chapter 11, tells us about the faith of many great men and women in the Old Testament. It talks about how by faith Noah did this and by faith Abraham did that. On and on it goes throughout the chapter telling us about the faith of Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and oh yeah, I certainly can’t leave out the prostitute Rahab. You see, God chose them for their faith, not because of their perfection.

In fact, the Bible tells us all about the failures, the character defects, and the weaknesses of Noah, Abraham, Moses, or David, but that’s not the point. The point is that they were chosen instruments who were honored because of their faith, but what we tend to do is we want to elevate them to some kind of superheroes that never sinned. But that couldn’t be further from the truth, because they were chosen instruments just like you and I. By faith they were made holy and useful to God, prepared for every good work. And so, God is making all things new because we are created for purpose, we are chosen instruments, and then number three, we are born of the Spirit.

## 3. BORN OF THE SPIRIT

In other words, God is empowering us, and this is so important, because there are some of you right now who would love to start over. There are some of you right now, who for you this is the best news ever, because you need a new thing in your faith, or in a relationship, or in your finances. I proclaim to you today that we serve a God who makes a way when there is no way and he tells us in Isaiah,

*“I am doing a new thing” (Isaiah 43:19).*

And so, when you can’t see a way, when it seems like all the doors are closed, we serve a God who can make a way in the desert, creating streams in the wasteland.

This is just so practical, because there are some of you right now, you may have hit a place in your life where you are at a dead end. In fact, you don’t see any way to get through what you’re dealing with, you’ve lost all hope, and yet that is exactly the type of situation where God works best.

In fact, in John’s gospel, there is a story about a Pharisee named Nicodemus. He’s from one of the most well-behaved groups of people in all of Jerusalem, a group that strictly followed 613 commandments, but John chapter 3 tells us that he went under the cover of night to see Jesus. In verse one it says,

*“Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."*

*“In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"*

In verse five, Jesus answered, *"I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again' (John 3:1-7).*

And so, Jesus is talking about new beginnings, a restart, a spiritual new birth. In other words, just as you were born physically, you must also be born again spiritually, born of the Spirit.

Nicodemus came to Jesus because he felt the weight of his sin, he knew that he was unable to fulfill the law, that perfection was unattainable, and so he came to Jesus hoping to find what had thus far escaped him in all of his religiosity. What he discovered and we discover too is that God is not just asking you to live a better life, but through Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to experience a brand-new life. And so, God is making all things new in you, it’s a work of God, and as you’re born of the Spirit, what was once unattainable is now realized.

As we close, the good news is that although God accepts you as you are, he’ll never leave you as you are, he’ll empower you and make all things new. What I love is that when you invite Christ into your life, when he gets involved in your life, faith begins growing, it begins increasing, and God always honors people for their faith and not their perfection. You see, faith results in righteousness, faith empowers you to act, and maybe you’re not who you want to be just yet, but when Jesus steps in, things change, because he’s making all things new.

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