

Each Day Is a New Beginning

February 17 & 18, 2018

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Go to the book of *Lamentations*, however you want to get there, turn your device on or turn in your Bible. The book of *Lamentations* was written by the prophet Jeremiah, and the word lamentation means “to cry out” to God. The prophet Jeremiah wrote this book soon after the Babylonians had destroyed Jerusalem, leveled it, broke down the walls, ransacked the temple, took all the treasures out of the temple, and Jeremiah had seen this. King Zedekiah was the king of Judah, and in front of the remnant who was left, they marched his sons and killed his sons in front of him and then blinded him so that the last thing he would ever remember was his sons being killed. Jeremiah had witnessed the brightest and best of the population being shackled with chains and marched off into captivity to the city of Babylon. He had seen all the destruction, the horror and bloodshed of war, and even though he had prophesied a judgment was coming, his mind couldn’t comprehend how bad it was. And when he looked at all this, he cries out to God, “Where are you in all this?” If you read the first 2-1/2 chapters, he cries out to God, “Where are you in all this? Have you abandoned us? How can this possibly be your will? How can this possibly be in your plan?” Now those questions I would think are familiar to many of us. Things have happened in our lives, and we love Jesus, and we are trusting Him with our lives, and these things come into our lives, and we go, “Really? How is something good going to come out of this? How, Lord, can this be your plan?”

Jeremiah and the remnant of Jews who were there were looking into an unknown future. The Babylonians had come and taken everything. If it was valuable, they took it. If you had livestock, they took it. Now the remnant is looking to Jeremiah, of course, he is the prophet, and Jeremiah doesn’t have the answers except he is just crying out to God with everyone else. On top of that, Jeremiah is the one who had prophesied that this was going to happen if they didn’t come back to God. His warnings were ignored. They even persecuted him, and the result was the destruction of Jerusalem. So the Babylonians are gone; now what?

In *Lamentations* as he is crying out to God, and in Chapter 3 things change a little bit. Things change a little bit as Jeremiah reminds himself of God’s character and faithfulness. Now before we read this, we are in the midst of a series that I am doing entitled, “*Twelve Scriptures that Will Set on Fire the Course of Your Life.*” Now I want you to remember before we read this scripture, these scriptures were not just randomly picked by me. They are scriptures that have impacted my life over the last 43 years of being a Christian. These scriptures, as I have embraced them and lived them out, have set on fire the course of my life. We are going to read verse 21, but the scripture that we are going to really concentrate on are verses 22 and 23.

Lamentations 3:21-23 (NASB)

This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. The LORD’S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.

In the midst of mourning, in the midst of feeling like God has abandoned him, he reminds himself of God’s faithfulness, and that changes everything. He reminds himself that he is God’s prophet. God’s word always comes to pass. God’s word always accomplishes what God set out to do. And then he understood, also, that God is working. God is always working.

Lamentations 3:25

The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, (And when you wait on God, you’re waiting for His purpose, His plan. You are trusting Him) To the person who seeks Him.

Now no matter what you are going through or will go through, if you are a Christian and know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, He is working in your life. He is working in that situation. Paul said in Philippians 2:13 that He is working to will His good pleasure. I want to say something else. I'm just going to interject something. This message today is for Christians. It is for that person who has given your life to Jesus Christ. If you haven't done that this morning, I hope this message prompts you to jealousy. Because what I'm going to talk about is magnificent. It is one of the greatest things I can think about about living life as a Christian. And my prayer is that if you don't know Jesus, you'll make a decision to do that before this service is even over.

Because there is a shift in his thinking, maybe Jeremiah reminded himself of a prophetic word that God had given him that he gave to the Jewish nation. In Jeremiah 29:11 and many of us know this verse.

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans that I have for you, ' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.

Many of you have that memorized, and if you look at that verse and you believe that it is God's word and it is a prophetic word over your life, it can't help but stir faith, confidence that God has your life in His hands and He is working in it. Deuteronomy 31:8 is another one of my favorite verses. I have a lot of favorite verses. Deuteronomy 31:8 says that God is not only with us, but He goes ahead of us. So God is not only working in whatever situation you may find yourself in today, but He has also gone ahead of you into your future. He is planning the way.

