**God is Doing a New Thing**

**神正在做一件新事**

**Isaiah 43:18-19 1/19/2025**

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What is the annual theme of ATPC Church? "A New Thing." It is printed in our weekly bulletin. This has been the theme for both last year and this year. The Lord says, "Behold, I will do a new thing." The Lord says, "Behold, I am doing a new thing." The prophet Isaiah asks, "Do you not perceive it?"

It is the Lord who is doing the new thing; Pay attention to the verbs and the subject in these two verses. The one who does the new thing is God, not the pastors or the staff, nor us. So, what is our role?

18 "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. 19 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.

As the scripture says, God declares, "I am doing a new thing," but what about us? The scripture says, "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past." In other words, it's about a change of heart and a change of perspective. We participate in the Lord's work by shifting our focus.

**Prayer:**

In the first month of this new year, I once again seek guidance and a clear vision from You. Let us embrace the hope You have given us and follow You faithfully and wholeheartedly, participating in the transformation You will bring. Speak to us through the words of the prophets. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be pleasing to You. This we pray in reliance on You, our Rock and Redeemer, our Lord. Amen.

Over the past two weeks, I have been reflecting on the words of the prophet Isaiah, seeking to understand them through thematic divisions, historical context, and literary features. The portion studied is referred to as "Second Isaiah" (chapters 40–66), also known as "Comfort Isaiah" or "Babylonian Isaiah."

Today we read two passages of Scripture. The first passage continues from last week's chapter: offering comfort to the exiled Israelites. It consistently emphasizes God's redemptive plan and the hope for the future.

The second passage today focuses on the vision of a new heaven and a new earth, where God's justice and peace will reign forever.

God’s Mercy and Israel’s Unfaithfulness

The book of Isaiah was written to the children of Israel during a low point in their history. In exile, they had lost everything they believed they would possess forever and longed for the land and blessings God had promised them. They cried out to God, and once again, God heard their cries and delivered them. A new Exodus was about to unfold in a new wilderness…

Since God is Doing a "New Thing," Can We See It Realized? To accept what God wants to do in your life, you must:

I. Change Your Focus

Stop looking back, and start looking forward. Verse 18: "Do not remember the former things,

Nor consider the things of old." If you keep looking back, you won't be able to see the path ahead. If you want to move toward the new things God is doing in Christ, you must learn the following:

A. You cannot rely on past victories to sustain you!

Past achievements cannot continue to lead you forward. When God is doing something new, we must let go of past successes and experiences and focus on where God is leading us now.

B. Forget the former things, and change your focus!

When we fixate on past pain, failure, or even past successes, our lives become stagnant. God calls us to look forward and embrace His new plans and new grace.

The Israelites had many past victories:

1. Leaving Egypt

2. Conquering Canaan

3. Defeating invading enemies

4. Successfully navigating the division of the kingdom

No matter how glorious or painful the past was, God is now calling us to let go of those memories and begin to look forward to the new thing He has prepared for us. Similarly, for each of us, past victories or pains should not become stumbling blocks to our progress but should serve as the foundation of our faith, propelling us toward the new things God has prepared for us.

Today, God is also calling us to shift our focus. Whether the past was good or bad, it should become a part of our memories, no longer binding our thoughts and actions. God's plan is new and full of hope. Let us walk forward under His guidance, eagerly expecting the marvelous new things He has prepared for us!

But now, they are in exile. Their past victories did not set them free. What they need is a new work, a new miracle, and a new victory.

The issue is not what God has done in the past—the question should be:

A) What is God doing in your life now?

B) What do you want God to do in your life now?

Next, Move Toward New Things in Christ!

You must realize that you cannot let past failures control you. Stop dwelling on the past! Change your focus.

The Israelites had experienced great failures. Every time God gave them blessings, They responded with evil actions:

1. God gave them the temple, but they offered idol worship.

2. God gave them truth, but they lived lives of deceit and spread falsehoods.

3. God gave them His commands, but they treated them as mere suggestions.

4. God gave them wealth, but they used it to oppress the poor.

5. God gave them Himself, but they gave Him nothing except rejection.

The Israelites were unworthy of receiving anything more from God. Yet, God still loved them and sincerely wanted to help them change.

"Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing! Change your focus." God is not condemning their past, They cannot change what has already happened.

God is not criticizing our past; He is inviting us to look forward and focus on what He is currently doing in our lives. No matter how many mistakes we have made in the past, God’s love and His plans are still moving forward. His will is for us to also move forward and embrace the new things He is doing in our lives.

On the contrary, God extends a hand of hope. He is actually saying: Forget your past— I am giving you a chance for a fresh start. Change your focus.

Isaiah 55:7 – "Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts;

Let him return to the Lord, And He will have mercy on him;

And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon."

 If you want to achieve something in your spiritual life, you must understand that you cannot rely on yesterday’s faith.

The Israelites experienced many great spiritual blessings in their history.

• From the first Passover,

• To the parting of the Red Sea,

• To the conquest of Canaan,

• To the building of the temple,

The Israelites witnessed God's marvelous works in their lives.

However, their faith in God’s past works could not save them from their current troubles.

Their faith in the past could not help them solve their present problems. They needed new faith, a new perspective to see what God could do!

They needed a new faith, the kind of faith that had brought all their past victories. They needed revival—a cry to God, asking Him to give them a fresh, spontaneous love.

Psalm 85:6-8

"Will You not revive us again,

That Your people may rejoice in You?

Show us Your mercy, Lord,

And grant us Your salvation.

I will hear what God the Lord will speak,

For He will speak peace to His people,

To His saints,

But let them not turn back to folly."

Don't go back to foolishness!

Shift your focus—stop looking back, and start looking forward! The second step toward embracing the new things God wants to do in your life is:

II. Clarify Your Focus—Discover What God Wants from You

What do you see when you look at your own life? Do you see possibilities or problems?

Pay attention to what God says: "I will make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert."

The Israelites had a choice. They could look at their past and present problems, Or they could focus on what God is doing in their lives now.

Colossians 1:21-22

“You were once alienated from God and made of yourselves enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled you in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.”

To discover what God wants for you, You must see your possibilities as God sees them—

"I am making a way in the wilderness!" God has the power to transform the wilderness in your life, And turn it into a field of blessing and abundance.

God can turn a dry, useless life into one full of purpose and grace.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

“Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with faces unveiled, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Clarify Your Focus—Discover What God Wants for You. Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old! The most important step toward embracing the new things God wants to do in your life is:

III. Offer Yourself to God's Plan

God has already started the plan to bring Israel out of captivity and back to the promised land.

But ultimately, it was up to them to decide whether or not to accept all that God had offered.

A. If they rejected God’s plan,

B. If they refused to follow His guidance,

C. Then they would continue to remain in captivity.

“I am doing a new thing!” “Change Your Focus! This new thing has already begun; do you not see it? I am making a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.God has already begun:

• A new direction and new goals for your life – Clarify

• Are you willing to follow Him? --Change your focus!

Psalm 95:7-8

“For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion.”

Seek God’s new vision and a renewed interest in His work.

**1. Change Your Focus – Stop Looking Back, Start Looking Forward**

 What do you see God doing in your life now?

 What do you want Him to do in your life?

 You must know that you cannot let—

 Your past failures own you—

 Stop being tangled by the past!!!!

**2. Clarify Your Focus – Discover What God Has Planned for You**

 When you look at your life, what do you see?

 Do you see possibilities or problems?

**3. Offer Yourself to God's Plan\***

 God has already begun—

 • A new direction and new purpose for your life—

 • Are you willing to follow Him?