

# Life is Bigger Than You Think

Series: REBOOT: Fresh Start for a New Year

Brad Bailey – January 8, 2023

Intro

My added my welcome into the new year.

As this new year has approached...I have had the sense that there is **a unique need for a fresh start this year...and a unique opportunity for it.**

In sense many of us could use **something akin to a rebooting a computer.**

**Have you ever had a computer slow down...** when it's not operating the way your use to? Sometimes it's hard to know why... and when there is **no one clear problem...** the **best advice** is to reboot the computer... reboot the system. There may be some changes that have occurred...that have bogged down how the system is operating. There may be files that got moved.

There may be updates that haven't been made.

The system needs to reset itself.

Rebooting a system can clear some process that got stuck... it can restore some connections that had changed.

**In a similar way,** when life brings **changes, some of us may find that we are not functioning** with all the **vitality we once did.**

**With every change in life...** our **inner operating system can bog down.**

Patterns have changed. It's been hard to keep up with updates.

**And it's important to realize...**

**we've all had a lot of changes in life.**

There is the **sheer rate of change** that has come in the recent years.

As technology has developed...it has accelerated changes...changes in multiple areas of life.

In the past... there had been one major technological advance that brought a major change into the world .... about every hundred years... like the Gutenberg printing press. Now we are experiencing multiple Gutenberg changes all at the same time.

The pace of change in technology is exponential... with **multiple advances ...growing from one another...in a compounding dynamic.**

Computing power and technological advances have been doubling every two years....and most recently...every 18 months. That is an **exponential rate** of progress. [1]

- It's estimated that **90% of the world's data was collected in the last two years.**
- There are **1.35 million tech startups** in the world.

And these changes ... bring massive change to every sphere of life... changing our economic systems, the nature of jobs, our life styles and life patterns, and our social dynamics.

The point is that we have been amidst a massive rate of change in life... a rate of change that is faster than we can simply process.

It is undeniable that things aren't what they were this time last year and we will be saying the same thing next year.

Even though changes themselves come quickly, our ability to adapt to change is a process... and sometimes a lengthy one.

Whenever we experience change, whether a positive change like a getting a better job or a negative one like the death of a loved one or even a neutral one like moving a phone from one side of your desk to the other.

This process takes longer and is more intense for bigger changes, but all change requires a process.

I read of research that says if you move a phone from one side of your desk to the other, it can take six months before you always reach for the right part of your desk when the phone rings. We might need six months of transition for something as minor as reorganizing a desk. [2]

An adding to the change we experience... came a pandemic....which brought more change than anyone can grasp.... a breadth of change we are still affected by.

Change in our **patterns**...

Change in our **aspirations** (school, jobs, economic, etc)

Change in our **relational connections** – along with those who lost friends or family ...people moved ... divisions arose. [3]

Some groups of people have been **affected much more than others**. Faced with extended school and university closures [young people have been left vulnerable to social isolation and disconnectedness](#) which can fuel feelings of anxiety, uncertainty and loneliness and lead to affective and behavioral problems. [4]

I understand it can be a little uncomfortable to talk about struggles with mental health... anxiety and depression ... but it is crucial that we do.

Because .... God cares... **he cares about your state** of mind and soul and mine.

And he cares about **the state of those in your life**.

And of course many people have identified some positive changes in their lives... but they are still changes. [5]

So much change can affect our inner operational system.

In the same way that on a computer we may have moved or deleted some files...and the operating system is slowed trying to find them.

Aspirations may have dimmed. Expectations may elude us. Connections may have changed.

Some may sense that they aren't as living as fully as they had... still doing things... but not with the vitality you've known in the past... not as fully engaged.

There are changes we haven't been able to grasp... let alone adjust to. Our relationship to the gift of life itself has been affected.

We need a reboot.

**And of course... it is also the start of a new year...** which is **always a good time** to stop and think about how we are living. A good time for a reboot.

So we are going to start this new year with a series entitled: **REBOOT: Fresh Start for a New Year**

In this series we are going to look at what we might call our inner operational systems... And listen to what God says to us about life.

