

Well, good morning again, everybody. How are you? All are you excited for the new year? How many of you are so over 2022? And. All right. Well, let's pray Father in heaven, as we now take a moment to dive into the word, be with us in Jesus name, Amen.

Okay, so I don't know if it was this last week or the week before I was on the YouTube page. And the course, you know, there, young man, probably eight weeks when he goes about on the street asking individuals, particularly those who are let's say they have a few more trips around the sun than others. Those in their sixties, seventies and eighties. And he asked what are some of the mistakes you feel that you made? What are some of the regrets that you also have and what advice do you have for those who are younger? And it's interesting what they kind of came up with being older, he said. One individual said, you look... everything when you look out looks the same, but others look at you differently. Sometimes you may be felt unneeded or unwanted. Another individual said Being older, it's like being at his age. He was asked how to describe it. It's like you played football yesterday and you don't realize, "Why do I feel so painful all day? The world sometimes looks at you differently, maybe as if you're invisible. Another one said, "Gravity. It seems like it's always trying to pull you down." Another person said, "You know, it feels like I'm just getting started."

What are some of the things that they regret? You know, the overwhelming one was getting married too young. Another one was not treating others well. Wish they hadn't done that. The pursuit of trying to get as much money as possible buying stuff.

He also asked if you could relive your life again or a certain period of your life. What would it be? And they mentioned, well, I'd be live my 35 to 40 or maybe late twenties.

And what were some of the lessons that they passed on don't always go with the flow. Be able to think for yourself, Don't worry about things. Don't worry about what other people think of you. Find your own voice. Try new things. Don't let money be the biggest thing that you chase. Not being happy is not the same thing as being ill. Take care of yourselves. Enjoy the opportunity that you have

choices. And the last thing that really stood out was time is precious. Don't be in such a hurry.

A lot of wisdom there. You know, when we look back, I think as you look back in 2022, there's a lot of things that I'm stoked that I was able to partake in and also accomplish. But there's also areas where I feel like, Oh, I fell short, I wanted to do better, I expected more. And I think sometimes, you know, what happens when we set up lofty goals and we don't accomplish them? What do we then feel like? I'm a failure. Why should I just keep trying or I'm just going to I'll try again, but I'm going to wait a couple of days, maybe at the end of the month.

For instance, you know, I wanted to eat well and I fell off the path. One day I had something that tasted really great and I kept eating more cookies or eating ice cream, whatever you name it. Oh, I messed up. Well, I'll just wait. Well, a couple of days turns into a couple of weeks turn month. I'm not saying a whole year, but it was trending towards that path. And I realize, you know, there I want to be able to be true to my word, and I want to be able to accomplish the goals that I set out. But oftentimes you're going to face adversity, right? And so do we just let it go? Or maybe is it possible maybe we need to reassess and just change things up a little bit?

Well, the truth, though, is one of the beautiful things when we go to the Bible, scripture, let's go to Second Corinthians chapter five verse 17. We touched base on this when I first got here, 2 Corinthians 5:17. One of the things that I love about this passage is it talks about our relationship with God. 2 Corinthians 5:17 We all there?

Okay, All right, here we go. Therefore, if anyone is in who? Christ, the new creation is come the old has gone and the new is here. We read that again. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation is come, the old is gone. The new is here.

Now, oftentimes around this time, maybe some of you are already trying to write out what you intend to accomplish. Your resolutions or your goals for 2023 and you want to change. One of the things that's interesting when we get to know Jesus, are we changed? I think there's a commentary says Great is the change, the grace of God makes in the soul that as it follows, old things are

passed away. Old thoughts, old principles and old practices are passed away and all things must become new.

Now, in this passage, there's a word that said twice, You know what that word is? New. You go to the Greek, the words the Greek word for this is kind of as everybody say, kindness. I mean, all right, you speak Greek now. Kindness means new. Or it could also mean recently made fresh, recent, new, unworn, unprecedented, uncommon, or novel.

And it's a same word that's used to describe when Jesus talks about the new wine skins in in the book of Matthew. And here Paul is writing to the believers in Corinth of this new unheralded idea. It's unprecedented. It's amazing. The old is now gone and he's declaring the arrival of a new creation, a second time. And part of this new creation is learning how we should live as a new creation.

