

Getting ready for a new chapter

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...Bibles this morning. I believe this is a crowd that does. Let's run over to Isaiah. Go to Isaiah 43. I want to read two verses, we will pray and ask God for his help this morning and I pray that this will be just the beginning of great things that will take place this year 2012. Once you get there let's all stand and it is Isaiah 43 and verse from 18 and verse number 19. The Bible says, God's Word says this:

Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.
Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know
it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.¹

The Bible says, the Lord says, "Behold, I will do a new thing."

I want to talk this morning this little thought, "Getting ready for a new chapter."

Father, thank you for your many wonderful blessings. Thank you for all the songs that were sung on this glorious Sunday morning and I pray, God, that the songs have tendered our hearts. I pray, God, that the songs have brought us into the mindset of worship, but also, God, a mindset of listening to the Word of God as it is being presented going forth. And I pray, God, that your Word will stir our hearts. I pray, God, for a Word {?}. I pray God your Word would renew us. I pray God that your Word would do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Free us from that which tries to bind us up. Free us from the thoughts that consume our minds. I pray, God, that your Word would cleanse us on the inside and the outside, making us vessels that are meant for your use. I pray, God, that this morning your Holy Spirit would speak directly to individual hearts. And I pray, God, we would respond by saying not, "No," but respond by saying, "Yes. Yes. Yes." I want more of Jesus. Yes. I want a new chapter in my life. Yes. I want to change. And with that, God, we will shout, "Hallelujah." I pray, God for some of your Holy Spirit. Guide my speech. Guide my actions and all that I do. I pray, God, that you would be the great orchestrator and for that, God, I personally praise your sweet name. Help that soul that might be here tonight or this morning that is lost. They don't know Jesus Christ as Savior. Yes, they can spell his name. Yes, they can pronounce his name. Yes, they can read his name. But, yet, his name has not been tattooed in our hearts. His name has not, Father, been etched on the depths of our soul. But I pray, God, this would be that

¹ Isaiah 43:18-19.

morning when {?} all things become new and they will become a new creature in Jesus Christ. May God help those saints of God, those who are blood bought and born again, that are in a struggle, that are in a dog fight. Some are hurting by men's side. And I pray, God, you will come by and heal that hurt. I pray and ask God just for peace to that disturbed soul and that God will shine again. Hallelujah. Help us and we will stop here, Father, for it is your Son's name we pray. Not a weak Jesus, but mighty Jesus. Amen. Amen. Hallelujah.

You may be seated. Getting ready for a new chapter.

Every book has a chapter. The Bible consists of how many books? Somebody. Sixty-six books. How many chapters? What did you say? One thousand, one hundred and eighty-nine. Bless you.

My dear friends, this Bible is full of chapters, but also our life is full of chapters. Chapter one, the day you and I were born into this world. And there will also be a final chapter that will be that chapter that is written down here, anyway, that chapter that is written that will say this is the close of our earthly life. All of us have a beginning chapter and all of us have an ending chapter. But each chapter before it comes is new. Each chapter is—I am about to have a spell—is unknown. Each chapter, my dear friends, you and I have no clue about because we have never read the chapter yet, because the chapter has yet to be written.

This chapter in 2012 can be a chapter of rejoicing, a chapter of victory or it could be a chapter of defeat. And a lot of that depends on our response to the direction that God gives us.

I don't know about you, but I want 2012 to be a great chapter in my life. I want this year to be a year, my dear friends, that I will look back at the end of and say, "Wow, look how God made himself known. Look how God moved in a tremendous way."

I don't know about you, but I am excited about this chapter. I almost wish {?} this morning on the keeping out of jail in 2012, amen? Hallelujah. {?} but that jail today, that prison of our mind, amen. Some of us need to stay out of that jail this coming year, amen. But nonetheless for us today this moment the Bible says {?} verse number 19:

"Behold, I will do a new thing."²

That word new in this verse here means fresh.

How many of you like stale food? Nobody. But we like fresh food. The Bible says here, my dear friends, this verse is, hey, I will do a new thing and fresh thing and that word fresh has some synonyms that mean this: new or not previously known. God is saying to his people, "I am about to do a new thing in your life." And I began to look at that word thing. I thought to myself, our new chapter in the people of God's life, the word chapter

² Isaiah 43:19.

has the synonyms of episode or phase or stage, our new stage in life, a new episode in your life, a new phase, something new, something that is different.

Do you know, by the way, that when you and I got saved we became something that was new? We became new creatures. Look what the Bible says in 2 Corinthians. We are talking about back here. But look in 2 Corinthians chapter five verse number 17 and {?} this verse, pastor? Because, my dear friends, some of us may think we have entered into a new life, but yet we have not entered into a new life {?} has not happened yet. Verse 17 of chapter five says this:

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”³

And that word new, again, in both of these verses here, both of these verses and here and in verse 17 means a freshness, a freshness.

