

Title: Hope for a New Season

Part 1: Let Hope Arise

Do you have hurtful memories from your past that are holding you back? You feel stuck, like you don't know how to move forward into the new things that God has for you? Maybe it's from an old relationship, rejection, shame, guilt...whatever it may be that's what I want to talk to you about today.

It's time you truly got over your past. Aren't you ready to stop reliving it, rehearsing it, replaying it in your mind, ruminating over it, and truly move forward in your life once and for all?

Do you feel discouraged? Do you feel a heaviness or unworthiness?

It's time to stop carrying those extra weights from your past. They are literally weighing you down and tiring you out. You're expending the majority of your energy on the wrong things like reliving your past in the movie theatre of your mind. **You only have enough, energy, time, talents and resources for your life assignment.**

It's time to let go and move on!

Do not use your energy to worry or fret about the past. Use your energy to hope and believe.

You can break free from your past today! You can get a do-over. I will show you how:

"If you could go back in time, what would you change? If you got a do-over, what would you redo? Hindsight—it's 20/20. **Regret**—it's plentiful. Guilt- even worse. With some areas, seasons, years, people, and events in our lives, we all just wish we could go back and do them again.

There's a popular song by Cher that embodies these sentiments called If I Could Turn Back Time(1989)... The lyrics go like this: "If I could turn back time, if I could find a way, I'd take back all the words that would hurt you and you'd stay, I don't know why I did the things I did, I don't know why I said the things I said...words are like weapons, they wound sometimes." If we could just go back....

But in our finite bodies on this finite planet and in our limited timelines, we know going back to the past just isn't possible. This life is just a vapour. It goes by so fast. Life is fragile. Our days are numbered. The world is getting darker. There's much work to do. There's no more time to waste. We must conquer our past once and for all.

In a hopeless world we are to get our hope from God.

Psalm 62:5-6 Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.

If we get our hope from God then nothing can take it away and we won't be shaken no matter what.

I believe that we can also find **hope** in the most famous conversation in the bible found in the John 3:16 verse. Nicodemus, a Pharisee and member of the Jewish ruling council, sneaks out at night to speak to Jesus privately. He knows that Jesus is from God but he has questions. We often have questions too, don't we? Jesus responds to his questions by saying "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again" (John 3:3). We can't blame Nicodemus for his confusion when Jesus said this, Be born again? "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked (verse 4). It's impossible. ¹Science has made lots of advancements in the 21st century but not being able to be born again or go back in time.

In a world of no second chances, one shot, and better-get-it-right-the-first-time, in a time of gas-lighting and cancel culture, it's hard to conceive of what it means to be born again. All we know is "missing the boat," "better luck next time," and "if at first you don't succeed . . ." honestly, you probably won't.

Nicodemus may not have understood it in the moment that Jesus was speaking about a spiritual rebirth but **what he received from Jesus that night was hope**. A hope to start over, be new, be clean, be saved. A chance to actually be born, again. As John explained, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (verse 16).²

It's simple, really. **John 3:16 are the numbers of hope** as coined by Max Lucado. But we tend to complicate it. We replace "whoever believes in him" with "whoever is good enough, smart enough, compassionate enough . . . whoever is worthy of God's love." We take ourselves out of the equation. "My past is too questionable, too horrible. I've made too many mistakes. No re-dos or do-overs for me."

John 3:16 assures us otherwise. It is a promise: A promise that says "It's going to be o-kay". How can we know? Because God so loved the world. God choose us to be with Him before the foundation of the world. This brings us hope for our future and hope for today. We can be born again in this life and be born again into eternity with the God who loves us. What can be better than that? We get a do-over! What's more and even better, our rebirth is not up to us. If it were, there's no guarantee we would do it right the second time. We would probably mess up again. I know that I

¹ Lucado, Max. "John 3:16 The Numbers of Hope." *Faith Gateway*. On line bible study-Accessed 27 June 2022.

² Lucado, Max. "John 3:16 The Numbers of Hope." *Faith Gateway*. On line bible study-Accessed 27 June 2022.

probably would. It is made possible only by the power of God and through the saving grace of Jesus.³

Grace=God's riches at Christ's expense

When He-Jesus- is in charge of the do-over, the do-over is always done right. No mistakes, no after thoughts, nothing missing and nothing broken. Thank God that He is in charge of our do-over!