One of the lessons that we can take when we read the Gospels for sure, is to know Jesus means our lives will change. When you look at the life of Jesus, when He ministered amongst the people, when people met them, was it the common occurrence of these individuals lives would be changed for the better. I mean, you look at the disciples, when Jesus calls them to follow him, were their lives changed? Not just a little bit, but a lot. The woman at the well, Zacchaeus, the woman he defended who wo anointed him, was Lazarus' life changed? Just a bit, fundamentally. And these are just a handful of names. There are many others in the gospels whose lives were changed in not just them. But also in our lives, when we meet Jesus, we're going to want to change.

The question is, are you ready to change? I'll be honest sometimes, no, I like being stubborn. I don't want to change. I don't like change sometimes, especially the older I get. I don't like change. And yet God is faithful. And even when change comes, it's sometimes uncomfortable stepping out into the unknown, trying something new can be very uncomfortable.

How many of you maybe just randomly chose to sign up for a class and it was completely out of your comfort zone? You'd never done it before. Like, for instance, how many of you took a baking class and you'd never done it before? What kind of things have you done where you've stepped out of your comfort zone? It was totally out of your nature? What? Being here. I hope you like us still.

Anything else? What's something that you've done where you got really uncomfortable but you were grateful? How about for some of us just trying to go to a new place and trying to make friends? That can be very uncomfortable, right? But when you find common ground, find commonality, it's amazing what can happen, especially things that are hard, that are difficult. I found that things where you have to persevere, draw people together and you can come from different backgrounds, but and that's if you have a common purpose. It's amazing what things can happen. Now when we look to the Old Testament, let's go to Psalm verse 40 sorry, Psalm chapter 40, verse 3. David Right. Something that's also very important.

That whole Psalm is amazing. But I want to I want to I want to touch base on this Psalm 40 verse 3. Okay. We all they're all right. He put a new what? song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in Him. When you look at the life of David, did he ever experience adversity? All the time. In fact, one of his first big tests was dealing with Goliath. And after that, who tried to kill him? Saul. Even his own family tried to get rid of him. These are just a handful of experiences. When he was a young, young lad, when he was a shepherd, he had to deal with animals who were trying to take out the sheep. And yet David had many, many challenging experiences. And when those experiences came along, though, what was he left with? God put a new song in his mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in Him. If you look back a little further, David actually points out, I waited patiently for the Lord. He turned to me and heard my cry. How many of you have ever thought the Lord cried out to God? He lifted me out of that slimy pit, rather descriptive, out of the mud and mire. He set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. And then he put a new song in my heart. A hymn of praise to our God. Many will see Him for the Lord and put their trust in Him.

What's something that we can take from this is that God delivered David to again and again, I'll add. And He can also deliver us.

Another author writes, It should seem that David penned this psalm upon occasion of his deliverance by the power and the goodness of God from great pressing trouble by which he was in danger. Essentially, David was in trouble and God rescued him. And God's continually working in our lives. And the question that we sometimes need to ask ourselves, are we ready and willing to want to

listen to God or is it ... Do I really want to do that or do I want to do what I want to do? There are times where we do need to be delivered because we don't always know everything.

And sometimes there's a season in our life, seasons in our lives where it's challenging. Sometimes our faith in our belief is tested, yet God faithfully delivered, David And also wants to help us.

Now, as we turn the pages, we flip the page into 2023 doesn't necessarily mean that all of our challenges or regrets from 22 are just going to be necessarily gone. But it does mean that we have a fresh start on our outlook. What God has for us, what are the things that we can do is we can, of course, go to the scriptures to provide hope, to provide meaning, to find purpose in our lives, to find understanding, and more importantly, to know that we are loved by our God and to look at the bigger picture. What does God have in store for us? One of the things that we have to do is we have to commit to understanding and knowing who God is. And that's going to take time reading through scriptures or listening to it. Sometimes I love to read that. Sometimes I like to just be able to hear these stories. But of course, I'm an auditory person and that also might mean fellowship with others having conversations.

God can use other people in your life to be able to speak to you, not just from Scripture. The challenge, though, is change requires intentional learning and growth. We want we need to want to learn. And so as we go forward, may you be somebody that desires to want to learn. What do you think is the fastest way to learn something? You do it. Okay. It's one way to do it. Have you ever tried to teach somebody something? I'll tell you what I found. The times that I learned the most is when I have to, I'm forced to teach something. Because what do you have to do? You got to know you got to know the subject. And sometimes that can be fun. Maybe you're passionate about that new endeavor, or maybe it's just completely boring to you or you have no desire. But when we truly learn about something and we get to the nuts and bolts, the content, and then being able to share and seeing people's eyes light up and as they understand, was one of the most gratifying things that you could ever do. But also especially for our own benefit, we're getting to know God.

