

What do you do when a phone freezes, stops working, or gets unresponsive? You toss it to the ground, step on it hard, and make sure it is completely crashed. Right? Well, probably not. What you do most likely is what most of us have done: we reset our phones to reactivate their functions; we don't discard them. Depending on how bad it is, we may remove the battery, or do a hard reset that restores the factory functions deleting everything in the hard drive. Not a good situation, but you get your phone back and start all over again.

Have you thought about your life along those lines? That sometimes we need some a *reset* too? When life gets so thick, unbearable, that we stop functioning in healthy ways and find ourselves thinking, behaving, making choices that are not good for us or the people we care about. In such times, what we need is a fresh start. I know I sometimes do for a variety of reasons, and maybe you do too.

Why would I bring this up? We are starting a new year, and although, technically speaking nothing really changed, it gives us hope in believing things can be different, that we can change and finally accomplish what we have wanted for so long in previous years. So, if anything, a new year somehow helps us believe "we can do it." And that is a gift.

Every day is a new beginning, a gift, and every day "we can do it." But why don't we? Why do we lose the drive and inspiration? Because maybe, just maybe, we have a whole bunch of stuff going on in our lives right now that keeps on getting on our way and from fulfilling what we know is God's plan and calling for our lives. We may have regrets, remorse, or guilt, the sadness of unmet goals and past disappointments that distract us from seeing a future for our lives to the point that we give up hope, saying, "I am broken, I will never be whole again, there is no future for me, I gave that up long ago."

These experiences and memories from the past often overpower us to the point that what happened in the past is ruining our present and future. But this is a bad deal, that is, giving up our future and our lives because of what happened in the past.

Does this speak to you? Have you settled in what has been? Have you lost your worth?

I know that for most of us, this is true—to whatever extent. And the sad part of it is that we think it is normal and we just have to deal with it. And it is true, in a way, we do have to deal with the not-so-positive happenings in life. But here is the trick, we are not called to do this alone, God wants to work God's goodwill in everything that happens in our lives, and God is in the business of making things new, in transforming the old into a new creation. Our God is a God of opportunities and new beginnings. Our God is a God of the perfect, ultimate *Reset*.

I am sure that all of us need a reset today, a new way of living, moving from what it was to what it can be. If you feel purposeless, broken, or, let's say, like a frozen, not-working, unresponsive phone, then it is time for a reset.

Now, how do we do this? Well, let's learn together.

The Scripture for today is 2 Corinthians 5:17. It is just one verse. And it says,

[I]f anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

Let's get some context first.

The Corinthians, just like us here, were struggling with many problems and difficulties. One of them was struggling to live into their new identity as followers of Jesus. As new believers in Christ, they were becoming a part of a new way of living that was in drastic contrast to their old ways. The Corinthian Christians needed to be reminded of this and be continuously encouraged about their faith so they wouldn't give up and go back into the old ways of living whence before they knew Christ.

For this reason, in this text and within the context of the letters to the Corinthians, Paul talks of a "new creation" as the transformation that takes place in us that makes us be "born again," meaning saved from the condemnation of sin and death, and the evil powers of this world, to become people of God: children of light with a restored and new life.

However, there is always conflict when you have two elements at odds, in this case: the old and the new. There is a sort of battle against these opposing elements. The moment we are embarking into our new life, the old yells back at us, reminding us who we were, "Hey, remember what you did!" or "Don't forget what happened to you!" with the only intention to discourage us and putting in doubt our worthiness to hold us back.

This is the ultimate weapon of our enemy against us, making us doubt God's grace in our lives by putting in question our worth. Thoughts such as "You are nothing," "Look what you have done," "No one wants you," "You are a waste," "You are too far gone" are the words of your enemy, not yours and most absolutely, not God's.

For this reason, a common struggle Christians face today as much as it was back then is to leave behind the old entirely and wholly embrace the new because although our soul has been saved, often our mind struggles to catch up because a part of us is still stuck in the past, in the old, in the very thing God has said, "You are the one talking about it, I don't even remember that anymore!"

