

"Behold, I'm doing a new thing!"

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[0 : 01] So, I'm going to just read a little bit of scripture to you, because this is what God has laid on my heart for you this morning. So, it's from Isaiah 43, and we're going to be looking quite a bit through Isaiah.

And we're also going to be looking through Ephesians 2, which goes quite nicely with it. So, it says this. This is what the sovereign Lord says.

Actually, I put sovereign in there, and it didn't say that, but he is sovereign anyway. He who made a way through the sky, a path through the mighty waters, who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and the 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'm doing a new thing.

Now it springs up. Do you not perceive it? I'm making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. Amen.

[1 : 11] God bless his word to us, eh? Well, it's very apparent to me that God is doing new things. He's doing certainly new things in my life. In a funny sort of way, although I've been here nine years, this still feels like a new thing, being in this church, doing what we're doing in Whitby.

Because we come from Chesterfield way off from here, and this is the first move of any of the family has really made beyond 30 miles of Chesterfield. So we're a bit of an introverted lot, I guess.

But before we actually get into what I've got to say, let me just say that in our own lives, new things come to us. New experiences, new possessions.

And this talk this morning was sparked by what we shared in worship last week about God's creation being there for all to see. And what that reveals to people of his nature.

But I believe that God is being creative now, and wants to be creative in our lives right now. But what do we feel and experience when new things and experiences come into our lives?

[2 : 20] And this next thing that we're going to do is a bit different, in that we're going to be doing a bit of interactive stuff, sharing about positives, likes, or negative dislikes of new things in our lives.

And if any of the kids want to shout anything out that's new to them and they want to do that, or they can do it through the parents, whatever, I'd like to get them involved, really. So, new things. Let's think about new things.

I'll get you started, Shella. I was telling Sandy about this. Have you ever opened a new jar of coffee? Oh, man. I love breaking the seal on a new jar of coffee.

Oh, actually, we're very posh in our family. I forgot. A new bag of, you know, processed, proper coffee, which we do drink every morning. But have you ever had that smell? Mmm. Love the new smell, Sandy.

Get that down as a positive. A new smell. Yeah, smells fresh. Smells good. Okay. Ever jumped into a new car? Yeah?

[3 : 23] No, I'm afraid not. Me neither. Only at the showroom, anyway. I do jump into them if I'm going to the showroom to get mine serviced. Well done. 1978. And she can still remember, everybody.

Woo! Yes, I've never jumped into a new car, but that new car smell. Woo! Yeah? Thinking, I'm the first person in this. Wow, that's great.

Superb. I love it. But you know there's some negatives as well, isn't there? New things are scary, I think.

Yeah? I have a bit of a fear of failure. Anybody want to shout out some positives and negatives? Positives about new things? Go on then. Let's have some.

Right, okay. Moving swiftly on from that. That was a positive or a negative? All right.

[4 : 20] Any positives? Go on then, Paul. Lovely. I'm not sure. I'm not sure. Motorbikes? New motorbikes? Motor cars. Motor cars. Oh, motorbike. Okay, we'll stick that on the bottom there. Has anybody got any other new things that are positive? Sorry, on the bottom of that list, I mean. Sorry? Rest in a dog. Feels great, yeah. What's the feelings, though? Let's think about the feelings. Let's go for feelings, shall we? What's the feelings? Uncertainty under negatives. Yeah, anybody else? Excitement for positives. Excitement for positives. Like it? I'll come back to you in a minute, Paul. I'm just... Yeah. Any ideas, sir? Not sure. Not sure what he's saying. Okay. Anybody up in the posh seats? Any ideas?

[5 : 29] Feelings about new things? Or negatives about new things? Sorry? Sorry? What did you... Shout it again. Hope. Hope. Love it. Hope. Positives. Absolutely. Hopes. Anybody else? Relief. Yeah? Relief. Yeah. Sometimes the situation we're in, a new thing is a relief to get into it, isn't it? Yeah? Okay. Shelley's doing that to me. Second back row. Oh, yeah. The loss of something. Yeah? Losing what we had. Letting go of what we had sometimes. Good. Loving this. Anybody else? Negative fear. Negative fear. Definitely. Definitely. Yeah, if you like.

[6 : 37] Can be both positive and negative, can't it? Yeah. Yeah. It can be hard, but sometimes we know it's the right thing as well. It can be a positive thing. Because sometimes when we're holding things in our hand to let them go, it releases our grip to grab something new.

