

**All Things New**  
**Pastor Joe Oakley**  
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Happy New Year and welcome to 2019. Today we are beginning a new sermon series called All Things New. It's based on Revelation 21:3 where God says,

*"Behold, I make all things new."*

This is at the very end of the Bible. At the beginning of the Bible – in the book of Genesis – God creates the heaven and the earth. At the end of the Bible – in the book of Revelation – God creates a new heaven and a new earth.

So, we have this principle all the way through the Bible of God making things new. And God making people new. Which means God can make a new you!

Let me ask you a question: Do you ever wish you could just start over? Just have a fresh start. Like when you're a kid playing a game and you mess up. You say, "Wait, that one doesn't count, I get to do it over."

Even grownups do that. Golfers call them mulligans. A free shot after a poor shot. That one doesn't count. Of course, that's only in informal golf, not professional. If you're Tiger Woods playing the last hole of the Masters and you're tied with someone else, you can't shank your drive and say, "Whoops, that one doesn't count. I'll take a mulligan and do it over."

Wouldn't it be awesome to be able to take mulligans in life? Mess up and it doesn't count – start over with no consequences.

Speeding ticket – tear it up – "Thanks officer, but I'm taking a mulligan"

Bounced check – "Sorry, bank, I'll take a mulligan with no fees"

Forget to study for a test, no problem, "I'll take a mulligan"

Don't pay your taxes – no problem "I'll take a mulligan with a refund"

Forget your wife's birthday or your anniversary – you're dead!

Now – all of us make mistakes in life. But some of us feel more than just, "I've made some mistakes." Some of us feel – "I am a mistake – I am a failure – I'm beyond help."

We sometime think, "I wish I could go back and do something over knowing what I know now." With my marriage – kids – job. Well, you had to go through what you went through to learn what you know now! I heard a saying once – "You can't go back and make a brand-new start my friend, But you can start right now and make a brand new end."

In other words, what's done is done. You can't undo anything. There are no mulligans or do overs in real life.

You can't say – "Well, I blew it in that marriage, but it doesn't count."  
 You can't say, "I really blew raising that child, but it doesn't count."

It does count – because there are other people involved and people count. Plus – the law of sowing and reaping is always at work and we reap the consequences of our behavior. Galatians 6:7-8 says:

*Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.*

Now – the great thing is this – we serve a God of mercy. Mercy means we don't always get what we deserve when we sow bad seeds. God is merciful and sometimes He allows us to experience crop failure! That's why I always ask God for mercy.

God specializes in taking situations that began bad or have become bad and changing them into something good. God can turn what looks like a dead end into a new beginning.

God can turn:

A setback into a comeback.

Failure into stepping stones to success.

God can turn your mess into your message.

Your test into your testimony.

Your biggest mistake into your biggest break.

God can even use a complete breakdown to turn you completely around!

There is nothing or no one beyond God's help.

God makes all things new!

Now when we think about starting over, our tendency is to try to get out of our current situation and start something else somewhere else with someone else.

Get out of this marriage and try a new one.

Get out of this job and try a new one.

Leave your church and try a new one.

So, we have a string of relationships or jobs or failures hoping to stumble across one that works. If we really want to start over - we've got to quit running away and start running to God. We've got to start looking at ourselves instead of blaming others.

You see, we try to reduce change down to changing our circumstances. But that only delays true change – which is change in us! So, people go from marriage to marriage trying to find the right spouse instead of changing themselves to become the right spouse!

Real change does not usually begin with a change of circumstances, it begins with a change of heart, and that's God's specialty. He makes all things new!

We're going to look today at a man who got a new beginning. In fact, his changed life is one of the proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The resurrection is all about change. Think about it. God took the worst possible situation – the death of His Son – turned it around, used it for good and changed the world. The resurrection changed history and resurrection power is still changing people today! Romans 8:11 says:

*If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*

In other words, the power of God that raised Jesus from the dead lives in you! And if that power could raise the dead back to life, certainly it can make all things new in your life!

Mark 16:1-7 tells about the women who went to the tomb of Jesus after His crucifixion. When they arrived, they found the stone was rolled away. They went into the tomb and saw an angel who said:

*"Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples - and Peter - that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you."*

Go tell His disciples AND Peter. Peter was one of the disciples, why single him out? Jesus singled Peter out because of the massive failure he had just committed by denying the Lord. In fact, Peter had failed the Lord many times. I studied Peter's life and found 10 major failings including: opening his mouth when he should have kept it shut, falling asleep when he should have been praying, rebuking Jesus to His face.

But the big failure happened in Luke 22:54-62 when Jesus was captured in the Garden of Gethsemane.

*Peter followed at a distance. But when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him." But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said. A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." "Man, I am not!" Peter replied. About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean." Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!"*

*Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.*

Can you imagine that look, that feeling of failure? That shame? Fortunately, failure is not final! Jesus restored Peter – even after all these failures.

Here's how it happened. After the death of Jesus, Peter figured it was all over. He had failed as a disciple and now Jesus was dead. So, what did he do?

He did what many people do - you go back to what you know.

Go back to your old life.

So, Peter decided to go back to his old life – fishing.

And the God of mercy met him right where he was.

John 21:7-17 says the disciples were fishing and they saw Jesus on the shore.

*As soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught." So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs."*

*He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep."*

*He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep."*

Many people get on Peter's case because when Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love Me" – He used the Greek word *agape* – which is the highest form of love – the God-kind of love – unconditional, sacrificial love.

But when Peter answered – he did not say, "I *agape* you" - he said, "I *phileo* you." *Phileo* love is a lesser love - the love between friends.

