

New Beginnings

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Preacher: Mark Mathos

- [0 : 0 0] Good morning. So, I want y'all to know, Steve, I need you to correct, make sure I'm telling the truth. Steve, have you and I had any conversations this week?
- Not at all. And I'm a little bit shocked at the words on the screen. No, we haven't talked at all. I haven't recommended any songs, because I do that sometimes.
- I ask whoever's leading worship sometimes to sing certain songs. So, I don't want you to know that that song, I Surrender All, I have like a feat.
- It's like words that get said in between lyrics. So, whenever we do the chorus and we do I Surrender All, I sit and I say, give it all up, give it all up. And then we go to the next I Surrender All, and I say, give it all up, give it all up.
- And I kind of like do that to myself, because I think it's important. I just think that should be added to the song, maybe modernize the song a little. You know, give it all up, alright? And it's New Year's Eve, right?
- [1 : 0 4] It's a new beginning tomorrow, right? Alright, so let's go to the Lord of Prayer and then we'll get into this. So, Father God, Lord, I just come to you.
- And Lord, you are so awesome. The way you work things out, the way you take care of us, the way you bless us, it's just amazing what you do for us.
- And we fall so short. But you are there to love us and grant grace to us. So, Lord, I'm going to come sit down in the back here. And you're going to take over and you're going to be the one giving the message, not me.
- Lord, just open our hearts to what you have to bring to us. I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen. So again, it's a new year, right?
- Tomorrow. And Matt came to me and we had this discussion when we were picking out weeks to preach. And when I got the email, it said that Christmas Eve was open. So I said, I'm going to grab that.
- [2 : 0 9] And so I sent him an email and I said, I want that. And then he emailed me and said, Mark, I made a mistake when I sent this out. I'm preaching on Christmas Eve. But why don't you do New Year's Eve and you can preach on whatever you want.
- And so I really thought about it and I thought, it's a new beginning. That's what tomorrow is, a new beginning. We're going to start fresh. We're going to start over, right?
- And because we're going to start over, I thought it was important that whatever our sermon was, was on a new beginning. And so I really thought deep into it about what we need to talk about.
- And so I came up with these three stories of Jesus in the New Testament and the new beginnings that he gave to people. And the first one that I'm going to speak on is the woman at the well.
- Do you all remember that story, the woman at the well? Y'all know how Jesus and his disciples went into Samaria, right? And they stopped at this well and the disciples went into town.

[3 : 22] And then a woman came along and Jesus said to her, give me a drink. And this woman was a Samaritan. And we all know that the Jews and the Samaritans, they didn't like each other, did they?

They would fight and argue and things like that. And so, and as the story goes, Jesus asked her for a drink of water.

And the woman says, you know, you're a Jew and I'm a Samaritan. We don't get along. And it got to this point here. And this, Mark, go to the next slide.

And this is John chapter 4, verses 19 through 26. This is like 26 verses of just talking to this woman. And I just wanted to narrow down what I thought was the most important.

And that was after he had said to her, look, I know you're married. You're not married. But you've had five husbands. And the man you're living with now isn't your husband.

[4 : 26] And you've been truthful. And they had more discourse and they talked more. And then they came to this. And the woman said to him, sir, I see that you are a prophet.

Our fathers worshipped on this mountain. And you people say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem. Jesus said to her, believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father, neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.

You people worship what you do not know. We worship what we know because salvation is from the Jews. But a time is coming and now is here when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

For the Father seeks such people to be worshippers. God is spirit. And the people who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. The woman said to him, I know the Messiah is coming.

The one called Christ. Whenever he comes, he will tell us everything. And then Jesus said to her, I, the one speaking to you, am he. And we know through the story that she went back into town and told everybody she could.

[5 : 44] But we need to really look at who this woman was first. She was not only a sinner. She had had five husbands. And in today's society, that would be like a man or a woman that lives with five different people.

I don't mean married them. I mean just live with them. Because it's not a big thing nowadays to do that, is it? But that's what this woman was.

And who she was. And notice I said man or woman. Because we're not saying it's women that are bad. We're not saying that it's men that's bad. It's both of them making the wrong decision. But God loves them tremendously.