And that's quite important as well, isn't it? Yeah. Okay. Anybody else? Mike? Unexpected new church building. Unexpected new church building. Well, certainly God is doing a new thing in this place.

If you don't believe he is, just have a chat to one of us at the end. He's doing new things here, for sure. New church building. Any more emotions? Tears of joy.

Joy in the positives then. We got one from Paul? Okay. Paul's banging something on here.

Hospitals. Well, that's definitely something to like, isn't it? That's definitely something to like. A new hospital has been good, actually, down in Whitby, hasn't it?

[7 : 38] That worked out well. Yeah. Joy. Is that a negative? I think that's a positive, isn't it? You'll have to forgive us his due.

Any more before we finish? Any more? Music. Music is positive. Yeah. Okay. Right. We've got quite a selection there on there.

Go on then, Paul. One more. Go on. You're going to have to get that. Write it down for me. Write it down. We'll add it. Okay. We're going to have to move on because I'm just desperately aware of time.

Go on. Say that again. Your new home. Yeah? Newness. New home. A new home. And that can be literal or not literal.

It can be where we dwell in. A new place to dwell. Great stuff. Right. I'm going to move on from that because I've got a list of things. And that was a bit of an experiment, really, for me. It's probably going to not work at all, but there we go.

[8 : 39] But, no, it's good, isn't it? It's good to sort of think about how new things make us feel. How new things make us feel. It's really, really quite important. Okay.

The first point that I want to make is this. We need to know that the new thing that we're entering, the new thing that we're partaking of or entering into is right.

That it's of God. When God does anything new, it's rooted in its unchanging nature. In His unchanging nature.

Any new shoots, and we can see some seeds on there, that grow from the plant, are specifically true to the nature of the seed planted.

It takes its nature from the seed. So if we look up at those seeds there now, they're all seeds. I dropped that one at the bottom because I felt a hue. Yeah. The acorn at the bottom.

[9 : 37] Yeah. Planting of the Lord for the display of His splendor. Oaks of righteousness. Got that really clearly for you this morning. Yeah. Okay. Can you add it, Sandy, to the list?

Okay. Paul's. What Paul got. So we've got apple seeds. Apple seeds will produce apple trees.

Yeah. Acorns will produce oaks. What are those on the left-hand side?

Anybody tell me what they are in the hand? They are sunflower seeds. Well done. Yes, they are sunflower seeds. Excellent. So the thing to remember then is that anything, any shoots that grow

from the plant are specifically true to the nature of the seed planted.

It takes its nature from the seed. When God plants seed in our lives, it's done from God's nature. His disposition towards us.

And anything that springs forth from that will be filled firstly with His love for us. and our identity as His children. So for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

[10:47] John 3.16, very familiar to us. But also in Isaiah 43 itself in verse 4. Since you are precious and honoured in my sight, and because I love you, I will give people in exchange for you.

And we of course know now that Jesus was given in exchange for us. Which is tremendous, isn't it? Nations in exchange for your life. In John 1 verse 11 to 13.

He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him. That's the Jewish people. Yet to all who did not receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.

That is our right. We are children of God. Yeah? We're loved. I love you. If we know that the new thing that we're entering, God is in control of, we can know that He loves us.

And we can know His plans and purposes for us. Okay? Yet to all who receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.

[11:54] Children not born of natural descent, nor of human decision, or a husband's will, but born of God. Ephesians 2 verse 10 also says, For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works.

And that leads on to something else that we're going to be doing about next. How are we doing with these negatives? If you think about God's love for you and your position in Christ, how are you feeling about these negatives?

Does it help with them? Does it help about stepping into a new experience in your life? Does it deal with your sense of uncertainty? Does it deal with warfare?

Warfare? I didn't see that one. The difficulty of moving on. Does it deal with that? Yes, it does.

Yeah. Does it deal with letting go? To some extent, when we know we've got Jesus holding our hands, it's not going to be easy.

I'm not saying this transition into new things is going to be easy. Please don't think that. Please don't think it's necessarily going to be easy. But we do know that God's love for us is taking us through all that.

[12:57] Amen? Yeah? Taking us into the new thing. And our nature is that we are children of God now. Amen. So that's good, isn't it? It's also down, these new purposes that we move into, these new experiences, are also, they're going to spring forth from His redemption, from His saving plans and His purposes.

