

Old and New: Stepping Into What God Has Next

Discussion Notes- December 28, 2025

1. What's one thing people often say they want to leave behind at the end of a year and why do you think it's so hard to actually let go?

As we close out the year, this message reminded us that God often works in a pattern of release and renewal. Before stepping into what is new, God invites us to lay down what is old; past failures, forgiven sin, wounds from others, and even our own regrets. Letting go creates space to perceive, receive, and faithfully walk into the new work God is doing. The gospel reminds us that in Christ, the old truly can pass away and something new can begin.

Read Isaiah 43:18-19

"Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

God is not dismissing the past but redirecting our focus. Dwelling on what was can dull our ability to recognize what God is currently doing. Spiritual perception often requires intentional release.

2. According to the message, what kinds of "old things" does God often ask us to let go of before stepping forward?

Read Psalm 103:10-13

"He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him."

God's forgiveness is complete, yet believers often continue to carry guilt, shame, regret, or resentment long after God has removed the sin or invited healing. We may replay our own mistakes, define ourselves by past failures, or hold tightly to wounds caused by others. While God has already dealt with sin through grace and calls us to forgive as we've been forgiven, holding on to these things can keep us anchored to the past. Letting go does not minimize what happened but it acknowledges that God's redemptive work is greater than our mistakes and stronger than what others have done to us. Carrying what God has asked us to release can quietly shape how we view ourselves, others, and what we believe is possible in a new season.

3. How does holding onto forgiven sin affect the way we approach a new season or new calling?

Read Psalm 40:1-3

"I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord."

This passage marks the transition from what God delivers us from to what He leads us into. God never calls us to release the old without also giving direction, stability, and renewal. A "new song" reflects a changed heart, renewed hope, and a forward-looking faith. Letting go prepares us to receive what God wants to place within us next.

4. What do you think it looks like (practically or spiritually) to begin walking forward into something new God is doing?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

This verse reminds us that renewal is not just about turning a calendar page—it is rooted in identity. In Christ, the old no longer defines us. God does not simply improve our past; He gives us a new beginning, a new identity, and a new way forward. Stepping into the new starts by believing what God says is already true.

5. As you move into a new season, what does it look like for you to live from your identity as a new creation rather than from your past?

Prayer/Closing:

- Pray for clarity to recognize what God is asking you to release.
- Pray for trust to step into new seasons without fear or regret.
- Pray for endurance to remain faithful while waiting for God's timing.

Deeper Dive- Understanding God's Pattern of Renewal

Throughout Scripture, God repeatedly invites His people into a rhythm of surrender and renewal. New seasons are rarely instant; they are cultivated through trust, obedience, and daily dependence on Him. Understanding the context of these promises helps us see that God speaks words of renewal most clearly in moments of loss, exile, and waiting.

Renewal in the Middle of Exile — Ezekiel

Ezekiel was written during one of the darkest seasons in Israel's history. God's people had been defeated, Jerusalem destroyed, and many Israelites—including Ezekiel—were living in exile in Babylon. The people believed their failure had disqualified them from God's promises. Ezekiel's message confronts their sin honestly, but it also reveals God's commitment to restore them—not because they deserve it, but because of His covenant faithfulness.

Read Ezekiel 36:22–28

"Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Lord God, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God."

This promise comes before Israel's circumstances change. God begins renewal internally by transforming hearts, before restoring land, security, or stability. Renewal is God's gracious initiative, not a reward for performance.

Renewal in the Middle of Grief — Lamentations

Lamentations is a collection of poems written in response to the destruction of Jerusalem. The city lies in ruins, the people are grieving, and hope feels distant. Rather than ignoring pain, Lamentations names it honestly. In the very center of this book of sorrow, we find one of Scripture's strongest declarations of hope.

Read Lamentations 3:19–24

"Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

Hope is not rooted in changed circumstances but in remembered truth. God's mercy renews daily, even when life still feels broken. Renewal does not erase grief, it sustains us through it."

Renewal Through Identity — The New Creation

Read 2 Corinthians 5:16–21

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation... All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself..."

Paul reminds the church that renewal ultimately flows from identity, not effort. In Christ, believers are not defined by their past sins, wounds, or failures. God's work of reconciliation establishes a new reality, one that reshapes how we live, relate, and move forward.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does seeing God promise renewal during exile and grief change the way you understand what it means to step into something new?
2. Why is it often difficult to believe God is doing a new work when circumstances, emotions, or consequences haven't changed yet?
3. How does living as a "new creation" in Christ reshape the way you view your past, your present obedience, and your future hope?