

Joke: On New Year's Eve, Marilyn stood up in the local pub and said that it was time to get ready. At the stroke of midnight, she wanted every husband to be standing next to the one person who made his life worth living. Well, it was kind of embarrassing. As the clock struck, the bartender was almost crushed to death.

A New Song. A Sermon for the New Year (Psalm 149:1-5)

Today I want to share a message specifically for the New Year here we are January 1. Before long we will be look back and wonder where this year went. Time sure seems to just fly right by.

Before I begin how many of you want to know what I feel the Lord gave me as our theme for 2023 ?

You ready: You are destined in be in twenty-three.

That word means foreordained or certain.

Let me share this the first part of Romans 8:29 tells us. . .For he knew all about us before we were born and he destined us from the beginning to share the likeness of his Son

You are destined in be in twenty-three.

So, let's start with a declaration of destiny over your life repeat after me

I DECLARE God's dream for my life is coming to pass. It will not be stopped by people, disappointments, distractions, or disruptions. God has a solution to every situation, problem or obstacle I will ever face? He already has everything lined up and in place to see victory. I will fulfill, with the help of the Holy Spirit, my destiny and purposes that God has called me to. This I decree and declare in Jesus Name.

Today I want to share about singing praise, moving in worship, and rejoicing in our salvation and faith.

And today whether you've never sung a song of faith, if you've stopped singing for one reason or another, or you just can't stop singing praise this message is for you.

A new year brings fresh perspective, a new beginning, and opportunities to see the faithful, all powerful hand of God in your life.

Let's open in Prayer: *"Papa, thank you for another year. Thank you for all the miracles you've done, thank you for the gift of grace that allowed us salvation. For every blessing you rained down on us, thank you. Let this year 2023 be another reminder of your unfailing love. Light our path and lead the way, as only you can.... Put a new song on our lips. Put a fire within each of us, stir up the gift within, help us help others encounter you. In Jesus name"*

There's something about new things. . .

Those new clothes.

That new car smell.

A new home, with a new address.

A new job... There's just something about *new things* isn't there?

Something that heightens our senses and makes us more aware and often times, more excited about it all.

A fresh start, a blank canvas, a new year. . .

These are things ripe with possibility. What will the new year bring? What will I paint on the canvas of life? What will be different about this coming year? What things am I ready to put behind me and where will I end up? What things will I finally let go of and what new things will I take up.

Before we get started let me share this video (Our mess, God's masterpiece) - skitguys.com

Staring with a fresh calendar can fill us with anticipation, or sometimes a little trepidation even.

As we look into the beginning of another new year together, I thought it would be a good time to see what the bible might have to say about it all.

What wisdom do the scriptures offer for these specific seasons of new-ness, new beginnings, starting afresh, or maybe in some cases, starting over.

We know that God will be with us always and that He is the same yesterday, today and forever. But what does that mean this year? What does that mean for my life, for your life?

I love what C.S. Lewis once said, “You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.”

So, maybe it’s time for another goal or a new dream. Or even resurrecting the dreams that you let die.

Maybe it’s time for a new song.

That’s the title of my message today. . .A New Song

It comes from the book of Psalms. . .And in case you are not aware of this, the book Psalms happens to be a collection of poems, songs, and hymns that the people of God have been singing and reciting for hundreds of years.

The Psalms were meant to be sung, or in more popular terms, the Psalms are the ancient playlist of the people of God. And today, we’re looking at one specific Psalm as we think about the significance of another new year.

Psalm 149:1-5 (TPT) 1 Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! It’s time to sing to God a brand-new song so that all his holy people will then hear how wonderful he is! 2 May Israel be enthused with joy all because of him, and may the sons of Zion pour out their joyful praises to their King. 3 Break forth with dancing! Make music and sing

God's praises with the rhythm of drums! 4 For he enjoys his faithful lovers. He adorns the humble with his beauty and he loves to give them the victory. 5. His godly lovers triumph in the glory of God, and their joyful praises will rise even while others sleep.

To sing a "new song" would indicate to an ancient reader that there was an event to commemorate.

In other words, a new song marks an event worth remembering, and also one worth celebrating.

Another thing to take note of is that the Psalms are meant to be sung in community, by the community, as the events of old are rightly understood not to impact just one, but everyone.