And here this woman sees this. And she becomes born again. Which means she gets a new beginning.

Just like tomorrow we get a new beginning on a new year. Christ gives us a new beginning when we accept Him as our Savior.

[6 : 55] And we want to honor Him by doing what He thinks is right. Not what we think is right. We get a new beginning, right? Life starts over again.

We're born again. There's that thing born again, you know, guys. And there's that story of Jesus talking to, I believe, Nicodemus about that.

About when He tells Nicodemus. You're going to be born again. And He asked him how I can be born again. And what does He tell? You're born again through the Spirit.

Right? And that's what happens to this woman. She gets born again through the Spirit. She moves on. She has a new beginning. Because her sin lied with not being able to stay with one person.

My mother. And I thought about this today as I was preparing myself again with prayer and thinking about this.

[8 : 00] And I thought to myself, my mom was embarrassed by the word divorced. My mother and my father got divorced. And it was finalized by the time I was 18 months old.

So, see, I never got to live with my dad. But, my mom was so embarrassed that after my dad passed away, even though they hadn't been married for many, many, many years, she would say, I'm a widower.

But my mom never went out and tried to find somebody new. She didn't date ever. Not that I know about anyway. She stayed. And she, so, in her eyes, she was still married to that man.

Even though the legal system said she was divorced. And of all the things my mom's done that aggravated me, because parents will aggravate their children.

That's just how it goes. Mark and I have those conversations a lot. So, but. She stayed true to God's word.

[9 : 12] When it came to that. She stayed true to God's word in a lot of things. And that made her not a sinner.

She was still a sinner. But maybe less. And she was a true, like, inspiration to me. I don't believe in the word divorce. I mean, sorry.

God said, no. It's one of the surest verses in the Old Testament. About how God talks about divorce.

And what He thinks of it. So, it's important that we know. That no matter what the sin is, as far as that goes. God's going to give us a new beginning through Christ.

God's going to give us a new beginning. And that's what we get, is a new beginning. Mark, go to the next slide. So, the next story I want to tell you is about this man.

[10 : 09] And this man was crippled. Okay? For 38 years, this man was crippled. And this is in John chapter 5, verses 1 through 9. And it says, Now, a man who was there had been disabled for 38 years.

Think about that. Think about being crippled for 38 years. And it doesn't necessarily mean that you can't walk and talk or do something.

It could be you're crippled by something that has hold of you. Think about that. Some sin that has hold of you. Something that you're addicted to.

That has hold of you. For 38 years. And when Jesus saw him lying there, when he realized that the man had been disabled a long time already, he said to him, Do you want to become well?

And the sick man answered him, Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up. While I am trying to get into the water, someone else goes down there before me.

[11 : 33] Jesus said to him, Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk. Immediately the man was healed. And he picked up his mat and started walking. Now that day was the Sabbath.

Something that we need to keep an eye on here. For not this story, but if we read deeper into this, we know what the Pharisees were playing. So think about that.

You have been addicted to something. You have been paralyzed by something. Something has a hold of you and told you down for 38 years.

And then Jesus asked you, Do you want to be well? Do you want to be healed? Do you want to get better? And you say, You give him this explanation about trying to get into the water.

Because when the water would bubble, that's when the saying was that there was an angel in there, and if you got to the bubbling first, you got healed, right? But think about that.

[12 : 41] That's the explanation you give, but then you get to the point where you say, Yeah, I want to be healed. I want to get better. And Jesus says, Let you be healed.

And he takes away whatever pain, suffering. He takes away whatever addiction you have. Whatever it is, he takes it away from you and heals you right then and there.

Right. That's your new beginning. Because you don't have a desire to smoke cigarettes anymore. I will tell you that I smoked from the time I was 15 to the time I was 30-something.

And I tried to quit on my own, and I tried to quit using patches and all that stuff. By the way, I don't smoke anymore. I quit smoking, let's see, Marcus 21, 22 years ago.

That's how I know how long ago it was that I quit smoking. And TJ had come to me and said, Dad, I want you to quit smoking because I want you to be around for my kids.