In other words, what happens in practice is that the devil will always be bringing up your past to discourage you from pursuing your future. Still, God will always remind you of your future to encourage you to keep on moving on—not because you are perfect or blameless but because you are worth it, and most importantly, because you are loved.

So, when I talk about a *reset* in this context, I mean the ability to embrace and move into the new things that God has for us by not allowing the hurts of the past to hold us back but welcoming God's grace into our lives. As Paul says, becoming new creatures is the ultimate *reset* through grace for anyone, "for everything old has passed away and everything has become new!"

But this is one of the most challenging practices. How do we move away from the old? Is it possible? I think it is, but we have to change it. What do I mean by "change it"? Like changing the past? Yes, like changing the past.

At first, I know this sounds like a contradiction; I mean, how can we change something that already happened. But think about it, why does the past matter at all? What is the past to us today? What do we get to keep from something that already happened? Why does the past have

so much power over us? Because of the memories, we get to keep those—either the bliss or the trauma.

When we talk about the past, it is the memory that we are talking about. The story that runs on a loop in the back of our minds of what has happened. This is critical because the past, those memories, although only existing in our mind, have a direct effect on what happens today and will happen to us in the future because **they define us**. Although those events may no longer matter, they have so much power and control over our minds, personality, and, therefore, our decisions.

For example, an experience and memory of a trauma or disappointment from the past can physiologically create stress responses like cortisol, anxiety, fear, and a sense of unworthiness (even if the event took place many years ago). In other words, we are the product of what we were and what we continue to allow to affect us today. That is why it is so hard to let the old go. Because it is tattooed all over our lives, and we think it is normal. We see it in the “mirror” every day, and we accept it as a part of us. And, the more we replay it in our minds, the more it takes over us, printing itself all over our lives defining who we think we are.

This learning led me to ask the question: can we change what has been already, meaning, our past experiences? Can we remove those unhealthy marks from our lives? I think we can. Of course, we can't change the facts of the past, but we can change how we feel about them and how we allow them to affect us today.

Here is what I am getting to with all this: we can't ignore the past, it happened, but we can reframe it into a story of redemption by looking at it, by talking about it, by thinking about it through the lens of Jesus' love and grace. So, we change our past by allowing it to be redeemed.

This is the *reset* we need! What this does to us is that we stop keeping our future hostage to our past. We free our future by allowing God to redeem our past and reframe our whole lives around a new story with the hope we get through Jesus Christ. So, we don't let our traumas and disappointments get in the way of our future anymore. We break the cycle of oppression. We don't choke on our fears and disappointments anymore but rework these experiences through our faith in Christ.

Ultimately, we output all of our stories from the past into a story of redemption, knowing that we are worthy and loved not because of what we did or didn't do but because we belong to God through our faith in Jesus the Christ.

My friends, there is a whole lot more that God wants to bless us with, but too often, we don't get it because we continue to allow an unredeemed past to dictate our future. And just like the Corinthians, we may find ourselves with a new faith but old thinking, old behaving, old brokenness marking us for life.

Allow God's grace to change how you think and feel about what has been; to change and redeem it; to let the gospel of Jesus, the Word of God, bring healing into your past and transform it into a beautiful story of redemption. Don't let it haunt you anymore. Look straight at those fears, unmet goals, disappointments, and even hurts, and say, “You are forgiven, you are redeemed.”

What has been doesn't have to be anymore. Let us stop building on brokenness and start building on hope, forgiveness, reconciliation, and acceptance by living in the power of the new life Christ makes possible for us day after day.

I finish with this. Let us be confident of this: what God is offering to all of us here today is a wonderful thought: the best days of our lives haven't happened yet. God is making way for you right now. All you have to do is to welcome God's Word into your life, so it can speak new life into your mind and soul by reframing your feelings, thoughts, and everything from your past that has been getting in your way for so long into a beautiful story of redemption.

I invite you today to frame your life, your whole self, within the gospel of Jesus Christ, in the love God has for you, in the grace that has been bestowed upon you. That is our *reset!*

My friends, be encouraged; you are going to make it. Your life still lies ahead of you. You are becoming as you keep on living and walking the pathway Jesus sets before you. Go ahead. In the words of Toby Mac: "You've got a new story to write and it looks nothing like your past." Amen.