John 3:16 invites us to know God's love deeply and intimately. And once you accept God's love, your life will never be the same. I am a living example of the transformative power of God's love. With God's love you can conquer your past.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says that when we accept Christ we become **brand new creations** that never existed before. That means that the old you is gone, dead and never to be resurrected again. **Jesus is the only one who resurrected from the dead-do not resurrect your old self by reverting back to your old ways of doing things** or old patterns of behaviour.

As you meditate on one of the richest verses in Scripture-John 3:16, may you remain open to this God whose love is so big it covers the whole world—**whose love is so big it covers you. Whose love is so big it can even cover your past** ~ Let this empower you and give you hope for this new season you are entering. Hope for the future that God has for you.

You can re-ignite your hope today. You can break free from your past! You can get a do-over. There is hope. I will show you how:

“A person with no vision or hope will always return to their past.”

Think about that. If you don't have a vision or hope for your life in some area, you'll go right back to what's familiar, comfortable, convenient... even if it's harmful.

You can be destroyed by looking back. Your life can be totally ruined by going back to the past that God is finished with!

So, I want to ask you some questions, is there something that you keep turning back towards?

- What continues to catch your eye and cause you to glance in that direction?
- What is still captivating your heart back there?

³ Lucado, Max. “John 3:16 The Numbers of Hope.” *Faith Gateway*. On line bible study-Accessed 27 June 2022.

- What is it that you know is not God's best for your life but it hurts too bad to let go?
- What or Who is it that Satan keeps tempting you with to drag you back to a past that God has delivered you from? I want you to know that he or she isn't worth it. If you go back it will be the biggest regret of your life!

You know what it is. You know the answer to my questions. You know what God is dealing with you about. You don't even have to wonder. What or who have you been thinking about all the time? That's what is causing you to look back to your past.⁴

Remember the reference to Lot's wife in the gospel of Luke 17:32? Jesus recalls the story in Genesis when God spared Lot and his family before he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Jesus says three words only about it "Remember Lot's wife". When she looked back she was turned into a pillar of salt. She instantly died! The moral of the story is don't look back when God is delivering you and wanting to do a new thing in your life. This is a warning from Jesus about how dangerous it is to look back to your past.

In Philippians 3:13-14(NIV), the apostle Paul tells us "Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Paul is reiterating what Jesus said, don't look back but press forward. We all have a race to run and an assignment to complete.

The bible says in 1Peter 4:8 that love covers a multitude of sins, of mistakes, of regret, of failures.

God's loves covers all of our past mistakes, present mistakes and future mistakes too (Natalie Quote).

Proverbs 10:12 Hatred stirs up conflict but love covers over all wrongs.

To cover a sin means to forgive it, and forgiveness is associated with love. **The best example of love that covers sin is Jesus' sacrificial death on our behalf found in John 3:16.** In fact, Jesus did more than just cover our sin; He did away with it completely (Hebrews 10;12-14). Once Jesus sacrificed himself for our sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. By His one sacrifice He has made us perfectly forgiven forever. Glory to God! It is done!

⁴ Foy, Terri Savelle. "Chapter Three." *Make Your Dreams Bigger than Your Memories: Don't Let Your Past Keep You from Your Future*, Chosen, a Division of Baker Publishing Group, Minneapolis, MN, 2016.

When you know that God's love covers or forgives all of "your past", your sins, your mistakes, your regrets, your guilt, your shame, it will no longer hold you back but this revelation will empower you to fully pursue your goals and dreams and become everything God has called you to be.

The enemy wants you to stay in the same place forever. He wants you to remain stuck. He wants you to live in regret always looking back to the past in a vicious cycle so you cannot see the bright and hopeful future that God has for you.

When God gives you a new beginning, don't repeat the old mistakes. Don't Look back!

References:

Foy, Terri Savelle. "Chapter Three." *Make Your Dreams Bigger than Your Memories: Don't Let Your Past Keep You from Your Future*, Chosen, a Division of Baker Publishing Group, Minneapolis, MN, 2016.

Lucado, Max. "John 3:16 The Numbers of Hope." *Faith Gateway*. On line bible study-Accessed 27 June 2022.