[13 : 44] That is what TJ told me. He was 12 years old when he told me that. And I quit smoking because of God, and I quit cold turkey because of God.

See, God healed me like that. And it came with a new beginning. You see there?

The new beginning. And that's what happened here. And the other thing is, this man did what God, Jesus, told him to.

Jesus said, get up and walk. And what did he do? He didn't give any excuses why he couldn't do what Jesus wanted him to do, did he? He just did it.

Kind of like when Jesus tells Matt Garrett, Matt, I want you to go to First Baptist Church. And I want you to be their interim preacher.

[14 : 44] And what did Matt do? He prayed about it. Didn't he, Matt? Didn't you pray about it a lot? You wanted to make sure it was the right thing. You wanted to make sure it was what God wanted you to do.

But you did go, and you did it. And we're glad to have you back, by the way. Thank you. It's good to be back. Granted, Matt's been back a couple years, but still, it's good to have him back.

But the point I'm making is, if God says, you need to go do this, one, we made sure it's from God, and two, after God says, we go and do it.

You know, I watched this guy preach on, just on these nine verses, not too long ago, and he talked about, and he did this, like, illustration of how hard it would be to stand up after not being able to walk for 38 years.

Think about that. Same thing when you're addicted to something. Something's got a hold of you for a long time. Do you think it's easy to just walk away?

[15 : 56] Not without God's can. Because God can just reach down and take it away from you, and then he puts people in place to help you get through so that you're not just sitting there and trying to do it on your own.

Because we know that all things are possible through Christ who strengthens me. Right? Do we all know that verse? And we've seen it time and time again that when we get that new beginning and we strive to honor what God tells us to do, God brings us through it and puts us in a better place.

I'm not saying it's overnight, but I tell you what, God will make it happen. Because I've seen it. I've experienced it. I know it.

But again, that new beginning comes from Jesus Christ. It doesn't come from us. That's the key. Mark, go to the next slide, please, sir.

So this is the next story. This is the first story that came to mind, by the way, when Matt said I could preach on New Year's Eve and that I could choose anything. And this is in Luke chapter 19, verses 1 through 10.

[17 : 17] This is the story of Zacharias. You all know that story, right? About the little man that climbed up the tree, right? How many kid songs are there about that? So Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it.

Now a man named Zacharias was there. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to get a look at Jesus, but being a short man, he could not see over the crowd.

Kind of like, you know, my daughter Courtney, sitting back there because she's short, you know. And we would have to pick her up. I won't tell you the nickname that she had in the youth group. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him because Jesus was going to pass that way.

And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and he said, Zacharias, come down quickly because I must stay at your house today. So he came down quickly and welcomed Jesus joyfully.

And when the people saw it, they all complained, he has gone to be in the guest of a man who is a sinner. But aren't all of us sinners?

[18 : 24] I'll ask that in the middle of that. But Zacharias stopped and said to the Lord, Lord, Lord, half of my possessions I now give to the poor. And if I have cheated anyone of anything, I am paying back four times as much.

Then Jesus said to him, Today salvation has come to this household because he too is a son of Abraham. For the son of man came to seek and to save the lost.

So let's think about this man. He was a sinner because he was a thief. May have been a tax collector, but he was a thief.

Steve, you see there when you said the word thief earlier, you didn't know this was coming. So that tells me God planned this sermon. Not me. Not Steve.

God planned it, told us what he wanted us to do. So this man's a thief. And here these people are not wanting to be close to Jesus.

[19 : 26] Now because he's going to go eat lunch with somebody that was a sinner. Big deal. Don't we eat lunch with sinners all the time?

Don't we eat dinner with sinners every single day? I don't think any less of my children. I don't think any less of my wife that I eat with every day.

I love them to death. I don't think less of anyone that I have eaten with because I know each and every one of us is a sinner.

and none of us is better than the other. Not in any way, shape, or form. Because I think the people that would say, oh no, he's going to go eat dinner with that guy over there and that guy over there is this or that or the other.