Some of you had a call the other day or a message the other day as I am cleaning my house out. I am getting rid of some stuff. Get some old stuff out of here. And I thought to myself, that is awesome. And I thought to myself, you know what? There is some folks, though, that is getting some of that old stuff and putting it back in the house. They got rid of it a long time ago. They did some spring cleaning, getting stuff out. But as time has progressed that {?} some of these things back into the house at one time that they have thrown away. I wonder how many of us hit that category. At one time our heart, life, mind, soul and body were sold out to a living God. But now it ain't.

Eat, breathe, sleep Jesus. But not today. {?} it is because we have brought some old things back in. Well, this is ok now. I can bring this back. But when you throw stuff away do you go back out in the garbage and pick it up? Do you go back down the alley, my dear friends, go into those trash bins? Why, I am glad they didn't go too far. Get out of that garbage can. If you throw it away, let it stay away. Don't bring it back into your life. Don't bring it back into your heart. Don't bring it back into your mind.

For some of us that is why we are unstable. Think back a little bit to when you first received him, that excitement, that joy, huh? But now it ain't like that. Old stuff mess you up if you are not careful. The Bible says:

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”⁴

How many of us need to get freshness back in our life again? Well, the Bible tells us back where we were in Isaiah, the Lord says to the children of Israel as well as flows down to us:

“Behold, I will do a new thing.”⁵

³ 2 Corinthians 5:17.

⁴ Ibid.

But {?} new thing, first of all, you need to forget the past. The Bible says in verse number 18:

“Remember ye not the former things.”⁶

That word remember means to not mention or think of. That mess some of us up. Get to thinking on some of that stuff. Now I mean I used to run them streets. I used to party and all that kind of stuff. I did all that. And sometimes I looked in some of that new... especially {?} like a wedding or a reception or something like that and it starts taking me back down 1982, 83, 84, the 80s, take you back. You say, “Yeah, I am already there. Oh yeah.”

You say, {?} but, yeah. Whoa, yeah. Or you break out, “That is my song.” My. And then before you know it you are {?} on YouTube and stuff and you are going to back along them {?} yeah. {?}. yeah, all that stuff.

And don't misunderstand me all secular music is not bad. And all {?} but what happens, though, sometimes it just starts pulling us more and more into that direction and it is to the direction we need to be going into. You understand what I am saying. I mean, you know, I mean, hey. We get some {?} pork... pork loin? Is that the one? What is that meat we had the other day? That is supposed to be not too bad for you. You told me. It is better than some. It is less of a better cut, but you get to eating that and you say, “Man, it would be good to have a nice pork chop, fried preferably with salt and pepper and some of the sole seasoning and some of that Cajun seasoning and that tenderizer, glory to God.” And before you know it we might be {?} before you know it, there you go, eating pork chops. And for me the next thing you know, I will {?} I will be sitting there, “Oh, my head.”

{?} what's wrong? Why are you here? {?} I am good. {?} say that pork chop and several pork chops.

But the Bible says, my dear friends:

“Remember ye not the former things.”⁷

The past things. Let's not focus on that stuff. Let's not mention it {?}.

“...neither consider the things of old.”⁸

So, in other words, first we need to forget some things. In other words, don't dwell on even this. Don't dwell on past failures. Don't dwell on past defeats. Because sometimes

⁵ Isaiah 43:19.

⁶ Isaiah 43:18.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

we {?} well, we lost there. Well, we might {?}. My dear friends, we focus on the past {?} dwell on them, they may hinder you from going forward.

Now don't misunderstand, though. You can use them to help you to go forward, too, though. But not dwelling on them to the sense that cause you to {?} that defeated type of a spirit. He says here:

“Remember ye not the former things, neither consider...”⁹

That means to regard even a feel the things of old, the ancient. But, in other words, to do something different, though, forget the past, but follow the Lord into the future.

The Bible says in verse number 19. He wants us to follow him because he says:

“Behold, I will do...”¹⁰

The word behold means see. So he wants us to see something. He wants us to look at something. He wants us to look at him, my dear friends, but also look at what he is about to do. He says, “Behold, look, see, I want you to see something, I, not you, but I will do. I will accomplish. I will make a new thing, a fresh thing.”