So, when Jesus was asking, "Do you love me more than anything?" Peter responded, "I'm your friend." He was only committing to a lesser love. Why did Peter respond this way? I think it's because he had learned an important lesson. In the past, He had bragged that he loved Jesus more than anyone. He bragged that he would never forsake Jesus even if everyone else did. He even argued with Jesus when Jesus told Peter he would betray Him. Yet, by that fire in the courtyard, Peter did deny the Lord.

Now – Jesus recreated the scene by lighting another fire on the seashore.

Jesus singled Peter out to talk to and He asked Peter three times if he loved Him – three times – One time for each time Peter had denied Christ.

But this time, Peter was humbled.

This time Peter was a broken man.

This time Peter had no confidence in the flesh.

This time he did not overstate his love for the Lord.

All he could bring himself to say was, “Yes, I’m your friend.”

I believe Peter was braced for being rebuked, chastised, disciplined or even rejected by Jesus. But instead, the God of grace and mercy sought Him out to love on him.

The failure Peter was reliving, Jesus overcame by forgiving.

Jesus did not disown him, instead He atoned him.

Instead of being rejected like Peter expected, Jesus overcame the dejection through reconnection.

Instead of disowning Peter, Jesus started over with Peter.

Jesus made all things new!

You see, God is a God of second chances. One of my favorite verses is “the word of the Lord came the second time to Jonah.” Jonah had turned from God and run away from God, but God came after him and gave him a second chance.

Moses had a call from God to deliver his people, but he took things into his own hands and committed murder. However, God came back to him and gave him another chance.

King David sinned by committing adultery with Bathsheba and killing her husband, but God convicted him of his sin. David repented, changed his heart and life and God gave him another chance.

Saul was heavily involved in persecuting the early church, terrorizing and killing Christians. God got ahold of him, changed him and he became the Apostle Paul who wrote two thirds of the New Testament.

The Bible records many failures because the Bible, thankfully, records life as it is. The Bible is about real people living real life like you and me.

There are many people in the Bible who we consider heroes of the faith, but before they succeeded, they experienced failure:

Moses – murdered an Egyptian

Abraham – had a child with Hagar – a woman who was not his wife

David – committed adultery with Bathsheba and had her husband killed

Yet how are these men known?

Moses is called the friend of God  
 Abraham is called the father of faith  
 David is called a man after God's own heart.

How can this be? Evidently, in the eyes of God - failure is not final. Each of these men failed miserably. Yet each of them went on to become powerful men of God whom the Lord used in a great way. That's because God makes all things new! God is a God of second chances - a God who does not change, but who changes people.

Peter failed the Lord greatly. He denied Christ and then he went back to his old life. But a few chapters later in the book of Acts you will find Peter preaching to thousands of people on the day of Pentecost and 3000 were saved. You will see him dragged before the authorities and threatened with death if he did not stop preaching. But he didn't stop!

What changed this impetuous man who failed often into one the greatest influences in the early church? What turned this man who so often blurted out the wrong thing into the one who preached on the day of Pentecost and 3000 were saved? What changed this man with little spiritual insight into the one eventually wrote 2 books of the Bible?

These changes started when he met the resurrected Lord face to face. Peter started over after he had given up because Jesus sought him out and called him out. These changes were the result of a new start that came from a new heart. Peter was changed by the power of the resurrection! 2 Corinthians 5:17 says:

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

Many Christians view conversion like a car wash. They see themselves as a filthy clunker that goes in one end of God's cleansing stream and they come out with their sins washed away - a really clean shiny clunker! Yes, God does cleanse us, but He does so much more. We actually come out like a new car! We are a totally brand-new creation in Christ! The old has gone and the new has come!

Canceling our past does not mean denying it happened. It means to neutralize it - to wipe it out. This is when we really do get to take a mulligan! Colossians 2:13-15 says:

*You were dead in sins, and your sinful desires were not yet cut away. Then He gave you a share in the very life of Christ, for He forgave all your sins, and blotted out the charges proved against you, the list of His commandments which you had not obeyed.*

*He took this list of sins and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross. In this way God took away Satan's power to accuse you of sin, and God openly displayed to the whole world Christ's triumph at the cross where your sins were all taken away.*

Some of you are weighed down by guilt and shame of past sin. Jesus knows what you've done wrong, but He didn't come to rub it in, He came to rub them out – erase them – forgive them – give you a clean slate.

He cancels our past and chooses to forget our sins. When Jesus died, He said, "It is finished." What was finished? Salvation, redemption, forgiveness.

The three words "it is finished" are actually one word in the original Greek – teleo – which means paid in full – cancelled. It's the word that was used when a debt was paid off – teleo – paid in full.

If God forgives and forgets, why are you remembering it and letting it hold you back. How long do you remember your bills once you've paid them? Do you worry about last month's electric bill after you've paid it? Doesn't it seem silly to worry about a bill you've already paid?

Well, Christ has already paid for every sin you have ever or will ever commit. 1 John 1:9 says:

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

You can become a new creation today. God wants to give you a brand-new start by giving you a brand new heart.

You haven't gone too far. You're not beyond hope. God loves you right where you are and He can bring good out of your situation. Because God makes all things new!

I've told you of people from the Bible who sinned, killed Christians and denied Christ – yet He gave them another chance - a fresh start - a new beginning. Because God makes all things new!

And Jesus wants to do the same thing with you today. You may have failed in business or in marriage or in school. You may have failed big time. You may have even failed the Lord like Peter. But God is not finished with you. God's grace can turn your dead end into a new beginning because God makes all things new!