

RESET

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This is our church's theme for 2019: "Reset."

It's a technological term. It's something you do to your cell phone or your computer or your internet modem—you restart or reboot it. You give it a reset.

And when you do, what happens to your device?
Your device goes back to the digital condition in which it started.

Resetting means getting back to a starting place.

Revelation 2:5 *Look how far you have fallen! Turn back to me and do the works you did at first.*

Resetting always involves changing something.

For instance, resetting clears the device's memory and restarts its operating system. Resetting also clears any pending errors or events, restoring the initial state of the operating system. And resetting loses all unsaved work or progress.

You can effectively reset by simply pulling the power cord from the wall socket, but it's usually best to let the operating system engage its own reset function, because it properly cleans things up before shutting down.

The former method (unplugging) is akin to a heart attack; the latter is more like taking a Sabbath, a sabbatical, or a real vacation. A Sabbath clears the clutter from your memory and gives your mind a rest and refreshing.

Losing all unsaved work doesn't sound refreshing (it sounds stressful!), but it's not necessarily so.

"Unsaved work" should have a special "insider's" meaning for Christians: it's all that work that you've been doing that wasn't motivated by the love of Christ or aimed at His glory. Maybe you were chasing that "almighty dollar," or that award at work, or that elusive quality of feminine beauty, or the appearance of the perfect family. Those take a lot of work, but it's "unsaved work" and deceptive progress, and it needs to be reset to the original way of Christ.

Daily Reset

Today is the first day of the rest of your life. That's more than a greeting card sentiment. It's true because God gives you a fresh start (a reset) every day!

Lamentations 3:22 The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. ²³ Great is His faithfulness; His mercies begin afresh each morning.

His mercies never cease (they never come to an end; they are inexhaustible) and they begin afresh every morning (your cup is refilled to overflowing each day).

If you pause at the beginning of the day to recall that truth and bask in it, even for a few moments, you will be refreshed, invigorated, and motivated for the opportunities that lie ahead of you.

You will recognize again that your day has already been planned for you by the kindest, wisest mind in the universe. Nothing will come your way that you and the Holy Spirit cannot handle together. Christ is above and below you, before and behind you, and always at your side. You are covered.

This is a daily reset. It's the way to begin each morning.

Reset Mercy

And the Number One thing to reset each day is the mercy in your life. You have been forgiven. And you may now forgive. Sharing what you have received is the way of Christ. The more you keep to yourself, the less you will have. But the more you give away, at the leading of the Holy Spirit, the more you will have.

Luke 6:38 Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.

This verse is often used to promote financial generosity (and, indeed, it's an applicable principle), but its context has nothing to do with money. In fact, the theme was introduced two verses earlier with these words from Jesus' lips:

Luke 6:36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Jesus was urging a generosity of mercy! A God-like kindness and compassion.

Most compelling to me is the first sentence of verse 38: *“Give, and you will receive.”* Everyone wants to receive from God—the abundance of His love and grace. And Jesus told us how. In effect, He said, “If you want to receive what God offers you, start by giving it away to others. Then you will be given plenty.”

The Bible offers many stories of people who gave the little they had for the sake of God or someone else before they received an abundance for themselves. You should try it sometime!

Reset Intentions

The next thing to reset each day is your own intentionality for living life today as a Christian.

How many times have you bemoaned your present condition as you reflected on the things you intended to do, but never completed?

“Woulda, coulda, shoulda!” you tell yourself. (For those of you in High School English, that’s “would’ve, could’ve, should’ve.”)

Do you find yourself dwelling on your regrets of those things you *would’ve* done if you had the time or the means, those things you *could’ve* done if you had the strength or the opportunity, or those things you *should’ve* done if you had the courage or the sense? We can all learn valuable lessons from past mistakes, but we don’t learn by wallowing. We learn by thinking deeply, then resetting our intentions for the future, and then letting go of the errors of our past.

Philippians 3:12 I strive to lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus also laid hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have attained this. Instead I am single-minded: Forgetting the things that are behind and reaching out for the things that are ahead, ¹⁴ with this goal in mind, I strive toward the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Just over a year ago, Mike invited me to join him for a K-LOVE cruise in the Caribbean. There were multiple Christian music concerts every day, and it was then that I discovered Josh Wilson. Since that time, I have bought every one of his recordings that I could find. He’s an excellent musician and composer, and his lyrics are down-to-earth, yet insightful. One of my favorites, which, if I can learn to play it, I hope to sing with you, is called “That Was Then, This Is Now.” Here are the lyrics:

*We used to hide from the light
We made friends with the night
We were headed the wrong way on a one-way track
Going nowhere fast
We got used to the dark
We thought this is who we are*

*And we figured that we were just too far gone
But we were wrong*

*'Cause Love came running like a river
And we got washed in the water
Then He said, "You're forgiven, your sins are gone"*

*That was then, this is now
You're bought by the blood
Saved by the Son the saints all sing about
That was lost, this is found
And it's time to say goodbye to the old you now
So, go ahead put the past in the past
Box it up like an old photograph
You don't have to go back
'Cause that was then and this is now*

*We've been remade by grace
We've all got new names
And nothing we do could ever change
What He did that day*

*When Love came running like a river
And we got washed in the water
Then He said, "You're forgiven, and you belong"*

*If we turn and confess every unrighteousness
He is faithful and just to forgive
Oh, so turn and confess every wrong and regret
And see what it means to live*

*So, go ahead put the past in the past
Box it up like an old photograph
You don't have to go back
'Cause that was then and this is now*

Reset Measurements

What standard do you use to measure your spiritual progress?

