

## **12/28/2025 – Sunday Morning Message: A Fresh Start—Pressing Forward in Faith**

***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.”***

### **Introduction:**

**As we step into a brand-new year, many of us are filled with hope, expectations, and fresh goals. A new year feels like a clean page—an opportunity to begin again. Yet, while the calendar changes, our hearts often carry the weight of the past: regrets, disappointments, failures, or even past successes that keep us stuck.**

**The Apostle Paul reminds us in Philippians 3 that a victorious life in Christ requires focus and forward movement. Paul understood that spiritual growth does not happen by looking backward—it happens by pressing ahead toward God’s calling. This New Year, God is inviting us to let go of what is behind and move forward in faith, confidence, and obedience.**

### **1. Release the Past**

**“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.” — Isaiah 43:18**

- **We cannot move forward while holding tightly to yesterday.**
- **Past failures can paralyze us with guilt and shame.**
- **Past hurts can harden our hearts.**
- **Past successes can keep us from growing into what God is doing now.**

- God does not ask us to deny the past, but He does ask us not to dwell there.
- **God's forgiveness brings freedom.**

2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us that in Christ, we are a new creation. The old has gone, and the new has come. When God forgives, He does not keep records—He gives new beginnings.

#### **Illustration:**

Remember earlier this year we were studying the scriptures of John that Peter denied Jesus three times, yet Jesus restored him and used him powerfully to lead the early church. Failure was not Peter's ending—it was part of his transformation.

## **2. Embrace God's New Work**

**"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" — Isaiah 43:19**

God is always working, even when we do not immediately see it.

Sometimes we miss what God is doing because we are expecting Him to work the same way He did before. But God often brings growth through change.

**How do we embrace the new work of God?**

- Spend time in prayer and God's Word.
- Ask God to open your spiritual eyes.
- Let go of habits, attitudes, addictions, or distractions that hinder your walk. Anything negative or worldly, putting God first in all things.

**Illustration:**

The Israelites struggled in the wilderness, but God was doing something new providing his daily blessings and guiding them step by step. God's provision was fresh every morning.

**3. Walk Forward in Faith**

*Hebrews 11:1 (ESV): "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."* Faith means stepping forward even when the path is unclear.

**God never promises that the road will be easy, but He does promise that He will walk with us.** Jeremiah 29:11 assures us that God's plans are for hope and a future.

**Illustration:**

When the Israelites stood at the Red Sea, there was no visible way forward. But when they trusted God, He made a way where there was none.

**4. Focus on the Goal**

*"I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."* *Philippians 3:14 (ESV)*

Our goal is not success, comfort, or recognition—it is Christ.

Like a runner in a race, we must stay focused on the finish line. Distractions, discouragement, and sin can slow us down, but Hebrews 12:1–2 reminds us to throw off everything that hinders us and fix our eyes on Jesus.

**Illustration:**

**A marathon runner does not stop to admire the scenery. Their eyes are fixed on the finish line. In the same way, our focus must remain on Christ.**

**5. Finish Strong**

***2 Timothy 4:7 (ESV): "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."*** God calls us not just to start well, but to finish well.

**We finish strong by:**

- **Staying committed to prayer and fasting. (Communication)**
- **Remaining rooted in God's Word. (Study/Read Daily)**
- **Walking in community with other believers (Church)**
- **Trusting God daily, even in difficult seasons (Faith Builder)**

**Conclusion:**

**As we begin this New Year, God is calling us forward.**

- **Release the past. (Forgiveness)**
- **Embrace the new work He is doing. (Slow-down/Sabbath)**
- **Walk by faith. (Builds a relationship)**
- **Fix your eyes on Jesus. (Jesus is our Target)**
- **Run your race with perseverance. (Your Pace)**

**Every day with God is a fresh start. His mercies are new every morning, and His grace is sufficient for every step ahead.**

**This year, let us press onward with purpose, faith, and confidence, trusting that the God who began a good work in us will be faithful to complete it.**

**Let us move forward—focused, determined, and hopeful—knowing the prize ahead is worth every step. So, this is not just a new year, every day is a new day with the Lord. So, no matter times you mess up, God is with you, he forgives you, he loves you... Trust him and honor him.**