{?} fresh {?} previously known. It is going to blow your mind. Some of that our mind is blown in 2012. Some of us had our mind blown in 2011. You are talking {?} they were overwhelmed at the folk that helped them when they had that fire just a month ago. It has only been a little bit over a month ago now. Folks pouring out. Why {?} I didn't know people would do this kind of stuff to help you. God will blow your mind, my dear friends. And I have a sneaking suspicion that God wants to blow some minds in 2012. But in order to do that we can't focus on the past, but, my dear friends, {?} him into the future. See, I know that is among other things he wants to show us.

“Behold, I will do a new thing.”¹¹

And then watch this. {?} and then he says:

“...now it shall spring forth.”¹²

I had to look that up? The word spring forth means to grow or bud. It says this new thing it will bud. It will grow. But things that grow have to be watered. Does not the Bible tell us that it is the water of the Word? The Word, my dear friends, is like water. But it is also seed. The Word is also seed. But, my dear friends, what lives in this regard here, we are going into take that water, take that Word and pour it over what God has said, that his Word again, that seed. And then just watch it start to grow. Watch things start to

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Isaiah 43:19.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

materialize, things we have never seen before, things we have not known before. Perhaps we read about it in somebody else's biography, but now, my dear friends, it is being placed in the chapter of our life, recorded in our book for others to read.

As we were celebrating the life of our {}, Penny's dad and Mrs. Marsha's husband, as we began to celebrate his life what did we start doing? We started going over chapters of his life and moments in his life, the {} chapter that he was involved in and how he first met {}. He was a 6-4, right? Six foot four. He was a big man, 6-4, big man. And Bill was about 4-5, something around there. And he said when he met him for the first time, come here for a minute. I mean, you ain't 6-4. We will pretend you are. And he said that he met Penny's dad for the first time he was staying over there because I believe you were about to have Ken in the hospital. And so they had dropped Billy. They put them both together. They had Billy over at their house and then they had David at somebody else's house. Yeah, very smart. {}

We have got to move on her. But anyway so when Billy was about... who is five here? Give me a five year old. Stephan, come up for a minute. He said he was like Stephan, five years old. But now he was saying, now imagine that he is not 6-4, but imagine him being 6-4. And when he is seeing him for the first time Billy just freaked out. And there was not a {}. He {} I mean, he was wanting to get out of there because he had met somebody that was huge. He had met somebody that was big, somebody, my dear friends, that was blowing his mind. And when he met him it caused him to be afraid, but at the same time he found out that her dad was a gentle giant. He was a part of that chapter in Roger's life. Thank you. And God is writing chapters in our life. And he is saying, "I want to grow something in your life. I want to do something big in your life. In this chapter of your life I want to do something that is going to blow your mind."

Now listen. Now it shall spring forth, it shall grow, it shall bud. And then he has another break here. He says, "Shall ye not know it?" In other words, my friends, you are going to know it when God is doing it. {}

My wife said {} you can walk around like {} because sometimes I am here physically. I will be on the floor. {} in Florida out on a boat somewhere and laid out on the beach, you know, just soaking in some sun, getting a nice tan. I mean, I be in a... you all didn't catch the tan part. But not the rest of it. {} I am going to do something new. I am going to do, write a new chapter in your life, something that is fresh and you will know it. You will know {} second place. You {} wow. Look what God is doing.

Well, God is doing something friends. You will know about it. But not only that, he says here, I want to give you something else. {} And he says, "Not only that, I will in this chapter of your life, I will even also make a way, a road, a course in the wilderness, in the desert."

You have to find your place, perhaps in 2012 where you find yourself in a desert place, but God says in the midst of that desert I am going not give you a road to travel down to help you to get through that desert in your life.

Now you {?} right now, but if you have ever seen a desert. {?} which way do you go? I mean it is not like there is... it is like it is a desert. It is all sand. It is all a big old desert, but if you hit that interstate that runs through the desert, you say, "I know if I stay on this particular interstate it is going to take me to a destination." So what God is saying, my dear friends, is he is going to put an interstate in the midst of your desert. God said, "I am strong here. This is the way south. This is the way north. Get you on this road right here and it will lead you through the desert, the wilderness in your life." But if you ain't careful, you will try to make your own tracks and get lost and start seeing mirages. You see water there and there ain't no water there. And God says, "You get on my road. I am going to lead you there."

He says this. I will even make a way, a road, a course in the wilderness in the desert. And then he says, "Not only that, and rivers in the desert." That word rivers there means a stream. Frequently it means prosperity. That means growth. Spring has water. Water causes growth. He says, "That is going to be growth in the midst of that desert." I am going to put some things in that desert that is going to help you to grow. There were things in your life last year that has helped you to grow.

One thing about Heather, she got saved in 2010, though. It was November or... what was that night? September? September of 2010, but then there were some things that happened in 2011 that has helped her to grow in the midst of that {?}. God gave her some things to drink that helped her to grow, to help her to make it through that desert.