Lamentations 3:22-23

The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.

The reason this is 1 of the 12 scriptures that will set on fire the course of your life is because of this truth right here:

Jesus has given us freedom and hope from yesterday's failures, tragedies or loss.

I know what it's like to have a heavy burden on your life, to be full of guilt, shame, loss, failure. And it just seems like this failure, this thing that has happened, and it's usually your fault, just won't go away. You are beating up on yourself. Others are beating up on you, and it is hard to look into the future. It is hard to have any hope about the future because this thing is hanging over you. It is hard to look past the event, the loss, the sin, the failure, the shame. You go to bed; it's there. You wake up in the middle of the night; it's there. You get up in the morning; it's there. You go to work, and there is always someone who wants to remind you about it. And if you're like me, you are very hard on yourself. But remember Jesus has given us freedom from that and hope from yesterday's failures, tragedies, and loss. When I embraced this truth, I mean really embraced it, it changed my life. You see, for most of us as Christians, that is theological, that is Orthodox Christianity: Jesus died on the cross. He put all my failures and sins upon Himself, died on the cross for me so I can have forgiveness. For so many of us that truth is up here, but it hasn't come to our hearts. The truth is that yesterday is over. Yesterday is over. God, Jesus, my Savior, wants me to concentrate on today.

I want to interject something here before I move on. There might be someone here this morning who has recently lost a loved one, and I'm not specifically speaking to you. I am in a way, some of this message will relate to you, but there is a time to grieve. Ezekiel tells us there is a time to grieve, and so brother or sister, take time to grieve, but I hope you understand that God has more life for you to live, and there is going to come a time when He is going to challenge you that it is time to move on; God's got a life for you to live. You don't forget about that loved one, but God has more life for you to live.

But I want to get back to this about failure and shame. Yesterday's failure, yesterday's shame. Do you understand that if you've asked God to forgive you, He doesn't even think about it? It is not even important to Him. It doesn't come to His mind. He doesn't remember it or it doesn't come to His mind. All Jesus cares about is today, what you are going to do today. If you are going to trust Him today, if you are going to obey Him today, if you are going to live for Him today. He is not interested in your past. You and I don't have to drag around our failures on our necks like a ball and chain. Like I said, people are going to remind you, Satan wants to remind you, but God doesn't. He has forgiven you. If you've asked the Lord to forgive you, the Bible says that that sin is as far as the east is from the west. The reason why we will always have a cross in this church and it will always be here as long as I'm breathing, is because that is what Jesus did for us on the cross. Jesus' death was not just for eternal life. As wonderful as it is that you and I don't have to fear death, but it was so that you and I could experience the forgiveness of sins in the here and now. God wants to give us vision and hope for the future, and that only happens when you look forward and not backward. That only happens when you look forward and not backward.

I have 4 questions, and we are going to run through them quickly. This is the first service, and I can't dilly dally. You can ask yourself these questions.

Four Questions

- 1. Are the sins, loss, or failures of the past hanging over your head like a cloud?**
- 2. When you pray does something inside of you doubt that God's going to hear you?**
- 3. Do you feel as if your potential to be used by God is over or is sorely hampered? Do you think that you are damaged goods? That your potential is limited?**
- 4. Are you afraid to move ahead in your life, make decisions, or take a step of faith?**

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions or any part of these questions, this message, if you take it to heart, will change your life. It will change your life. It is so sad for me as a pastor to see Christians who are stuck. They are stuck in their past. They just can't move out of it. They have let the past define the present, and they have left the past define their future. I'm not condemning anybody in here. I have compassion for that. I see it too often. Some of these things that you dear people have gone through are horrific, but don't let the past define your present or your future. Jesus said, "Don't let the past define how you experience life today or how you plan and look forward to the future. I died so you would have a positive and hopeful attitude for the future." Now, sure there are consequences for when we fail, when we disobey God, when we do something stupid, and I know all about stupid. There are consequences that we have to experience, but God says He will help us go through that. He will help us through that until we have victory. He will help us navigate the consequences to the point where we can ultimately have victory. Not only have victory but Romans 8:28 tells us, Christian, you know this verse, that not only will God give us victory, but that situation that we thought was going to kill us, that we thought was going to affect us the rest of our lives, God has used that and turned it around for our good.