The good news is that Jesus was constantly speaking about a new life... and how to live in relationship to it.

### **John 10:10 (GNT)**

**The thief comes only in order to steal, kill, and destroy. I have come in order that you might have life--life in all its fullness.**

### **What is he saying?**

He is saying there is **one source which will seek to take away life.**

It will use circumstances to declare that your world ...your life is small.

**Jesus saw all human life as cut off from real Life.**

**But he has come to bring life...**in all it's fulness.

Entering this world in this state... disconnected from eternal life... the Kingdom of God.

The good news is that Jesus has come to bring you that life... and he was constantly speaking about a new life... and how to live in relationship to it. He speaks into the power of knowing what really matters... of learning to travel lighter...of finding the pace of grace...and love....and so much more.

**Each Sunday morning**...we'll listen to what God says to us...to help us reboot our lives.

Just as a reboot goes through steps....as there may be **various changes that have been made...** **"updating" to do**....old file locations to re-find. Similarly... we are going to take the following six weeks.

**Today... conclude our time with the wider truth...that Life is bigger than we think.**

### **Matthew 6:25-34**

**"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? <sup>27</sup> Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?**

**....<sup>33</sup> But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**

When we hear Jesus say "Don't worry...." ... we may hear what sound like a reprimand...and perhaps an unfair one. After all... food and clothing seems like basic necessities.

But Jesus is calling them to realize that there is a larger reality at hand...that life is bigger. Notice that he says... **"Is not life more than these?"**

**He didn't say**... these things are **irrelevant**... he said there is MORE to this gift of life.

He **doesn't say don't have a natural concern** for these things.

**> He is saying that there is a type of worry that doesn't reflect the big picture.**

He says... it's the kind of worry that can't really add anything.

We all know that difference.

When our energy is given to what we have no control over... it's like a computer having something in the background...using it's RAM...it's processing memory... and unable to operate like it should.

He isn't dismissing food and clothing...he is telling us not to let our temporal circumstances define us...and drive us.

Jesus is telling us that **life is bigger....and that larger reality is under God.**

There was a **moment in professional football** this past week... that I imagine everyone saw or has heard about.

**Damar Hamlin** of the Buffalo Bills fell to the ground in a cardiac arrest....motionless.

I turned on the coverage... struck by what I began to watch.

Players lost in emotions...Scott Van Pelt... SportsCenter on ESPN... football is entertainment... this is about life.

Players gathered on their knees in prayer.

In that moment... the "bigger than life" nature of professional sports...was pierced.

Not that it captured the whole of life... but it was a moment in which **what was important....changed in a flash.**

Much of what we worry about... is often that which we fear about our temporary circumstances... and Jesus tells us that life is more than those.

It reminds me of a truth that has helped me in the past few years.... Which is that...

***"Nothing is as it big as it seems."***

Everything tries to be bigger than it is.

I don't mean that everything is insignificant.

But **at the root of our worry** ...our anxieties...**something is trying to be bigger than it is.**

Small things try to take on a significance they don't have.

Things that are moderately significant try to become far more significant than they are.

(Last night I told my wife I was trying to shape this message... and that I was going to engage worry...and I was worried.)

And of course there are very significant concerns we may have... perhaps related to health or loved one. Jesus himself faced his own coming crucifixion. And it weighed heavy.

He didn't push it down... he faced it... and focused on the larger reality... the larger life that could not be taken from him.

We all have things that we worry about...and we often spend a lot of internal energy trying not to think about them.... Trying to keep them pushed down.

But in a healthy way what we may need...is to look at what we fear straight on...and see that they are not as big as they seem... that life ... the fulness of life is so much bigger.

Jesus didn't say he came to change all the short term circumstances we face in this life. He said he came to bring life in all it's fullness.

What so many people face today...especially younger lives...is the circumstances that have made the future uncertain...their world seem smaller... and on the other side...the secular belief that there is nothing more than this.

They need to know that no circumstances are as big as they seem...and that the life which God offers is far bigger than they realize. Life is bigger than we think.