My dear friends, God is going to... no matter how dark the place gets, no matter how solitary the place might seem, {?} I will put a stream right in the midst of that desert.

But now you know we do have choices. We can either decide to follow that road. We can decide to follow him as he {?} to drink or we can't see no way. I am going to do it my way. I like what brother Brad told that lady that was a witch. You know, she was debating whether... she called him up. She wanted to meet with him. He is sitting there talking with her. I believe this was Starbucks. I believe it was. He is talking to her and she is saying why she believes this... why she doesn't believe that and he finally told her, "How is it working for you?" He says, "You called me. I didn't call you."

Listen, my dear friends. If something is working for you, why in the world are you calling somebody else and say, "I don't believe that. I don't believe that." Well, ok. What you are doing is working for you. What are you calling me? You know why she called him, don't you? Because it wasn't working for her.

We are {?} that she is saved and born again. She is leading a Bible study down in South Carolina, hallelujah. I was watching one of the sermons and while he was preaching gave that illustration. She was sitting out there in the audience and she waved her hand out there. She was embarrassed, but she waved a hand out there. But I will tell you what, my dear friends. We have got a God that is real. And we have got a God that will make a way in desert places. He will give us things to drink out in the midst of the desert. Why is

it? Why does God do all of this? Because God is writing a new chapter in your life. God is doing a new thing in your life.

The questions we are left or are you satisfied with the old thing? Now if you are satisfied with the old life, then this message won't help you. But if you are not satisfied with the old same old, same old, my dear friends, say, "Wait a minute. Hey. There is a God who wants to give me a fresh start, a God who wants something new in my life, a God that wants to write a new chapter in my heart."

But will we follow? It is a choice we have all got to make. Every person has to make this choice themselves. God isn't going to make you, because he says, "Whosoever will," if you want to. {?}

Come here {?}. Where is little Jack? Come here, little Jack. {?} Come right here {?}. Get in a single file line. There you go. Come here for a second. Yeah. {?}.

{?} Why are you following? Why are you following? {?} Why are you following? {?} You are following me. That is the first thing I learned in my life. This is hard. {?}

You know why you all was following me, because I asked you to. I said, "You all come follow me." And one took off. The rest {?} and you all followed. You all didn't have to follow me. {?} you all did a good job. {?}.

Now after the service {?}, ok? But they had a choice to either follow me or not follow me and they chose to follow. They went everywhere I went. I picked up the pace, they picked up the pace, too. Now they all need to go and have a cardiac testing. But this is {?} us.

We can either follow Christ in 2012 or we don't have to follow Christ in 2012. This is your decision. This is your choice. Nobody is going to make you do nothing. {?} make me {?}. Some of us need to be like {?} That was lady. That was our {?} whatever he was. {?}

Now she is {?} she is going to slap me {?}. But some of us {?} we are like, "God, {?}." And God does have a way. {?} and believe it or not, if you are blood bought and born again, you are probably coming not God and he says he will follow me. You don't want to follow... it is your choice, but he will get your attention. He is going to get your attention.

{?} and just come follow me. {?} I mean this is... {?} I mean, listen. Because {?} amen? {?} I am simply saying this. We all need to get ready for a new chapter in our life. This is a new chapter in 2012, a brand new chapter and God wants to fill that chapter with victory after victory. Now also remember if there is going to be victories that means there will be battles. You are going to have battles. But you want to win you have got to follow him.

I have one question and two statements. The first question is this. Are you ready for a new chapter in your life? The second one is a statement. Forget, but learn from the previous chapter. And then, lastly, let's not repeat the same failures that we had in 2011.

Now here is your decision.

Father, thank you for you many wonderful blessings. I thank you, Lord, for the tenderness, the {} present morning and I pray, God, just for that, but your Holy Spirit will reward them greatly and first off {} as they come and talk to you in a few moments in prayer. I pray, God, their prayers will not only be sent toward heaven, but also I pray that response is already on its way. I pray and ask God that you would help us as we begin a new chapter in 2012. This is the first day of 2012. And, God, it thrills my soul, Father, to see so many of your children in the house of God on the first day of 2012. And I pray, God, that would be repeated at week after week and after, God, they find themselves growing stronger and stronger and closer and closer to you. And then, Father, mine is somehow for some reason {} is lost and as, God, that some here this morning that wants Christ to be their Savior, they know his name and all that stuff, but they have the {} they have never trusted Christ {} they have never received him as their Savior King and pray, God, {} and by faith trust Jesus Christ as Savior, believe that his death, his burial, his resurrection was enough to pay the penalty for our sin {} and by faith, I pray, God, they receive Jesus as their Savior. I pray {} [music overwhelms speaking here]