

I AM DOING A NEW THING

Isa 43:18-25

Lots of new things! New technologies! New styles! This morning, in the book of Isaiah, God says, “*I am doing a new thing!*” What is this new thing that God is doing? How can anything related to xianity be a new thing? I thought that Xainity was an old thing – a religion that has been around for almost 2000 years – something from the past, something that is becoming more and more obsolete. What does God mean, when He says, “*I am doing a new thing*”? And what does this have to do with JC, the focus of our worship this morning?

In verse 18, God says, “*Forget the former things. Do not dwell on the past.*” These words were meant to be words of comfort for people in captivity. God chosen people were going to be over run by a foreign nation called Babylon. The Jews would be taken far away from their homeland. There they would reminisce about the “*Old days:*” “*Remember when God rescued us from Egypt? Remember when God parted the Red Sea and defeated all the nations*

that stood in our way? He did all that for us. Those were the days!”

1. But God says, “*Do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?* God was telling the people, that while he did some amazing things for them in the past, they have not seen anything yet. He was going to rescue them again: “*I am making a way in the desert, and streams in the wasteland.*” God’s people were trapped in a country that was surrounded by one of the most barren, most deadly deserts in the world. Even if they escaped from their captors, they would never make it through the desert. But God was going to do the impossible - he was going to set up a highway for them to walk on. He was going to provide water for them on the journey: “*the wild animals honour me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the desert and streams in the wasteland to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people I formed for myself, that they proclaim my praise.*” Even the wild animals would notice all

the good things God was doing for his people. Not only would those animals praise God, but the people of Israel would praise God too, for all the amazing new things God was planning to do for his people.

This is the “*new thing*” that God eventually did for the Jews during that time in history. They were eventually released from captivity. They eventually survived that difficult trip through the desert, and returned to their homeland. What does this have to do with Christ? Can you see Christ in these words we have heard read this morning? God says, “I am making a way in the desert.” Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” God says, “I am making streams in the wasteland.” Jesus says, “Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst.”

Just as God was doing a new thing for Israel, rescuing them, so also right now – he is rescuing us, rescuing us from this world, which is passing away. “*Do you not perceive it?*” Says God.

If at all this new thing is to become a reality in our lives and in this congregation then there are two [2] important principles we need to bear in mind.

1. **Be Open to change and Surprise!**

Israel had to adjust to their God whose name was “**Surprise.**” God was not doing his “new thing” the old way through leaders such as Moses and David. Surprise? He was working his will through the heathen Persian King Cyrus! Deliverance from Babylon and return to Jerusalem will be partially facilitated through a non-Jewish agent.

It is important that we do not try to restrict God to the ways he has worked in the past but try to be open to the ways he may be working in the present and the future.

We will have to learn to cope with the tension and insecurity of newness. It can cost a lot to say, “yes” to God, but it will cost even more to say “no.”

2. **Trust the God of the process**

We may not always be able to trust the process, but we can always trust the God of the process—the God who leads his children. Israel eventually learned that God always honours His word. Deliverance and restoration would be better than they imagined. Jerusalem would be rebuilt, the temple would be restored. The messiah would come.

God is saying to us this morning: “I am doing a new thing!” God is creating a new way for us to get to heaven, a new way for us to be right with God, a new way for us to have the sure hope of eternal life. And that new way is Jesus Christ.

He is our highway in the desert. He is our oasis, our stream in the wasteland. Jesus is the new thing that God is doing for us. God gives to us this new way to heaven, all through JC. It is a gift of grace that we do not deserve. And then when we look into our lives, we realize that we are no different from the people of Israel. We worship money. We allow ourselves to be tainted by the immorality of the world. We talk about people behind their backs. We

fail to love the people that God has placed in our lives. The list could go on and on. God is weighed down by all the mistakes we have made and continue to make, and the sins we commit in our lives. We would think that God would punish us. But instead God tells us this morning that he is doing a new thing. Instead of sending us to hell, he gives us eternal life. Instead of letting Israel rot away in captivity, he leads them back to the Promised Land. Why is God doing this new thing? It does not make sense, until we read the last verse of the text: *“I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers our sins no more.”* He is such a gracious God.

He covers up all our sins. All that dirt in our lives, all that sin – God blots it out – it is covered, with something new and different – the blood of Jesus Christ. Because of Jesus, our lives are made beautiful in the eyes of God. Our sins are forgiven.

Someday when we stand before God on that judgment day, we will not have to worry that God will remind us of our sins. God wont say

to us “ Remember when you did this? Remember when you said that?” because of Christ, God as it says right here, “remember our sins no more.”

Do you see yourself in our Gospel reading for this morning? Are you that paralyzed man, lowered through the ceiling? And Jesus looks at you, and says, “ Son /daughter your sins are forgiven.” That’s a new thing. You are the one to whom Jesus will say on Judgment day” Take up your bed, and go home. On that last day, Jesus will lift us out of the grave, and you will go home with Him and be with him in the life to come.

This is a new thing. Yes, these teachings have been around for a long, long time, but they never get old. They are new every day – never obsolete, always on the cutting edge of “Spiritual technology.”

Technology never stays new- it always gets old. But when you hear God say, your sins are forgiven” - when you realize that Christ will someday raise you from the dead – when you believe that all this is a gift from God that you

do not have to earn- that is a new thing that will never get old.

AMEN

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