God is with you. Life with God is with you...and that life is bigger than anything.

**So ...."seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."**

**Focus on the life that doesn't change.**

His ultimate rule will never change.

And what is truly right will never change.

Jesus is telling us that we should focus on the unchanging nature of life with God... which is **righteousness...goodness.**

Kindness...honesty.... generosity.

**You know what telling the truth meant 2000 years ago?** The same thing it means today... and that it will mean next year....and that **it will mean forever.** It is unchanging.

So much has changed. But... when we feel "Everything has changed"...stand back... and smile... and say "**What matters most hasn't changed.**" changed (Say it to your neighbor)

**And I think this speaks into the tendency** some of us may have for **nostalgia**....for looking back on how much better things were.

I was born in 1960... was a teenage in the 70's... and I can't help but feel how much things have changed...how I wish my kids could be living in a simpler time.

Nostalgia may be natural... but it can reflect a trust in circumstances ... more than God.

Jesus didn't come to define life by a less complicated version of this world. He came to bring a larger unchanging reality.

What we need is not nostalgia... but the Kingdom of God.

And life in **God's Kingdom is not bound to the past... it is the way of eternity and is at work even now.**

As one point,

**Jesus said, "My Father is always working, and so am I." - John 5:17 (NLT)**

**And with those words, Jesus invites us into this new year... into a fresh start into new year.**

**Life is bigger than you think.**

**Life is a gift and it is bigger than you think.**

**There is a fullness of life that Jesus has for us.**

Life is bigger and it is now.

Rebooting begins with a desire to embrace life in its fullness now.

Some of us may realize that our inner operating system has been stuck in the past... and we may need to embrace this year seeking the Kingdom in the present.

Some of us may realize that our inner operating system has been weighed down with worry about the future... about circumstances we don't control.

PRAYER

**Notes:**

1. From: How has technology changed - and changed us - in the past 20 years?

Nov 18, 2020 – WEF - [here](#)

While [less than 7%](#) of the world was online in 2000, today [over half the global population](#) has access to the internet.

Similar trends can be seen in cellphone use. At the start of the 2000s, there were [740 million](#) cell phone subscriptions worldwide. Two decades later, that number has surpassed 8 billion, meaning there are now [more cellphones](#) in the world than people

And From: Technology statistics: How fast is Tech advancing? [growth charts] 2023, By: Author Paul Michael - <https://mediapeanut.com/how-fast-is-technology-growing-statistics-facts/>

- Millennials unlock their smartphones 71 times per day, while Generation Z unlocked their phone an average of 82 (MediaPeanut 2021 survey).
- Automation is projected to take over 45 million jobs from Americans by 2030.
- Millennial research from 2019 reveals to us that they spend the following amount of time per day on the internet:
  - 211 minutes spent on internet or apps.
  - 31 minutes spent on daily desktop use.
  - More than 25% of millennials utilize a smartphone for content & video consumption, while Gen X sits at 17%, and baby boomers, 7%.

2. Drawn from Bob Logan, The Times They are a Changing who notes a chart by chart comes from William Bridges Associates that shows that whenever we experience change we go through stages of: Endings, Neutral Zone, and New Beginnings.

3. Another aspect of change has been the cultural posture towards Christianity. The year 2014 has been noted as the year in which there was a shift from neutral to negative. See Navigating the (New?) Negative World, Trevin Wax, MAY 26, 2022 - [here](#)

4. COVID-19 pandemic triggers 25% increase in prevalence of anxiety and depression worldwide. There has been grief after bereavement.... constraints on people's ability to work, seek support from loved ones and engage in their communities. See - WHO – [here](#)

5. Many created better connection to their community and to nature and they felt clearer about their overall priorities in life. Note BBC report: 'I feel less alone': The pandemic's varied effects on wellbeing. Published 25 October 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-63173393>. People in Vietnam, India, Egypt, and Nigeria were most likely to say they felt better, while in Japan, South Korea, and Hong Kong they were most likely to say the opposite.