

NEW BEGINNINGS

THIS IS RALLY DAY, SEPTEMBER 7TH, 2014. THIS DAY HAS BEEN A TRADITION FOR WELL OVER FORTY YEARS OR MORE. THE DAY HAS BEEN A SIGNPOST, A MARKER FOR THE BEGINNING OF SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES, AND VARIOUS CHURCH PROGRAMS. OUTSIDE THESE WALLS FOR THE YOUTH, WHO JUST GRADUATED FROM A SCHOOL IT IS A TIME OF ANTICIPATION OF NEW SURROUNDINGS AND STUDIES. IF STILL IN SCHOOL, SENIOR STUDENTS LOOK FORWARD TO CLOSING THIS CHAPTER OF THEIR LIVES, TO TURN THE PAGE FOR A NEW CHAPTER, PARENTS MAYBE NOT SO MUCH. YOUNGER STUDENTS CONTINUE ON THEIR PATH WITH POSSIBLY A NEW BUILDING OR NEW STUDIES. PEOPLE IN THE WORK FORCE HAVE NEW CHALLENGES SET BEFORE THEM OR FOR OTHERS IT IS A TIME OF PLANNING, ALREADY PREPARING FOR A NEW FISCAL YEAR. YET OTHERS PREPARE TO RETIRE AND STEP INTO A WHOLE NEW CHAPTER OF LIFE. IT SEEMS WE ARE ALWAYS WALKING INTO A NEW CHAPTER OF OR A DIFFERENT STAGE OF LIFE. AND BEING THAT THE CHURCH IS REALLY ITS PEOPLE AND NOT ONLY A BUILDING, MUST MEAN THAT A RALLY DAY MARKS A NEW BEGINNING NOT ONLY SYMBOLICALLY, BUT POINTS TO NEW BEGINNINGS FOR THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH AND FOR US AS INDIVIDUALS OF THAT COMMUNITY. AFTER ALL BEFORE LONG WE WILL ENTER INTO THE SEASON OF ADVENT, A TIME OF WAITING, TO RE-EXPERIENCE THE BIRTH OF JESUS. WE CAN NOT LET SUCH TIMES BECOME **ONLY** SYMBOLS OF A SEASON THAT WE MARK OFF ON OUR CALENDARS. WHEN WE ARE

ON THIS SPIRITUAL JOURNEY WE MUST SEEK THE
NEWNESS OF OUR FAITH+ EACH AND EVERY DAY.
MEANING, THAT WE, WITH THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
SEEK TO DISCOVER A NEW MEANING IN GOD'S WORD, A
WORD THAT HELPS US TO BECOME THAT MORE CHRIST-
LIKE PERSON. WITH GOD'S LOVE, GRACE, AND
FORGIVENESS WE CAN REALIZE THAT EACH DAY OF OUR
LIVES IS A NEW BEGINNING! YOU MAY NOT FEEL MUCH
DIFFERENT THIS MORNING THAN YOU FELT YESTERDAY,
BUT PHYSICALLY WE HAVE CHANGED AND THERE IS NOT
MUCH WE CAN DO ABOUT THAT! WE CAN MAKE A CHOICE,
HOWEVER TO CHANGE SPIRITUALLY. SCRIPTURE GIVES
US A CLEAR PICTURE OF THE SITUATION IN 2
CORINTHIANS 4:16. *Therefore we do not lose heart , even if our
physical body is wearing away, inwardly we are being renewed
day by day.*+ENCOURAGING WORDS, BUT HOW DO WE GO
ABOUT NEW BEGINNINGS? WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?
WHY DO WE NEED TO DO IT? THESE ARE VALID
QUESTIONS. IN OUR SPIRITUAL WALK THERE WILL BE
TIMES WHEN WE DOUBT, WE WONDER WHETHER IT IS ALL
WORTH IT AND MAY EVEN BECOME ANGRY WITH GOD IN
THE CIRCUMSTANCES WE FIND OURSELVES IN. AT THOSE
TIMES IS WHEN JESUS WHISPERS TO US *UNDERSTAND, I
AM HERE TO SEE YOU THROUGH IT ALL+AS I LOOK OUT
HERE THIS MORNING I KNOW JESUS HAS KEPT THAT
PROMISE TO YOU ð PERSONALLY!!!* AND THIS MORNING
YOU ARE A BETTER PERSON FOR THAT WHICH YOU AND
JESUS AND OTHERS WENT THROUGH TOGETHER. FROM
THAT POINT ON THERE WAS NEW BEGINNING, A RENEWAL
INSIDE. JESUS CONSTANTLY CALL US, WOOS US TO HAVE

A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM, THE FATHER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.