As you read the Gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, pay attention to the men that Jesus called to follow Him. Consider their backgrounds, their personalities, and their attitudes. Ask yourself, “What did these men think about themselves as disciples of Christ? And how did their thinking about themselves shift over time?”

They were just ordinary people, like you and me, and subject to the same ups and downs from day to day.

Sometimes, on top of the world, because they had just witnessed Jesus performing a miracle of grace and power. Other times, at the bottom of the heap, because they had just stumbled over their own miserable humanness.

Even after witnessing the greatest of miracles—the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Himself—they were distracted by self-centered thinking.

They had traveled to Galilee in the north, where Jesus had said He would meet them. They waited for Him to show up. But each day was just like the day before—no Jesus, and no sense of meaning or purpose for their lives. So, they just did what came naturally for them. Peter said, “I’m going fishing.” All the others said, “We’ll come, too.”

After a long night of fruitless effort (even their familiar skills gave them no pleasure), they headed back to the shore, where they saw a man tending a campfire. It was Jesus, though they could not tell who it was. He asked if they had caught any fish. They said, “No.”

Jesus said to them, “Cast your net on the right side of the boat, and you’ll catch some.”

They did, and suddenly had so many fish in the net that they couldn’t even lift it into the boat. They dragged the bulging net to the shore, where they found breakfast already waiting for them.

After breakfast, Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love Me more than these?”

Peter was hurt that Jesus had to ask, but he answered, “Lord, you know everything. You know that I love You.”

Then, Jesus said to Peter, “Follow Me.”

Peter turned around and saw John behind them and asked, “What about him, Lord?”

Jesus replied, “If I want him to remain alive until I come again, how does that concern you? Follow Me!”

We are so inclined to measure our own lives by the lives of others—Am I doing as well as they? Do they have more advantages than I? What if they don't like me? Do others like them more? Who is smarter? Who is more creative? Who is better looking? Who is more spiritual? Who is happier?

Of this you may be sure: no one who entertains such questions in their mind is better off. All this comparing and grading and competing completely misses the point of our faith (2 Corinthians 10:12). We are far better off by keeping our eyes on Jesus. Make Him your standard of measurement for spirituality. Concentrate on following Jesus as He follows the Father.

Reset Hope

You may learn from the past, but you cannot live in it. All of your past is past. It is dead; there is no life in it for you now.

You may dream about the future, but you cannot live in it. Your future is yet unborn; there is no life in it for you now.

Jesus Christ is not the I WAS. Neither is He the I WILL BE. He is the I AM. All time is present for Him—the past and the future. That is a huge benefit to His followers! We need not dread the past, nor fear the future, because it is all in Jesus' hands—covered by His death and resurrection. In Him, your past is forgiven, and your future is secure.

Reflect often on the Person and deeds of God. Remember what Christ has done. In these ways, you will reset your thinking (and your feelings will follow).

At the beginning of Psalm 77, Asaph lamented the fallen condition of his nation, Israel, to the point that he himself was overwhelmed with grief:

Psalm 77:1 I will cry out to God and call for help! I will cry out to God and He will pay attention to me. ²In my time of trouble I sought the Lord. I kept my hand raised in prayer throughout the night. I refused to be comforted. ³I said, "I will remember God while I groan; I will think about Him while my strength leaves me."

His circumstances suggested that God had abandoned him and was no longer acting on his behalf. Yet, this was contrary to his deepest beliefs about God. To counter this sinking feeling, he exercised extraordinary means:

Psalm 77:11 I will remember the works of the Lord. Yes, I will remember the amazing things you did long ago! ¹²I will think about all you have done; I will reflect upon your deeds!" ¹³O God, your deeds are extraordinary! What god can compare to our great God? ¹⁴You are the God who does amazing things; you have revealed your strength among the nations.

This kind of reflection, whether of Biblical events or personal experiences with God, will reset your thinking and your attitude.

And as you recall God's activity in the past, also recall His promised activity in the future. Remember who He has called you to be, for *"faithful is He who has called you, and He will do it"* (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is worthy of respect, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if something is excellent or praiseworthy, think about these things. ⁹And what you learned and received and heard and saw in me, do these things. And the God of peace will be with you.

Think about *these* things and do them, and the God of peace will be with you. What a promise!

Friends, never forget: What God has done in the past, He can do again. What He has done for someone else, He can also do for you.

We sang this song earlier this morning. It is fitting for us to recall what we sang:

*I've seen You move, You move the mountains
And I believe I'll see You do it again.
You made a way where there was no way
And I believe I'll see you do it again.*

*Your promise still stands
Great is Your faithfulness, faithfulness
I'm still in Your hands
This is my confidence, You've never failed me yet
Oh, I will never will forget
You've never failed me yet*

Beloved, it's time for us to reset our lives for Jesus. Are you with me?