Truth is a new job doesn't just impact one person, it impacts an entire family. A new home marks the beginning of new memories for everyone involved.

Unfortunately and I preached on this a couple months ago. I fear sometimes that we see events only as they impact us as individuals, but the reality is that singular events often times have ripple effects.

You may have heard of this phenomenon called the butterfly effect. . .

What the butterfly effect is, is the notion that the world is deeply interconnected, so much so that one small occurrence can influence a much larger and more complex system.

The effect is named after an allegory for the chaos theory; it evokes the idea that a small butterfly flapping its wings in one part of the world could, hypothetically, cause a typhoon elsewhere.

Have you ever thought of your decisions like that before? That even the small, seemingly insignificant things you do every day could have such a larger impact on the world around you.

I wonder if Jeff Bezos ever thought that Amazon would grow into a trillion dollar company, impacting hundreds of millions of families every day. . .

Did Banting, Best, and Macleod think that their work with insulin would save millions upon millions of lives, impacting generations of families for decades to come.

I understand that these are extreme examples, but here's something pretty amazing that same principle is true for faith as well?

Small decisions of faith can make an eternal impact in your present and future family for countless generations to come. Listen to this from Deuteronomy 7. . .

Deuteronomy 7:7–9 (NIV): The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. 8 But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh

king of Egypt. 9 Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.

God was thinking about His people to the thousandth generation.

Most of us are not thinking about our families for one or two generations from now let alone a thousand?

But what if your seemingly small decision of faith, your decision to ask God for more of Him, for a fresh encounter, a new revelation today could impact your great great great grandchildren?

I ask that question today because I believe there are several different types of people here in this room or watching online today.

There are those who've never sung a song of faith before. They have been watching from a distance, sizing things up, considering whether or not to jump in, to begin their journey, to encounter Jesus.

Then there are others who've stopped singing for one reason or another. Maybe they've been hurt, discouraged, distracted, or even disillusioned and it's been awhile since you felt the urge to even praise the Lord.

And lastly, there are the people who frankly can't stop singing. They are full of faith and they've seen the unfailing Love of God in their lives and they want everyone else to know about it.

I'm sure there may be other groups I failed to mention, but those are the three groups I want to focus on today.

And I'm going to use Psalm 149 as a filter to read another passage of scripture called the parable of the sower. It can be found at the very beginning of Matthew 13.

Matthew 13:1–9 (TPT): Later that day, Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeshore to teach the people. 2 Soon, there were so many people surrounding him that he had to teach sitting in a boat while the large crowd stood on the shore. 3 He taught them many things by using stories, parables that would illustrate spiritual truths, saying: “Consider this: There was a farmer who went out to sow seeds. 4 As he cast his seeds, some fell along the beaten path and the birds came and ate them. 5 Other seeds fell onto gravel that had no topsoil. The seeds quickly shot up, 6 but when the days grew hot, the sprouts were scorched and withered because they had insufficient roots. 7 Other seeds fell among the thorns and weeds, so when the seeds sprouted, so did the weeds, crowding out the good plants. 8 But other seeds fell on good, rich soil that kept producing a good harvest. Some yielded thirty, some sixty, and some even one hundred times as much as he planted! 9 If you're able to understand this, then you need to respond.

As I read the parable, maybe there is one group you identify with more than another?

So, let's start with those who've never sung a song of faith before.

In the parable we see that there is a group of people for whom the seed, which represents the gospel, has been scattered but something comes and steals the seed away before it can even take root.

In the natural world a seed needs a certain type of environment to take root and grow. If the conditions aren't meet the seed will never give it's intended purpose.

So, the question today for some of you is *what type of environment have you been living in?* Is it one where the seed of the gospel can grow? Is it one that promotes singing, worship, and praise to the Lord no matter the circumstances or situations in life? Or is your environment focused on other things? Does your environment need to change and if so are you ready to make that change?

Jesus did tell us seek first His kingdom and everything else will be added onto you.

Today could be the day you start singing, it could be the perfect day for the Lord to put "a new song" on your lips.

Next are those who've stopped singing, for one reason or another. . .they sang before, but life hit.