Okay? In 43 verse 1, but now this is what the Sovereign Lord says, He who created you, O Jacob, He who formed you, O Israel, do not fear, for I have...

Anybody want to finish me off? Redeemed you. Redeemed you. Yeah. I have summoned you by name. There's a beautiful part. If you watch The Chosen, on The Chosen app, it's the story of people who Jesus called.

There's a beautiful part where Jesus confronts Mary. Mary's had this scripture from her early life, and she's lost it. She's lost the truth of it. She's destroyed the truth of it in her life by what's happened to her.

And Jesus just comes up and puts her hands around her face, and she said, I have redeemed you. I have summoned you by name. It's a personal thing.

[14:09] God has done that for all of us by name. If you've not experienced God calling you by name, ask Him to. To reassure you. To put His arms around you. And He will. I promise you.

Okay. So do not fear. I have redeemed you. I have summoned you by name. In verse 3, it says, I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.

So He has saving plans and purposes for us in this new thing. Ephesians 2 verse 1 to 3 paints a real bleak picture of where we stand without Jesus.

Just listen to this. As for you, you were dead. Great. In your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world under the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh, following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

[15:16] We deserve God's wrath. That's the truth this morning. We all do. Whether we think we've lived great lives, good lives, I can tell you, you're misguided if you think that's the truth. Because we've all fallen short of the glory of God.

And we all need God's forgiveness. But then I love verse 4, going back really to the previous thing. Because of His great love for us. Not because I'm any better than anybody else.

And nobody in this church is any better than anybody else off the street. Yeah? Nobody. Nobody. But because of His great love for us. God who is rich in mercy made us alive.

We've been made alive again with Christ. Even though we were dead in transgressions. It's by grace that you've been saved. These purposes that come into life, these new experiences, are filled with God's grace for us.

Remember that. They're filled with God's grace. This new life that Jesus has given us is eternal. And it fills our daily life.

[16:21] Day after day. Hour by hour. Minute by minute. Second by second. Millisecond by whatever. Yeah? Just remember that God's new life is there for you. His grace is there for you.

For I know the plans I have for you. This is personal. He's saying this to you this morning. For I know the plans I have for you. These are my plans.

Don't know what you want to do with them. Declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you. And not to harm you. Plans to give you a hope and a future. This right hand side of the board for me is disappearing.

Yeah? As I'm hearing this. I hope it is for you. Yeah? Lots of us I know are going to be experiencing new things in our life. And there's a lot of trepidations. There's a lot of fear. There's a lot of things on that negative side of the board that we're having to deal with.

But I can tell you with full certainty. That God's plans in our lives are to prosper us. Not to harm us. But to give us a hope and a future.

[17:23] And it's all about our response to us. It's all about our response to that. Okay? Finally, the last thing on this bit is. His authority over all things.

God is over all things. That makes me feel good. I don't know about you. Isaiah 43, 10 and 11 says. Before me, no God was formed. Nor will there be one after me.

I, even I, am the Lord. And apart from me, there's no saviour. And again, in verse 12. You are my witnesses that I am God.

Yes. And from ancient of days I am He. No one can deliver out of my hand. No one can deliver you out of God's hand. No matter what happens around you. Nobody can take you out of God's hand.

Nobody. It's not possible. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?

[18:22] Is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. The beginning and the end, it says in verse 13 of Revelation chapter 22. Colossians 1 to 7. He is before all things.

And in Him, all things hold together. Happy? You happy about this this morning?

Yeah? Taking it to heart? It's good to know that these aspects of God's nature and our position in Him are at the centre of anything new that God births in our lives.

All this is part of the seed of new life or experience God has for you. I just want to focus on verse 16, 21 very quickly. I already see that I'm well out of time.

So just forgive me for just whistling through this, if you would. Firstly, in verse 16, 17, God reminds the people of Israel of His redeeming nature about He delivered them from the land of Egypt.

[19:24] How He delivered them when their backs were against the wall, up against the Red Sea, pursued by chariots and horses and armies and reinforcements. Nowhere to go.

How He made a way through the sea so that they walked on through it on dry land. How He destroyed their pursuers in verse 17. And there they lay, never to rise again, extinguished.

Snuffed out like a wick. I love that bit. But the interesting thing that is, He says that and then in verse 18 He says this. Forget the former things. Do not dwell on the past.