Oh no. That's a hypocrite. That's somebody I don't want to hang with. But I probably would anyway just because of who I am. But I would try to teach them something through my actions of hanging out with people.

[20 : 36] I have a friend and she is a lesbian. And she will come to me and, Mark, so this is going on in my life.

What do I do? And I'll give her godly advice. Why? Because God would want me to do that. So recently, she came to me and she sent me this message and it said, Mark, there's this woman that says if I don't send her \$400, she's going to make these bad things happen to my family and me.

And I said to her, only God is the only one you need to worry about. That person, ignore them. And then you just need to keep praying because God will protect you.

She's just trying to steal from you. Honestly, that's what it was. But the point is, is we can all learn from this story.

Here we see a thief got a new beginning. A tax collector because the tax collectors back then were thieves. They would overcharge the people. Charge more than the Roman government wanted.

[21 : 47] And then they'd pocket the rest. That's why he became a rich man. And the people we run into and we disagree with their beliefs because they're trying to take advantage of us, we have to love on them.

We have to be willing to sit down and have dinner with them. We have to be willing to show them they can get a new beginning. A new beginning in Christ. no matter what they're doing.

Whether they're drug dealers or thieves or they live a life that's not the life that Christ would have us live. it's important that that's what we think about.

How can we help them get a new beginning? Because I tell you what, Christ is what it's all about. I'm telling you. Mark, go to the next slide.

And this is a parable Jesus told. And I think it's so important that we know this. And it's in Luke chapter 15 verses 1-7 and it says, Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming to hear him.

[23 : 00] But the Pharisees and the experts in the law were complaining. This man welcomes sinners and eats with them. Weren't we just kind of talking about that? So Jesus told them in this parable, Which one of you, if he has a hundred sheep and loses one of them, would not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go look for the one that is lost until he finds it?

Then, when he has found it, he places it on his shoulders rejoicing. Returning home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, telling them, Rejoice with me because I have found my sheep that was lost.

I tell you, in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need to repent.

see how important this message is about a new beginning? See how important this scripture is?

How Jesus just left the hunt ninety-nine so he could go find the one. Now one was the woman at the well. Then the one was the man sitting there by this pool.

[24 : 11] Then the one was the tax collector. And the one was Glenn Hawk. And the one was Matt Garrett. And the one was John Howard.

And Teresa and Becky. And Steve Garrett. And everyone that's given their heart to Christ, you were the one.

and you were the one that got a new beginning. And you were the one that he left all to us so he could find you and bring you into the fold.

By the way, y'all know what the fold is? Do y'all know what a fold is when you're herding sheep? Do y'all know what that is? Kind of. And you know who stands in the fold?

Jesus does. Because he's the shepherd. And so the fold is the entrance and the exit to the pen where the sheep are at. And the shepherd lays down in that fold and sleeps there with his cane.

[25 : 24] You know the cane that he carries? So that he can protect those inside the fold. So if a bat, a bad animal tried to get in, you know, like a coyote or a bear because wolves are great animals.

So there's a misconception about wolves. That's just my thinking. So and when they try to get in, he's going to protect you. So when the bad guy tries to get to you, Jesus is laying in that fold so that when that bad guy tries to get in, he goes, get out of here.

You ain't getting mine. You can't have mine. He belongs to me. She belongs to me. Jesus is laying in the fold of everyone that has accepted Christ as their Savior.

And he's protecting you all the time. And all you've got to say is, Jesus, come into my life. I love you, Jesus. And then Jesus will put you in the fold and he'll lay in it so that the bad guy can't get to you.

Whether it's Satan or somebody else. Because we know there's a bunch of bad guys out there. And I get frustrated having to protect people from them in the IT world.

[26 : 47] I do. And Lord, I just we can't thank him enough for putting us in the fold. Let's go to the Lord of Prayer.

Father God, Lord, we just thank you for this message that you brought. I didn't bring it, but you did. I sat in the back and I listened. I sat in the back and let you bring it all to us.

Lord, thank you for this awesome message. Thank you for being the one that gives us a new beginning. That not only gives us a new beginning, but protects us as you put us in the fold.

I pray all of this in the name of Jesus. Amen.