

A FRESH START



## **Unstuck!**

*By Pastor Sabu Samuel*

We've all experienced times in our life when we've been tempted to give up. For example, it's easy to get discouraged when you try something, and it doesn't work out the way you expected it to. But God doesn't want us to get stuck in a moment in our lives when things didn't work out the way we planned. He wants us to keep going so we can fulfill His purpose and truly enjoy our lives.

John 10:10 says, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." God has a great life planned for us, but too often we allow the enemy to steal our joy by causing us to focus on our past.

In order to live the wonderful lives that God planned for us, we need to leave our past behind and press forward. We need to get unstuck. Life is a long journey with many challenges up ahead. Be determined to finish strong and complete the race.

Many of us need a fresh start especially this New Year. God's Word is filled with examples of people who were given a fresh start...

A woman known only as "Rahab the harlot" was rescued and given a noble name in the bloodline of Christ. Then we have Peter who was ashamed because he gave in to fear and denied that he knew Jesus. Peter was given a fresh start as the Holy Spirit inspired him to preach at Pentecost. Paul was fierce in persecuting the early Christians. However, God transformed him and called him to write much of the New Testament. An amazing fresh start!

God loves new beginnings! And He has a fresh start waiting for you. If you will seek his face and spend time in His Word the Holy Spirit will guide you and empower you to be transformed. Living in Christ is a fresh start. The greatest new beginning anyone could have is becoming a new creature in Christ.

In Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "If anyone is in Christ [that is, grafted in, joined to Him by faith in Him as Savior], he is a new creature [reborn and renewed by the Holy Spirit]; the old things have passed away. Behold, new things have come because spiritual awakening brings a new life."

Our history is not our destiny, it's very important to learn to discern God's voice and be led by the Holy Spirit.

God loves you, and His plans for you are "plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" Jeremiah 29:11. So don't remain stuck in a moment or season of your life when things didn't work out as you thought they should.

You are a work in progress, the Lord will never give up on you!

## **A Fresh Start**

*By Daniel Kuruvilla*

**(John 21)** A few days after Jesus resurrected from the dead, He was on the shore on the Sea of Galilee preparing a charcoal fire. He called out to Peter and several of the disciples who were fishing, "Friends, haven't you any fish?". They were out a long time but had not caught any fish and did not realize that it was the Lord asking. They were about to give up. Many times we're in similar circumstances in life (relationships, career, church) where we're about to give up due to the pressures surrounding us. A lot of times we get to those circumstances only because we've not been in line to the will and desire of God. We tend to be driven more by the pressures around us (what we want people to see in us) and make choices that best fit our desires and consider them to be from God.

Jesus then asked Peter and the disciples to cast their nets on the right side. Out of desperation, they did so and caught more than they could handle. Only then did they realize it was the Lord and His doing. Our Lord calls us out in our lowest and many times we ignore the call not realizing it is the Lord and miss out on the abundance of Grace that He has in store for us. Only because we're drowning in our problems. But just as the Lord gave a breakthrough to the fishermen when they listened to Him, He is willing to give you a breakthrough and a fresh start if you listen to His voice and obey.

Peter and the others had an amazing breakfast with the Lord that early morning, cooked by the Lord. Their lives were transformed by their encounters with Jesus. After the breakfast with Jesus, Peter was restored (forgiven) and given one of the greatest missions. Peter was given a fresh start!

From the encounter of Peter and the other disciples with Jesus, as well as many others, I believe there are three responses that lead to a fresh encounter and a fresh start with Jesus.

**1) Surrender and repent:** Recognize we have been created by God in His image and for His purpose, His Glory (1 Cor. 10:31; Isa. 43:7). It's very natural, in this world filled with pleasures and pressures of many kinds, we lose our focus and indulge in the desires of the flesh and lose track of the very purpose God has for us. Apostle Paul reminds us to do nothing with ungodliness and to train ourselves to be godly (1 Tim. 4:7).

Therefore, we need to surrender to God and ask for His strength to live out His purpose. Submit yourself, your challenges, your weakness, your pride to God, and then you'll be given the strength to resist the devil, who then will flee from you (James 4:7). Repent, so you may find mercy for a fresh start (Prov. 28:13)

**2) Forgive and Forget:** Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Philippi (Phil. 3:13-14) challenging both himself and the church to keep moving forward in the christian walk of faith. He reminds us to forget what lies behind and focus on what lies ahead - the goal that Christ Jesus has set for us.

Living in the past and not forgiving keeps us bound to sin. It's time that we stop looking back at past relationships, failures, temptations, things that are distracting us from being who Jesus wants us to be.

**3) Trust and Obey:** "Behold, I am doing a new thing; note it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" (Isaiah 43:19).

Leaving our past behind is not easy, but our Lord promises to make our paths straight if we trust Him and submit our ways to Him (Prov. 3:5-6). Jesus taught us not to worry about tomorrow or our future but instead to seek first His Kingdom and all the things we worry about will be taken care of (Mat. 6:33).

"God specializes in giving people a fresh start" – Rick Warren.

Remember, we are God's most precious creation, created in His very own image, fearfully and wonderfully made. He longs to have a fellowship with His children and wants to give you a fresh start. May each of us encounter a fresh start as we start this new year.



### Weekly Meetings

Date	Time	Location
Monday	10:30 AM	@ Church
Tuesday	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM	@ Zoom
Friday	10:00 AM - 11:00AM	@ Zoom
Saturday	7:00 PM - 8:30 PM	@ Church

### Mark Your Calendar

Event	Date	Location
Sunday School Anniversary	1/18	@Church
General Body	2/09	@Church

### Pray For Nations

Country	Capital	Population est.
Morocco	Rabat	36,769,000
Mozambique	Maputo	34,091,000
Myanmar	Nay Pyi Taw	57,940,000
Namibia	Windhoek	2,688,000
Nepal	Kathmandu	29,871,000