Seems like a contradiction, doesn't it? To talk about all that stuff that He's done in the past. And then say, forget about it. Doesn't it? But I believe what God is saying, you know, because they were so steeped in their traditions.

You know how your fathers and your forefathers have said about this awesome God who loved them and created them and redeemed them and delivered them and chosen them. Well, that's me.

[20 : 30] That's me. I am He. That's what God is saying to them. That's me. It's not to just say, okay, this stuff has happened.

You know, and we believe it's happened and that's great. Our response to that shouldn't be, righto, thanks for letting me know. We'll just carry on in our current state, following all our traditions and doing what we've always done, preserving what's gone on before.

And here's the key thing, little expectation of anything new and significant happening to move us forward. Hey, can you remember it till days when God did stuff?

Hey, wasn't it great? When God used to do stuff. Can you remember that? Yeah? There's nothing wrong with remembering what God has done. In fact, Mike's already mentioned it this morning. Little Ebeneezers as we go along. I think it was you when you were praying, Mike, wasn't it? Yeah. Nothing wrong with these little Ebeneezers because these little Ebeneezers, these stones that we set up in our lives, these key points where God has met with us, they remind us who God is.

[21 : 41] That's the thing. It's not the event themselves. It's because we see that God has been us thus far. God has helped me.

The Lord has helped me. So why does the Lord go on to say, forget the former things? Well, I believe it's because they've become trapped in looking back and had no intention of changing what they did in the light of the new thing God was doing.

There was no inclination towards the new thing that God was doing. They were happy taking their identity from what had happened before rather than moving into the new thing, the new existence that God had for them.

Do not dwell on the past, it says. Those that dwell in the past live in the past. In verse 19, see I am doing a new thing. Now it springs up.

Do you not perceive it? Sometimes we don't perceive the new stuff that God is doing and wanting to do in our lives or the extent to which it will require change. But are we ready and willing to ask him how he wants to do that?

[22 : 48] Are we willing to ask him to help us to accommodate that new thing in our lives? Because he goes on to say I'm making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

Are you worried about a new thing that's happening? Are you worried about not knowing how to be successful in the new way? Are you worried about what you'll need in the new thing God has for you?

He will make a way for you. He will make a new path through the wilderness, through the desert. He will make a new path. Isaiah 30 verse 21 says whether you turn to the right or to the left your ears will hear a voice behind you saying this is the way.

Walk in it. That's the Holy Spirit, our guide, our counsellor. Are you worried about being alone with it? God says to you this morning I will never leave you or forsake you says the Lord.

That's Joshua 1.5 and Hebrews 13.5 as well. So a final look at the board. I'm tempted to do a Bruce Forsyth at this point and say let's have a look at what we've written misfitting.

[24 : 08] I'm not saying that some of these won't be a struggle but what I'm saying is let's think about God's nature as we move into the new things.

Let's think about his love for us. Let's think about his position for us. Let's think about his authority over all things. Yeah? Let's give God the glory. Let's move in faith into these new things.

I'm just going to finish off now. I am a little bit over time. I do apologise because I don't want to just leave this and leave it up in the air. I want to just post some questions to you.

I hope you can see those. Are we looking for and anticipating a new thing from God or are we settled? Are we asking him to show it to us?

If we're not perceiving anything new are we asking him to show us the new thing he has for us? I believe God has new things for all of us. I believe his plan is to change us from glory into glory.

[25 : 10] Yeah? That's what the Bible says anyway. So I think God's got new things for us new experiences. Are we willing to change? That's a key thing. The way we run our lives to accommodate it and be part of it.

Are we willing to step out in faith knowing that he is able to do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine? Will we declare that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me?

I like that. You will never need more than he can supply. Amen? Shall we just pray for a minute?

Father, sorry for wittering on this morning Lord but I thank you Lord that you gave me something that you laid on my heart and I trust that as I've shared that you will take it out and you will

challenge people that people will be reminded of your word to them Lord and we do it in faith. We do it all in faith. Moving forward is all in faith. It's in faith of you Lord because we know we have no resource in ourselves and every good gift comes from our Father who doesn't change like shifting shadows.

He's always good and true to his nature. So we ask in Jesus name that your word would have effect when it needs to have effect and Lord we ask you to challenge us and to move us by the power of your spirit this week into the new things that you have for us.

[26 : 39] Amen. Amen. Amen.