

A New Beginning

JOHN 8:1-11

1Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. 2And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. 3And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, 4They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. 5Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? 6This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. 7So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. 8And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. 9And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

I want to preach to three different types of people today.

- 1) The first are those who can say, “Yes I have done everything I could this year for God”. I lived for God the best I could.
- 2) The second are those that can say there are some areas that I did well and then there are some areas in my walk with God that did not go so well.
- 3) Thirdly are those that did not do well at all in their walk with God.

To these three groups of people I direct my comments today. I feel that the word of God has some great news for those in all three groups. There is hope for you today no matter where you are.

PRAYER

No doubt there are questions in your mind about his new year.

- What will happen in this New Year?
- Will the United States go to war?
- Will our shores be invaded this year?
- Will there be another terrorist attack?
- What lies in store for me personally?
- Will this be the year that the Lord returns for the church?

Often times during the beginning of the year people ask themselves questions about their own life.

I'm talking to you this morning about: A New Beginning

At the beginning of the year perhaps more than any other time of the year we become reflective, and look back over the year and over our life. We think about things that went right and things that went wrong. We think about victories and we think about defeats. We think about mistakes that we made and how there are things we wish we could do over again or words we wish we could have taken back. At this time of the year resolutions are made, diets are started, and exercise machines are dusted off and put to use again. At this time of the year new things are tried.

As a Christian this is a time that we can evaluate our walk with God.

- Did I give my best to God this past year?
- Did I pray like I should have?
- Did I witness like I should have?
- Did I read the word of God like I should have?
- Did I attend church and was I faithful to God as I should have?
- Was God number one in my life?

Often resolutions are made.

Resolved in 2003:

- I will spend more time with my children.
- I will finish those odd jobs around the house.
- I will become more productive on my job.
- I will become more involved in the church.
- I will lose weight and exercise more.
- I will become more faithful in my daily devotions.

Resolutions – most people make a few every New Year. They make them even though they are broken almost before they are made. But I suppose they are made because they symbolize the rite of passage into the New Year.

Resolutions are made because people want to see some specific changes in the New Year. **They want to:**

- Get to be a better person
- Get thinner
- Get smarter

➤ Improve relationships

- Maybe they want to learn from the mistakes of the previous year. Perhaps they want to keep hope alive that somehow this new year will be different.

I'm talking today about: **A New Beginning.**

- I wonder do you have hope in your life that 2003 will be different than 2002? Do you feel that there is the possibility of change for the good and change for the better? Or do you feel trapped in the cycle of life that never seems to change?
- Is today the same as yesterday,
- Is this week the same as last week,
- Is this month the same as last month?
- Is this year going to be the same as last year?
- Do you feel trapped in the routine and monotony of life?

The saying goes, "**TODAY IS THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE**".

How true that statement is and how few people really take advantage of it. They are trapped in their yesterdays and in their pasts. With the help of God I want to preach to you about a new beginning that you can have in your life starting right now. I want to preach to you about a new beginning that you can have in your walk with God. Today is a new beginning. I want you to know that no matter what the future may hold for you, the same God that was with you and brought you through in 2002 is still here today to bring you through in 2003.

- His ear is not deaf that he can't hear your cry.
- His arm is not too short that he can't reach you at the point of your need.

- His eye has not gone blind that he cannot see you, but his eye is on the sparrow and I know he watches over me.
- His power has not diminished that he can't mend your broken life.
- His healing virtue has not run dry that he can't heal your body.
- His peace has not vanished that he can't still bring you through the storms of this life.
- He is still a friend that sticks closer than a brother.
- The name of the Lord is still a strong tower that the righteous can run into and be saved.
- The Lord is not slack concerning his promise.

Let's praise Him today!

I do not know just when this tragic story, of our scripture text, had its beginning. Months before, perhaps something had crept into the relationship of this Jewish husband and wife. Somehow the lines of communication had been shut down and the confidence that was once between this couple began to dwindle away. It could have been months afterward that this woman committed this awful sin. Or maybe it was just a few moments of unbridled lustful passion that ended in the act of adultery.

Some Bible scholars suggest that this happened during the time of the feast of tabernacles. When it may be that their dwelling in booths and their feasting and joy might have provided an occasion for sin.

Whatever the case was this woman now finds herself in the middle of something that she can't escape from. The scribes and Pharisees bang down the door and barge into the house and pull her from the bed in the act of adultery the Bible says. They want to stone her right there on the spot but one of the Pharisees said, "Let's bring her to Jesus and see what he says." This they did hoping to entrap Jesus and bring discredit to his name.

Their chest was heaving with excitement as they began to drag this woman down the street to where Jesus was. They pushed her down time and again along the way until her hands and knees were scraped and bloodied. As they went, shades were drawn back ever so slightly and eyes peered out from darkened rooms and people said, "Well she certainly is not the woman we thought she was."

When she had no strength to go on they would drag her along until she got to her feet again. Finally, when she was a bloody mess, they threw her at the feet of Jesus. They said, "Master, the Law says she must die. Moses commands that she be stoned. But what do you say Jesus?" Here they called him master but just the day before they called him a deceiver. This they said tempting him that they might find occasion to accuse him.

This account sounds so familiar to most all of us here today. That was our life. The devil had us bound by sin and the filthy habits of this world. The fetters of our iniquity had us all packaged up, ready to be sent to hell. The devil brought us bloodied and broken and paraded us before Jesus and said he's got sin in his life; she has sin in her life. They deserve to die. They deserve to pay the penalty of sin. The Bible says the wages of sin is death. That's the story of our life. That's the condition that we found ourselves in. Thrown at the feet of Jesus. Thrown at his feet:

- A sinner
- An alcoholic
- A drug addict
- Involved in immoral relationships
- Hooked on pornography
- Our minds bound by worldly lust

- Living our own way
- No place for God in our life
- Having lived for God for a time but now we've fallen and are away from Him.