Anybody ever give a Bible study or were asked to do a Bible study and then you froze like, I don't know the Bible. That's why we need to study the Bible. Amen. Okay. If you really want to know who God is and you really want to learn what Scripture has to say, try to teach it. And by the way, if you're interested in doing that, please let us know. We will help you learn how to do that.

Now, Richard Feynman, Sheldon Cooper's favorite physicist, some of you will get that, shares a little bit of a formula of how you can learn something. You actually talk about this "Number one first step is get a notebook out, right? The topic you're learning at the top of the page and then try to explain it from start to finish as if you were explaining to do it, explaining it to a child." You know, children I've learned over the years they are so honest and I love that. And one of those times where I was trying to teach them, they just said, pass or you're using fancy words, simplify. How can you share something that is maybe using just the best simple explanation? When we're trying to share something, we try to be as simple. When we try to complicated, it's hard to convey. You can't hide behind complicated jargon. You could also try to fill in those gaps where information is lacking so that there are no gaps. And finally, organize your information. When you're sharing something, when you're learning, organize that information.

When we look at Jesus life, what are we passionate about? Jesus? What drives us to want to learn more? What interests you most about Jesus? Do you write that down? You try to share with others? Is it something that stirs within your heart to want to say This is what God has done in my life? Learning requires commitment. But one of the things that's most beautiful about it, as you learn and grow in this journey, you're going to see the success and the challenges and maybe the missteps that you will have. And this doesn't just apply to learning scripture, but about anything. Imagine going to a new job and it's a new field. Are you going to want to claim I know everything about that? No. You want to be the most humble person and say, Hey, how can I best understand this? How can I learn? What can I learn from you? Don't be afraid to ask questions. And that's certainly true of the Scripture. When we gone through trying to understand and share how we can study the Bible, what's one of the biggest things that we tell you? Ask questions. Ask questions about the text. Who's saying this? Why are they saying what's been said? Where is it being said? Who's there? And as you grow, your knowledge will increase. And as you head into 2023 with a desire to

learn, God is going to do amazing things and God is going to provide opportunities to be able to witness, because that's ultimately what we're called to do, right?

If we continue reading on actually in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 17, let's actually go back there. Let's go to 2 Corinthians chapter 5. We'll start at verse 18, just as a reminder. Verse 17 says, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation is come, the old is gone and the new is here. We have the opportunity to be a changed person.

And in verse 18 it says, All of this comes from who? God, who reconciled us to himself. Guess who takes the initiative? God, That God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people sins against them. And He is committed to us. The message of reconciliation. So God's hand in this important task to us to be able to share the good news of Jesus Christ, what Jesus has done for us. And it's in return. Therefore, we are Christ ambassadors as though God were making His appeal through us. We're simply instruments. We implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin before for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

My friends, as we look to 2023, I want to encourage you to regularly seek the Lord learn. And as we flip the page heading into 2023, the challenges that we experience don't just cast them aside, learn from them, take those lessons, be a reminder of I'm not going to do that again or I'm going to learn from them and not do that either. Right. And it's amazing what God can do in our lives. Be faithful, be ready to learn and be ready to share.

If you watch our YouTube page, you notice that during the week we have a short little video. And I shared I shared a quote with somebody I'd like to share here one more time. And this is looking at the New Year's misses by F.B. Meyer. By the way, I want to give him credit.

It is a mistake to always be always turning back to recover the past. We can't change the past. They amend the law for Christian living is not backwards but forward, not for experiences that lie behind, for doing the will of God, which is always ahead and beckoning us to follow, leave the things that are behind and reach forward to those that are before four on each new height to which we

attain. There are the appropriate joys that befit the experience. Don't fret because life's joys are fled. There are more in front. Look up, press forward. The best is yet to be.

So my friends, may as we enter 2023, go forward with faith God can deliver us. May we be faithful and recognize that we are a new creation because God is working in our lives daily, shaping and molding us through the Holy Spirit, that we might be the faithful disciples that God is called to be and just to be loved by God is a great blessing.

Amen go forth with courage and shine a smile for Jesus Father in heaven. Thank you, Lord, for all that you're doing in our lives. As we're leaving in 2022 and heading into 2023, Lord there are accomplishments and also regrets and mistakes that we can learn from may not be bogged down. But as we turn the page, as we've flip the page, Lord help us to go with conviction. Encourage to not only love you more, but also to love others as well, and help us to be a faithful community for you here in Downey and the surrounding areas. And above all, Lord, may we understand and know your grace even more. In Jesus name. Everybody said Amen.

Grace in peace everybody. God bless you all.