

A New Thing

- It's our human nature to be drawn to new things! They're exciting, they're unknown and we're drawn to the mystery of the unknown.
- And it's no wonder we're drawn to new things, because God, our Creator, is always on the move. He's been doing new things since the very beginning. There's a mystery that leads us to question, "What is God going to do next?"
- **If we want to see the new thing from God, it's important we understand how God makes new things come about.**
- As you follow the history of Israel, you'll find that God was always doing something new and exciting: first, they're nomads without land or country and God moves them to a new place, called Egypt. Then God does something new and He moves them out of their enslavement and familiarity into the desert.
- There, in the desert, they learn new things about God, who He is, how He is to be worshipped, how to trust Him. In the desert, God prepares them and moves them into a new land, the promised land.
- After many generations, establishing the nation and kingdom of Israel, the people get caught up in rebellion. And because of their sin, God moves them out of Israel into a new place called Babylon.
- While they were in Babylon, their hearts longed for something new: to go back to Israel and build a new city, with new city walls and a new temple.
- And it's while Israel is in captivity in Babylon, that they cling to the hope of the prophetic words written by Isaiah:
- Isaiah 43:16-19- This is what the LORD says— he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick: "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.
- This prophecy from Isaiah is about Babylon and how God would deliver the Jews from their captivity. But like many prophecies in scripture, this prophecy was 2 fold.
- This prophecy was also about Jesus and the New Covenant. There is a 400 year gap between the OT and NT and this season of silence was a spiritual wilderness for humanity. God didn't speak or move, His presence was nowhere to be found and Israel lived in a spiritual wasteland. The people are desperate and weary in this wilderness.
- And then... God does something new. It's while Israel is in a spiritual wasteland and wilderness, Jesus is born. Jesus becomes the way in the wilderness. Jesus became the stream of living water that refreshed weary souls who had been stuck in the wasteland.
- If we want to see the new things of God, it's important that we understand how God brings about new things. When God created the first humans(a new thing), they came from the lowest, messiest place: down on the ground and with dirt.

- When God did a restart with Noah and his family, it came by means of a destructive flood. When a new tree grows, it comes at the death of a seed. When the new covenant was established, it came at the death of Jesus.
- We like the idea of new things from God, but we're often ignorant to the process of how God works.
- Isaiah 43:16-19- This is what the LORD says— he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick: THIS IS LIKE WHEN WE GET SAVED.
- But then it says, "...do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?"
- God IS doing something new...but many times we just don't see it! Because often times when we look for a new thing from God, we expect it to look like it did in the past!
- We love to see a new house...but we forget the years it took for those trees to grow and eventually provide lumber. We love seeing new babies, but we forget the 9 months of discomfort, stretching, and pain...and a final push of intense agony.
- When God does a new thing in your life...often times He'll lead you out- to the wasteland.
- In the wasteland we wonder, "Where is God in this?" I know many people wondered that when Jesus hung on the cross- where is God in this??
- Love your enemies. Why? Bless those who curse you. Why? If you want to see the new thing, come out to the wilderness. Why? Because this is just the way it is! This is the way God grows us!
- So often Christians fail to see the new thing that God is doing because we're afraid of the wilderness and the wasteland. We get out there, it's hard, it's lonely, it's full of trials, it tests our faith...and what happens so many times: is we turn around and walk back to Egypt.
- We're led into the wilderness and before we make it to the life-giving streams, we get weary of the wilderness. We go back to old habits, old ways of living, looking for artificial streams and man-made ways...and miss the new thing!
- James 1:2-4- Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.
- Far too many times, Christians get weary of the wilderness and they don't allow perseverance to finish its work!
- Escapism: the tendency to seek distraction and relief from unpleasant realities, especially by seeking entertainment or engaging in fantasy.
 - Beware of escapism. Don't run away from difficulty. A lot of people use sports, alcohol, work, hobbies, social media, etc. as an escape. Life can be hard, but don't escape.

- Many times we make the tragic mistake of trying to run away from our lives. Trying to escape our problems rather than face our problems.
 - When facing difficulty, the question isn't how can I get out of this, but rather what can I get out of this. What lesson, what teaching, what wisdom, what character is God developing in me?
- Paul and Silas were called by God in a dream to go to Macedonia- but Macedonia was a mess. There was demonic activity that the people of the city embraced. Paul and Silas were dragged to the marketplace, stripped and beaten with rods. They were severely flogged and then thrown into prison.
 - After something like that happens, you may begin to question whether or not it was God who called you to that place. As they're in prison, they begin to worship God and all of the sudden- their chains fall off and the prison doors are opened.
 - Paul and Silas realize, this is the tactic of the enemy- tempting them with escapism. So instead of leaving, they stay in the prison! They knew, God was making a way in that wilderness. God was making new streams come forth in that wasteland.
 - Paul and Silas let perseverance finish its work.
- Before Jesus goes to the cross, He goes to a garden. The Garden of Gethsemane. Gethsemane is a Greek word meaning "oil press".
- There was a new anointing, a new covenant, and new life just on the other side of the cross. But the crushing of the cross, began with the pressing in the garden.
 - In the Garden, Jesus was in anguish, sorrowful, troubled, and began to sweat like drops of blood.
 - Matthew 26:38- "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death."
 - "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup to be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as You will." Matthew 26:39
 - Jesus stays in the garden. Jesus continued through the persecution and flogging. He persevered on the cross! Jesus let perseverance finish its work!!
 - On the other side of Jesus' perseverance was the New Covenant, the New wine, the new anointing, a new age in humanity- where we can be born again and experience New Life!!
- Hebrews 12:1-3- let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, **2** fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **3** Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.
- Beware of escapism. When life gets hard, don't run. When the place you're called to feels like a prison- stay the course. When you're being pressed on every side...take up your cross and follow Jesus!

- Isaiah 41:18- I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs.
- You're never going to see these miraculous moves of God unless you're up there on the barren heights and down low in the valleys. Unless you're obedient to go to the desert and the parched grounds, you'll miss the new thing!