He doesn't offer a word but simply stoops down and begins to write in the sand. This woman with the curse of death and the shame of sin on her thinking him to be looking for a stone covers her head and begins to weep on what she thinks is the last day of her life. The Pharisees continue to pressure Jesus to answer them. They have stones in their hands ready to throw. But Jesus acts like he doesn't even hear them and continues to write in the sand.

Silence fills the air as finally Jesus begins to speak. He says, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." The scribes and Pharisees were so thunderstruck by the words of Jesus that one by one conviction filled their hearts. You could hear the dull thud of stones as they began to drop to the ground and they all walked away. The guilty woman opens her eyes and all she can see is the ground covered with stones. Jesus asks her, "Where are your accusers," and she responds, "I have none, they are all gone." And then Jesus says, "I don't condemn you either go and sin no more."

What was Jesus saying? What he was saying was,

- You thought this was the end of your life but it's not.
- You thought that this was it the last day of your life but it's not.
- You thought that it was over but it's not."

Today is a new beginning. Today is the first day of the rest of your life. This is a new chapter, go and sin no more. God wants you to know that it's not over but it's a new beginning.

I'm preaching about: "**A New Beginning**" today

- There we lay at the feet of Jesus. The accuser of the brethren had cruelly thrown us there. The devil said you and I must die. We must pay the wages of sin. But Jesus stands up and says, "Wait just a minute devil, I've already paid the price for his sin. I've already taken care of the penalty of her transgression." It's true the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. I paid the price at Calvary when I was crucified and shed my blood."
- The song says, "*What can wash away my sin, nothing but the blood of Jesus.*"

Romans 8:31-33

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

The Bible is full of examples of people who didn't deserve a new beginning but God stepped into the arena of their life and gave them a new beginning. All through the pages of scripture God is giving people another chance.

Rahab was a harlot. She was a woman of the night. Night after night she would be involved in immoral sin. I don't know exactly how or why she ended up in this situation but here she was. She longed for a better way of life. But all was hopeless until she met some spies from God's chosen

people. God gave her a new beginning. She left Jericho and walked into the pages of the New Testament in the line and lineage of Jesus Christ.

I'm talking about a new beginning.

Zacchaeus was a tax collector. He was one of the most hated men in his day. He cheated the people. He robbed the people of all of their substance. He had everything he could ever want. But still he was an empty man and in need of a change in his life. God gave him a new beginning. Don't remember me as I was because Jesus visited my house and gave me a new beginning.

I'm talking this morning about a new beginning.

Peter was a disciple of Jesus. When things got tough Peter folded under the pressure of the crucifixion. He denied his master three times and cursed. He probably felt like it was all over. He could never serve God again. But God gave him a new beginning. And Peter took advantage of that new beginning. It was Peter that stood on the day of Pentecost and delivered one of the most powerful, convicting messages ever preached.

I'm preaching about a new beginning.

Saul was a man who sat at the feet of Gamaliel. He was a learned man. He was a Pharisee of the Pharisees. He turned his knowledge into persecution of the Jews. He did everything in his power to wipe out the church. But there was still an emptiness in his life. He tried to fill it with more persecution and being more vile. But there was still something missing. God gave Saul a new beginning. He changed his name to Paul and Paul became one of the greatest apostles in the scripture.

So many times we find ourselves saying if only I could do it over again. If only I could change this thing about my life that happened in the past. There is no need to fool yourself. You can never go back to the past and change things that have already happened.

It is a trick of the devil to take us into the past, and set us down by all the ships we have watched sink. He would like to dance in our memories, as he

parades through our minds all the failures, the disappointments, and the unhappy moments of bygone years. He'll tell you that you can't live for God because of everything that has happened in the past.

- Satan will tell you that you can't pray this Monday because you didn't pray last Monday. It is the trickery of the adversary to involve us in the past. He does not want us to see today! He would rather weave us into a web of depression, despondency, and discouragement over what took place yesterday. He would like to take us to the rim of all the canyons of the past, and let us listen to the echoes of our failures.

But the apostle Paul said forgetting those things which are behind me and reaching to those things that are before me I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

If Satan can't bewilder you with yesterday, he will try to make you dizzy with tomorrow. Why? Because he is afraid of right NOW!!! He is afraid of today!! God help us to wake up and realize that it's not yesterday or tomorrow but it is today that counts. It all begins with today.

- Illustration of son (we will let him have his own way - he can decide for himself to serve God)
You see it's not over yet! It's not too late to do things you wish you had done. You can start it today! The prayer life you wish you had you can start today! The fasting schedule you planned you can begin today! You messed up last week, that's okay because this is a new day! Today is a new beginning.

You have been addicted to drugs and tried to kick the habit but could not do it yesterday. It is not the ending but the beginning because today is a new day. Today is a new beginning!!!

Aren't you glad that what looks like the last chapter could really be the first chapter? God can create a brand new beginning for you.

Perhaps the enemy of your soul has accompanied you here today and he is reminding you of your life.

- Your failures,
- Your disappointments,
- Your mistakes,
- Times when you've fallen down,
- Times when you didn't do right,
- Times when you gave in to the pressure of sin

He came with stones in his hands. But Jesus has just stooped down and he is writing in the sand of your life today.

Three types of people - each can have a new beginning!

- **What are you going to do for God in prayer this year?**