



## Sunday Sermon Notes: December 30th, 2018

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### Burn the Ships – Rev 21:1-5

#### I. Believe God longs to grant us a fresh start

Is. 43:1 But now, this is what the LORD says— he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. 43:2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze... 43:19 See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.

**Our God is loving enough to want us** – The powerful language in v. 1 reflects the burning passion he has for us. He has “redeemed” us (ἐλυτρώσαμην) and “summoned” us (ἐκάλεσά). These actions aren’t based on how we’ve done or who we are but rather what HE has done and who HE is!

**Our God is strong enough to walk us through the fire** - Stop the charade that things are fine and that you can walk in the fire alone. We aren’t that strong or that tough. That’s the purpose of God’s kind gift of Christmas – to insure we don’t walk this path alone. How great to have a sustainer, protector, shield and warrior standing guard over us. One who will walk with us without regard to our past mistakes but rather a passion toward our brilliant future. God has assured us that his presence is enough.

**Our God is good enough to allow a fresh start** - This might sound redundant, but as we begin the new year tomorrow, we must first believe God longs to GIVE us a new start. It’s not an easy step. Our emotions and our logic tell us we’ve done too much and gone too far. Above all else, we must embrace the concept of a Father-God who welcomes us back no matter how far we’ve gone. Our journey home is just a prayer away.

#### II. Decide NOW you’re going to walk with Christ in 2019.

**Make the decision before you need to** - In Daniel 1, the 15 yr old prophet has been taken prisoner. The Babylonians overthrew Israel and carried off into exile the best and brightest of the lot, Daniel among them. The world was very different than anything they had ever known previously and the temptation to fall in with them was intense. Yet Daniel knew better. They knew they couldn’t go there. Thus, in Dan. 1:8 - But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. The opportunity to forsake God was readily available and a far easier and more convenient choice. Daniel and his friends rose above their years and the circumstances to decide in advance what they WOULD and WOULDNT do. It’s like something screwed to the floor – unmovable, unshakeable, undeniable. They would choose to walk with the Lord even if it cost them. We need no less conviction now, when people are so confused about their direction.

**Live out this new direction** - Luke 9:23 - Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. Once you’ve settled you’re going to follow Christ, throw yourself whole-heartedly into it. Don’t hold anything back. Our calling demands it!

Col. 3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 3:2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3:3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 3:4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

The new direction I have has set me on a new path that changes everything! Because I’m in Christ, nothing is the same! I’ve changed what I think about, what I act on and where I act on it.

#### III. Celebrate God’s plan to make EVERYONE and EVERYTHING new!

Rev. 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." 5 He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

**Nothing lasts except these three things: God, his Word, the souls of people. Everything else – EVERYTHING ELSE –** will be destroyed. Its season will be complete. Its moment will pass. And yet there is indeed more. More ahead than there is behind us. The incredible, awesome, sovereign God stands supreme over all with a solemn promise – it will ALL be made new, including us. The moment that we find our hope in the promise of what's ahead is when we realize it's better than what we have.

**Our future is far better than our present.** God's promise to make everything new makes the posture of the open hand even easier. Since I can't keep it, I'm better off not holding on so tightly. Since it won't be something for my new life, I might as well use it now to bless and improve other's lives.

### ***So how do we get there? Use your silver bullet!***

Our silver bullet for 2019 – "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." (1 Samuel 3:7-11). 1Sam. 3:7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. 3:8 The LORD called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. 3:9 So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. 3:10 The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." 3:11 And the LORD said to Samuel: "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears of it tingle.

Add to that a willingness to do what the Lord directs you to and you'll find the clarity we so desperately lack. When he says go, we go. When he says stay, we stay. When he says love, we love. When he says prophecy, we speak. When he says serve, we serve.

### ***How do I listen for God's voice?***

- Prioritize God's word in your life. Spending time in it every day.
- Make Prayer a daily habit and not just over meals!
- Find godly friends who will help keep you on track
- Keep a spiritual journal reflecting on where you've been, where you are and where you hope to see the Lord take you. Re-read it at the end of every quarter.
- Live in the light of your calling as a Christ-follower!