Do you want to revolutionize your life? Do you want to radically change how you live each day? Then simply embrace the truth that as a Christian your future is unlimited. Your potential is unlimited. You are looking at me like deer in the headlights. I'm going to say that again. Christians, do you understand that because Jesus Christ is living inside of you, the power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead is living inside of you, your potential for the future is unlimited. Your potential is unlimited. In Romans 8:11, Ephesians 1:18-19, Ephesians 3:20, Paul is praying for the Ephesians and for the Romans that they would understand the power that resides inside of them. Jesus said that He was going to give us the Holy Spirit. He was going to make His abode with us (John 14:23) and that wells of living water would break forth from our innermost being. If you bring everything to God in prayer, you can unleash God's influence, His possibilities into your situation. Therefore, your future is unlimited because God is in your future. And friends, that is what the devil will do everything he can to make sure you don't understand. The devil wants you to define your present by the past. He wants you to define your future by the past. Your loss, your failure, your tragedy does not have to define your future.

I hope you understand that constantly dwelling on the past, even though Jesus has forgiven you, is going to keep you from experiencing what Jesus' death, one of the reasons why He died for you is so you could experience, and that was to enjoy each day and have success in it.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Look, I've sinned against people. "Not you!" Yes, me. I have failed God. I have missed opportunities. I have disobeyed God. I have said things I shouldn't have said, and that shouldn't surprise anybody, and I have done stupid things, and that shouldn't surprise anybody either. Many of these things have kept me up all night. I just couldn't shake them. Over and over and over again. But when I embraced the truth of the cross that God really did forgive me. It is not just something that we sing about. It is real. Jesus took that failure, that stupid thing you did, on Himself on the cross so that you could live in freedom from it. Jesus, when He looks at you, He doesn't even remember. If you've asked for forgiveness, it isn't even in His mind. He's not even thinking about it. All the Lord God who created the universe is thinking of you when you get up in the morning is: "What can we do today?" They don't even come to God's mind. What is important to Jesus is how I react today, how I love today, how I obey today, how I trust today. You see that changed everything in my life.

I'm going to talk about this in a few minutes, but nobody can beat up David Hoffman like David Hoffman. Forgiveness is freedom. Forgiveness is freedom. Say it with me. Forgiveness is freedom. When you understand that you can live differently than most of the people in this world by accessing the forgiveness of the cross, you will be free. Jesus said, "I came that you might have freedom." Freedom from guilt. Freedom from the expectations of others. Freedom from pronouncements of others. Freedom from lies. Freedom from self-accusation. Freedom from feeling like a failure. Freedom from hopelessness. You see, forgiveness is freedom.

Each Day is a New Beginning

Today is a new day to live differently, to react differently, to trust God. I have said it repeatedly; I am going to say it again, understanding this truth will radically change your life. It will set on fire the course of your life. Because if you're like me, no one is better than beating up me than me. Now God has given us as human beings, He has created our minds, and it is a gift that we can remember. As you get older, I can tell you, a lot of the memories are wonderful. They are a blessing. All the good things with my children. But memories can also be our enemy.

The apostle Paul had a dreadful past. I mean you couldn't get any worse. If he would have dwelt on what he once was, he would have been neutralized. He would have never come into what God had for him. Guys, he persecuted Christians. He rounded them up and threw them in prison. He took their coats so that they could kill Stephen. He had blood on his hands. He was responsible not only for Stephen's death but many others. The Bible says he ravaged the church. By his own admission in 1 Timothy 1:15, he said, "I am the chief of all sinners." Paul could have been crippled by the horrible things he had done, and believe me there were plenty of people in the church who didn't want him to forget it. I'm sure there was someone who was always reminding him and couldn't wait to get rid of him. As a matter of fact, when he got to Jerusalem, it wasn't long before they put him on a boat and said, "See ya. God bless," and no one contacted him for 7 or 8 years.

