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Starting The New Year Fresh
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As we enter into a new year sometimes we begin to make many resolutions of things that we think we want to do ie: go on a diet, start exercising, reading our bible more and spending quality time with the Lord, but usually in a short period of time, we find that we haven't done those things that we thought at the time were so important. Why do we make these resolutions? Is it because others are making them and we want to do what the world is doing or are we really sincere in wanting to make a change in our lives? If you are going to make a resolution make up your mind to stick to it, it will require persistence, endurance and much discipline. These are words that we don't like to hear, but they are in the bible and will enable us to be fruitful and grow in the Lord.

The following scriptures teach us how to let go of the past and look toward to the future. Many believers in different churches are in agreement that there is going to be a turn around this upcoming year and that we all should be ready to participate with what may be happening, seeing miracles, deliverances, outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a greater way, people ministering to others, not just the fivefold ministries, but the general population of believers and a move in the young people, the smaller children, a great revival. A good year to move ahead, not a year to draw back, businesses and families will prosper, walking in faith in a greater measure.

Isaiah 43:18-19 "Forget about what's happened; don't keep going over old history. Be alert, be present. I'm about to do something brand-new. It's bursting out! Don't you see it? There it is! I'm making a road through the desert, rivers in the badlands." MESSAGE

The greatest gift we can give is forgiveness, don't hang onto the things that happened so long ago. We can't see things that are new if we are always tied to the past mistakes, going over them all the time. God is going to make favor and increase for us, things that we cannot even image, providing provision where there has not been provision before.

Isaiah 54:1-5 "Sing, barren woman, who has never had a baby. Fill the air with song, you who've never experienced childbirth! You're ending up with far more children than all those childbearing women." God says so! 2 "Clear lots of ground for your tents! Make your tents large. Spread out! Think big! Use plenty of rope, drive the tent pegs deep. You're going to need lots of elbow room for your growing family. You're going to take over whole nations; you're going to resettle abandoned cities. 3 Don't be afraid—you're not going to be embarrassed. Don't hold back—you're not going to come up short. 4 You'll forget all about the humiliations of your youth, and the indignities of being a widow will fade from memory. 5 For your Maker is your bridegroom, his name, God-of-the-Angel Armies! Your Redeemer is The Holy of Israel, known as God of the whole earth." MESSAGE

v. 1 - barren, never experiencing answered prayer, always beginning something, but quitting and losing hope, planted seeds but never saw the harvest, but we can experience the goodness of God by having a merry heart and singing

v. 2 there is no small thinking with God, make preparation for good things, our lives and visions will be stretched, coming to a new level in believing and trusting God,

v. 3 no embarrassment, will not come up short, sometimes people let pride get in their way and the fear of failing

v. 4 forgetting all the things of the past, failure will fade from our memory

v. 5 our redeemer is the Lord

God sees us through His Son, Jesus Christ seated with Him in heavenly places, all things under our feet, we are seen as winners not failures, as completing our course and not quitting.

In the following scriptures we find that Paul is in jail in Philippi, the jail was a small enclosure in the ground with a rock on the top, like a dungeon without much light to see by. He is wondering if all his ministry has been useless and is probably over for him. He had been betrayed by others and is feeling alone, but he is confident that the work that had been started in him would be finished. He hasn't quit, hasn't given up but is pressing toward the final goal that makes him realize that it has all been worth it.

Phil 1:6 "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:" KJV

Going into this new year, the word that was spoken prophetically in Isaiah regarding our being able to let go of the past, forgetting all those things that have tried to drag us down, we must be like Paul, knowing the good thing that has been started in us, we will be able to finish if we keep our eyes on the goal set before us not looking back. God is not done with us yet. Paul goes on to say in the next scriptures that he knows that it is for his good and all that has happened in his life, by letting go of the past not looking back, he will not be ashamed and will continue with boldness. Paul was expecting his deliverance to come and every time he heard the stone being moved over his head he was waiting to be released, he never gave up hope.

Phil 1:19-20 "For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 20 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death." KJV

We should all be expecting great things to happen this year, spiritually and in the kingdom of God, a change in our lives, increase and favor regardless of where we might be, expecting and receiving the best that God has for us. The Son is getting ready to rise and shine upon us.

Phil 3:11-14 "If by any means I might attain unto the *resurrection of the dead. 12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, *forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I **press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." KJV

* resurrection used here means to be resurrected out of the adversity that has come our way, has no negative effect on us

* forgetting those things means to erase or change the way that you are thinking

** press means to pursue relentlessly like the adversary persecutes relentlessly

Paul is expressing how he has gotten to this place, by forgetting and not dwelling on the things of the past, all the bad things that had happened to him or had been said about him. He is continually pressing forward, not looking back. His mind set is not that God is done with him, but that the things that are ahead are so much greater, looking with the eye of faith.

Circumstances may not change but resurrection life and power brings us up above and out of it, where we are seated in heavenly places all things under our feet.

Phil 3:13-20 I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back. 15-16 So let's keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision—you'll see it yet! Now that we're on the right track, let's stay on it. 17-19 Stick

with me, friends. Keep track of those you see running this same course, headed for this same goal. There are many out there taking other paths, choosing other goals, and trying to get you to go along with them. I've warned you of them many times; sadly, I'm having to do it again. All they want is easy street. They hate Christ's Cross. But easy street is a dead-end street. Those who live there make their bellies their gods; belches are their praise; all they can think of is their appetites. 20-21 But there's far more to life for us. We're citizens of high heaven! We're waiting the arrival of the Savior, the Master, Jesus Christ, who will transform our earthly bodies into glorious bodies like his own. He'll make us beautiful and whole with the same powerful skill by which he is putting everything as it should be, under and around him." MESSAGE

Paul is keeping focused, not having something else in mind, has total commitment, has cleared his mind of the past, he is staying on the right track by not bringing up those things again from his past, but is staying bold in his walk, not associating with the unbelievers who would try to take him a different direction but finds those that believe and are pursuing the same things that he is. He is warning about those of the world who claim to be believers but are not, who would try to get born again believers going down a wrong path, they are looking for an easy street, don't really know or love the Lord, their whole goal in life is to have a good time thinking only of themselves and their flesh. This is the charge that Paul is giving to each of us as believers because of who we are in Christ Jesus and what our final outcome will be. We must learn to rub shoulders with other believers of faith.

The following scriptures show us what we can expect and what our reward will be. Keeping our eyes on Jesus, He never lost sight of what the reward or goal was, even when He was going through such terrible persecution and shame, His eyes were fixed on heaven and all the glory that was there. Continually remind ourselves how and why He was willing to pay such a price, it was all for us.

Heb 12:2-3 "Do you see what this means—all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running—and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way: Cross, shame, whatever. And now he's *there*, in the place of honor, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. *That* will shoot adrenaline into your souls!" MESSAGE

Don't lose sight of our goal, keep Jesus and heaven in our sight and know that as we continue to walk with Him, we shall reach the final goal God has set before us.