

NEW BEGINNINGS

MONDAY – Looking Back and Leaping Forward



1 Corinthians 11: 23 – 24 *The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”*

**Memories are the key not to the past but to the future
Corrie Ten Boom**

There is power in remembering. Our ability to look back can empower us to move forward.

When you are in the season of: Where do I go? What do I do? Or you stand on the brink of this new year needing direction. Or maybe you are stuck waiting. REMEMBER that God’s presence is still with you.

At Jesus’ last meal with His disciples He instructs them “....do this in REMEMBRANCE of me.” He knows that we need prompting and reminding and so gives us symbols to help us do this. Why is it so important to REMEMBER? Because we need to constantly remind ourselves that Jesus is present and active in our lives.

Remembering what God has already done for us spurs us on!
Remembering some of Jesus’

promises to us, gives us the courage to leap forward:

- ❖ “I will never leave you, nor forsake you” (Heb 13: 5b).
- ❖ So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. (Is 41: 10)
- ❖ “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.” (2Cor 12: 9)
- ❖ I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, do not fear; I will help you. (Is 41: 13)
- ❖ “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. (Matt 11: 28)
- ❖ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you. (Ps 32: 8)



Prayer: Lord help me to remember Your love, guidance, comfort and peace and may I take that into the days that lie ahead. AMEN

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9oCNwIA6xLc>

TUESDAY – The hidden future



Proverbs 3: 5 & 6 *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

Recently I came across this prayer which was penned on the eve of 2020:

“Lord Jesus, thank You that Your love is a fixed point I can depend on in an ever-changing world. Keep me steady, stable and loving every day of 2020. Amen.”

When the author wrote those words, they had no idea what the world was about to enter. No idea of “an ever-changing world.” It was a prayer to commit the next year into God’s hands. Except on Old Year’s Night 2019 nobody had an inclination of the ensuing chaos that was about to hit the world!

That is the thing with life. We have no idea what lies ahead. Each one of us WILL face crises in this life. *I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this*

world you will have trouble....” (John 16: 33). We don’t know when or what. But we do know that we have an anchor in our God. We need to grow in our relationship with Him so that when the crisis hits, we know exactly what to do.

My father’s lesson to me about swimming in the sea was: when the big wave comes, don’t panic. Dive under it and let it pass over you. I needed to be prepared. And so too when life’s big waves come, cling to your Lord until it passes. Trust Him and lean on Him with all your heart.

Read, pray, study and fellowship. And so let us prepare for the hidden future of 2022, resolving to grow in faith and love for God. To be prepared!



Prayer: Lord, life is so unknown. I have no idea of what I have to face this year. Keep me strong and steady in You. AMEN

WEDNESDAY – Reach out for things ahead



Philippians 3: 14 *I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

In these words, so fitting for the new year, the apostle Paul testified that his goal was to grow into all God called him to be*. As *The Message* says, “*I’m not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me....I’ve got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I’m off and running, and I’m not turning back.*”

Paul shared an essential truth about pursuing God's goals: "I forget about the things behind me and reach out for the things ahead of me." The process of growing spiritually focuses on what is to come, not what lies behind. Yes, we have to remember God's promises, but we can't just look back.

Reflection:

- Is anything from your past haunting you, or defining you in the present? If so, ask God to help you let it go. Focus your energy on living the year ahead with God, not the things (bad or good) in the past.

William Barclay said Paul's word for reaching out "describes the man who is going flat out for the finish."** Do you want 2022 to be the year that you decide to go flat out for living the life God calls you to?

Reflection:

What choices can you make in this New Year that will empower you to reach out for what God has planned for you?



Prayer: Lord Jesus, make it more true of me this year that “the goal I pursue is the prize of God’s upward call” in You. Keep my eyes on the prize of the ultimate goal of life in Your kingdom. AMEN.

* Acknowledgements to Church of the Resurrection

** William Barclay, *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians* (Revised Edition). Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975, p. 67.

THURSDAY – The more excellent way



1 Corinthians 12: 31 *But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.*

Whenever we set out to do something, there is usually more than one way of doing it. In an extreme example: if you wish to get to Durban, the quickest way is to fly; the cheapest way is to walk! The decision depends on certain factors which need to be weighed up. This process applies to almost everything we do in life. What are our options?

We all have to face the fundamental question: How are you going to live life? It is sad if we just live life from one day to the next without giving the HOW serious thought. The life which we have been given is precious and there is only one chance at it.

Reflection:

How do you want to live life? What will be the legacy you leave behind?

In the verse above Paul instructs us to seek the gifts that build up the church and love and encourage people. And so pursue a more excellent way. Into the chaos of the world, comes the voice of Jesus: "I am the way." And if we are listening, we begin to want another way of looking at our own life, ourselves and others. The way of love, truth, righteousness, justice and peace. The more excellent way.

Some are walking that way – even if not perfectly.

Some have let go of it.

Some are very new to it and;

Some don't see the need.

What are your options?

Be challenged this new year to do life in a more excellent way.



Prayer: Lord, let Your Spirit flow through me this year. Help me to commit to a deeper more meaningful way of doing life. Take my life and mould it Lord. AMEN

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AxB9VH3cCN4>

FRIDAY – Do you know?



Luke 2: 38 *“I am the Lords’ servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.*

New beginnings can be exciting and a time of hope. They can herald new opportunities or challenges. New adventures. But new beginnings can also bring apprehension and worry. The unknown future brings anxiety about leaving behind what is familiar and comfortable.

Mary was part of something new. Jesus’ birth brought about a new spiritual birth. The Messiah. He would bring deliverance throughout the world. Did Mary know this? All she knew that her life was about to change and it would be really really hard!

Mary, did you know that your baby boy would save our sons and daughters? Did you know that your baby boy has come to make you new? This child that you delivered, will soon deliver you.

We do not know what the future holds. We do not know what we may achieve or what we may miss. Mary didn’t know anything of the greatness of the child she bore. BUT she was faithful to her Lord. We have the choice to accept God’s direction in our life, our forge our own way. But whatever our choice, we will live the consequences.

Mary did you know your baby boy is Lord of all creation?

Do not miss the greatness that God may offer you. You do not know. But one thing is sure: God loves you and offers you more than you could hope for. As you examine your heart this new year, may faith lead you because you just don’t know the greatness that may await.



Prayer: Lord, lead me into what I do not know but what is known to you. May my faith grow and strengthen this year and I trust that You have my life in Your hands. AMEN

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1H1-scfD1s>