You know, when you read the New Testament you get a sense of what Paul was like. He had to be discouraged when they put him on that boat and sent him away and when nobody said anything. The apostles, as far as we know, had really no communication with him for 7 or 8 years. Paul could have easily given in to all this, but listen to what he said in Philippians 3:13-14.

Philippians 3:13-14

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul learned that we are going to fail. Tragedy is going to come into our lives. We are going to do things and shake our heads and say, "Where was my mind?" We can't allow ourselves to dwell too long on the past. We can't let even peoples' opinions of us dictate our future. Everybody's got an opinion. I get letters all the time telling me how I've blown it. Like I don't know. People just have this need to tell me how I've blown it, and now they're leaving the church or whatever. Like I don't already know it. Like the devil isn't beating on me.

This is what I know. Nothing you've done in the past, no person's opinion of you can keep you from the forgiveness of God. Jesus loves you. Nothing you've done, peoples' opinions of you, letters you get, hateful stuff, can keep you from God's forgiveness and Him anointing you for that day. None of those things. None of those failures or people can keep you from enjoying that day and being successful in it. The only thing that can keep you is to hang onto the past. I'm absolutely convinced that Jesus wants to anoint us to have success in this day and enjoy the day. If you can get this in your head, I guarantee you're going to live life differently. It took me until I was 40 years old to figure this out.

Each day the alarm goes off. I get up and I go downstairs and praise God for the automatic coffee maker. I don't know what people did without them. It is there. It is ready to go. The Lord has blessed me with where I live. I was able to build my own house. That was one of the things that I asked the Lord when I was 20-something. I said, "I'll go into the ministry but could you let me build my own house?" Our house is on a hill, and one whole side of it is just windows, 4 giant windows facing east. I see the mountains, and when the sun comes up, God announces a new day at my house. Sometimes it's a problem, I mean it's so bright. But I go down, and every day I'm reminded that this is a new day. So many mornings I find myself saying, "This is the day the Lord has made, I'm going to rejoice and be glad in it." Especially when I'm dealing with something and been up all night or worrying about something that someone else did. "This is the day the Lord has made, I will rejoice and be glad in it. Lord, you have made this day. You have anointed me this day. You want me to enjoy this day and have success in it." It changes everything.

I'm going to end here with one last truth:

God wants our lives to be defined by the possibilities of the future not the past.

Christian, get ahold of this truth and you will never be the same. Not only will you not be the same but you will live your life differently than most of the people around you. If you and I can get this in our head that the past is behind us, God is worried about today, and He has anointed us to enjoy this day and be successful in it, it'll change your life and people around you will notice it. ***The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.***

Every day I pray something along these lines: "Lord, as I live out this day, Lord, help me not to say anything, do anything, speak anything, infer anything, or write anything that brings shame to You, Your Kingdom, or my family." Now how many of you know there is many a day where I do just that, and there is many a day where I go to bed beating myself up, and I lie there, and I can't wait to see the light coming through there, going "It's a new day." I jump up, I go downstairs, I remember the fact that this is a new day. Jesus has forgiven me, and all Jesus cares about really is how I trust Him today, how I obey Him today. He will help me through whatever. If there are consequences, He will help me through those consequences today. But this is the day the Lord has made, I'm going

to rejoice because of what God is going to do with me and through me today. "I'm going to try to trust You today. I'm going to try to obey You today. Yesterday is over. What matters to You is today, and I'm going to try to live for You." Do you understand how that can change your life? Each day is a new beginning. If you start embracing this today, tomorrow morning when you get up, it will set on fire the course of your life. You will experience life differently. You won't miss out on many things that God has for you, and I'm not standing up here and saying every morning I'm a paragon. You know, sometimes it takes me a couple of mornings for this truth to get in here, but the sooner the truth gets in the head that God has forgiven me, I need to move on, He's got things for me to do, the better I am.