In contrast to those who've never sung, or those who've had the gospel seed stolen from their lives are those who've stopped singing.

Those who began to grow in faith, but were choked out by what our parable calls “the thorns.” Maybe that sounds like you.

Did you get going too fast without a root system that could support you? Did you get discouraged, distracted, or disillusioned? Did you get burnt out and scorched? If that sounds like your story, it’s nothing to feel bad about, in fact It’s more common than you’d think. . .

Listen church, it can be easy to get distracted and discouraged when you seem to have more questions than answers, when life bombards us with, well life. But don’t stop singing.

The enemy of our souls is far too good at his job for us to think that we won’t experience seasons of discouragement and doubt. But we need to stay faithful through the difficult seasons. To keep growing, even if the growth seems minimal or non-existent.

As the song says. Even when I don’t see it, You’re working
Even when I don’t feel it, You’re working
You never stop, You never stop working
You never stop, You never stop working

We need to keep singing, even when it hurts, even when it’s frustrating, even when it you find yourself in a desert season.

Today is a good day to lay aside the past, forgive, and move forward in your faith. Today is a good day if you stopped to start singing again.

Remember, as C.S. Lewis said, “You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.”

As long as you and I have breath in our lungs it’s never too late to take up our proverbial crosses and start back up after Jesus. And as we do, we join in step with the church, who’ve been singing, praising, and weathering the storms of life for thousands of years.

And then there are those who can’t stop singing about the joy of their salvation

They are filled up with faith. We praise God for you, and we need those people. We need you to sing loudly, to raise your hands high, to help lead the way for the rest of us.

We need your encouragement and excitement. As the parable of the sower says, there is a harvest of righteousness that springs forth from your life. That harvest begins here. . .

So let it rip, today is as good a day as any to sing loudly and boldly before the Lord. As Psalm 149 says,

Psalm 149:2-5 (TPT) 2 May Israel be enthused with joy all because of him, and may the sons of Zion pour out their joyful praises to their King. 3 Break forth with dancing! Make music and sing God’s praises with the rhythm of drums! 4 For he enjoys his faithful lovers. He adorns the humble with his beauty and he loves to give them the victory. 5. His godly lovers triumph in the glory of God, and their joyful praises will rise even while others sleep.

It's an honor to praise the Lord. It's a joy to be called His people and friend to be counted as adopted sons and daughters of the King.

It's as good a day as any to sing.

Romans 1:16-17 (TPT): 16 I refuse to be ashamed of sharing the wonderful message of God's liberating power unleashed in us through Christ! For I am thrilled to preach that everyone who believes is saved—the Jew first, and then people everywhere!

17 This gospel unveils a continual revelation of God's righteousness—a perfect righteousness given to us when we believe. And it moves us from receiving life through faith, to the power of living by faith. This is what the Scripture means when it says: “We are right with God through life-giving faith!

I don't know where you find yourself today, but I do know where we can find God. He's right where He's always been, right where we can find Him over and over again. He's faithful and true He will never leave us or forsake us.

Take some time to consider today where you are in your faith, because here's the reality. . . I guarantee that the minute we all walk out the doors there will be countless distractions and disruptions.

There is a very real enemy of your soul who wants to steal away the good seed of the gospel from your life. An enemy who wants to choke the faith out of you and see you wither away and die. But that isn't what God wants. . .

Here's what God has to say on the matter listen to this. . .

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV): For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Romans 8:28 (TPT): 28 So we are convinced that every detail of our lives is continually woven together to fit into God’s perfect plan of bringing good into our lives, for we are his lovers who have been called to fulfill his designed purpose.

Hebrews 13:8 (TPT): 8 Jesus, the Anointed One, is always the same—yesterday, today, and forever.

He’s worth singing about today. Let’s start this year off right. Honoring the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Our savior is worthy of our praise. He’s ready to put a new song on our lips. . .The question is, are we ready to receive it?

Maybe it’s time for another goal or a new dream.
Maybe it’s time for a new song.

This year I want this church to be different, to encounter Jesus in fresh new ways, to not just put time in, but to come to truly worship. The Scripture tells us that God inhabits the praises of His people.

It’s time to not play church, but to truly be the church.

Let’s pray together.

Close with Rick Pino nothing else. . .a little over nine minutes