ON THIS RALLY DAY SUNDAY A NEW BEGINNING WITH FUN AND GAMES, AND FELLOWSHIP ARE GOOD FOR THE BUILDING UP OF THE FAITH COMMUNITY. HOWEVER, LOOKING AHEAD AT THIS %SEASON+BEFORE US IN CENTENNIAL& 138TH YEAR WHAT NEW THING DOES GOD DESIRE TO DO WITH US? WHERE ARE WE GOING? MANY OF YOU HAVE A STRONG PRAYER LIFE AND GOD HAS BLESSED YOU AND GIVEN YOU A HEART FOR HIS CHURCH WE CALL CENTENNIAL. YOU QUIETLY AND FAITHFULLY PRAY FOR THIS BODY OF BELIEVERS. WHEN WE ARE PRAYING AND LISTENING FOR THE STILL SMALL VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WE WILL RECEIVE GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION FOR THAT WHICH WE DO. GOD DESIRES FOR CENTENNIAL WILL BE SEEN TO COMPLETION. PRAISE GOD THERE ARE FAITHFUL PRAYERS IN THIS CHURCH!!!

GOD ALWAYS BRINGS HIS PEOPLE INTO NEW BEGINNINGS. ALL THROUGH THE BIBLE WE READ THE STORIES OF SUCH EVENTS . THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT, THE JOURNEY TO THE PROMISED LAND, AND RIGHT INTO THE NEW TESTAMENT WHEN GOD FLESHED OUT A NEW BEGINNING FOR ALL HIS PEOPLE THROUGH HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST! WHEN WE DO STUDY THESE STORIES AND EVENTS IN DETAIL, NUMEROUS TIMES WE DISCOVER THAT GOD& PEOPLE MAY NOT HAVE BEEN SO KEEN ON THE IDEA OF A NEW BEGINNING! IN THE EXODUS, THE JOY WAS TURNED INTO GRUMBLING OUT IN THE DESERT. ONCE IN THE PROMISED LAND THERE WERE MANY STRUGGLES AND

TOUGH TIMES. AND WHEN GOD SENT HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST, THE PEOPLE EXPECTED A MILITARY SAVIOR, NOT SOMEONE WHO WOULD TURN THE RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENT UPSIDE DOWN. THE ROMANS NEVER SAW THE NEW BEGINNING, THE CHURCH THAT, GOD GREW OUT OF THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS. WE CAN SEE FROM THESE EXAMPLES GOD& PEOPLE DID NOT ALWAYS WANT NEW BEGINNINGS. DO WE? DO WE LOOK WITH ANTICIPATION THAT GOD **WILL** DO SOMETHING NEW IN THE LIFE OF OUR CHURCH AND IN OUR OWN INDIVIDUAL LIFE? ISAIAH 43 GOD TELLS HIS PEOPLE TO FORGOT THE FORMER THINGS; DO NOT DWELL ON THE PAST. THE PAST IS GOOD. IT& FAMILIAR AND WE FIND COMFORT THERE. IF WE CHOOSE, AND MAKE NO MISTAKE IT IS OUR CHOICE, TO REMAIN IN OUR COMFORT ZONE WE WILL LIMIT OUR GROWTH. GOD HAS DESIRED HIS PEOPLE TO STEP OUT AND MOVE FORWARD, BECAUSE IF WE ARE NOT MOVING FORWARD THEN WE ARE STAGNANT OR WORSE YET WE ARE BACK SLIDING! THINGS ARE ALWAYS MOVING. RIGHT NOW AS WE SIT HERE OR IN MY CASE STAND, THE EARTH IS SPINNING AT OUR LATITUDE AT ABOUT 700 MPH! WE ARE NOT EVER STANDING STILL IN OUR PHYSICAL WORLD AND WE SHOULD NOT STAND STILL IN OUR SPIRITUAL WORLD EITHER.

ANOTHER ELEMENT OF A NEW BEGINNING IS WHETHER WE SEE IT OR NOT? WHAT COMES TO MIND RIGHT AWAY IS THE OFTEN TOLD STORY OF THE MAN ON TOP OF A ROOF IN A FLOOD AND PRAYING, THEN AFTER THREE PEOPLE COME TO SAVE HIM HE ASKS GOD WHY HE DID NOT ANSWER HIS PRAYER!! WE DO NOT WANT TO MISS

OUT WHEN GOD DECIDES TO DO SOMETHING NEW. THE PHARISEES REALLY MISSED THE BOAT+WITH A MESSIAH. AN IMPORTANT REASON WHY THEY MISSED JESUS WAS THEIR NEGATIVE ATTITUDE. OVER OUR LIFETIME HOW MANY THINGS CAN YOU RECALL THAT WERE MISSED BECAUSE OF A NEGATIVE ATTITUDE? AWHILE BACK THERE WAS A COMMERCIAL AND THE YOUNG BOY WAS GATHERING WATER IN A BOTTLE FROM A FRESH CREEK AND HE COMMENTED MAYBE HE COULD SELL IT. HE WAS HIT BY A NEGATIVE ATTITUDE! DO NOT DOUBT GOD DESIRES CENTENNIAL, HIS CHURCH, TO DO SOMETHING NEW. HE IS NOT GOING TO WANT US TO BE SITUATED BACK HERE BEHIND THE TREES OFF OF UNIVERSITY AVENUE AND JUST EXIST. HIS WORLD IS HURTING AND BY HIS WORD AND HIS SONGS HE WANTS US TO REACH OUT AND BRING HURTING PEOPLE TO HIM.

WILL THERE BE A COST INVOLVED? LOOKING OVER SCRIPTURE, BOTH OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT, IT ALWAYS COST SOMEONE, SOMETHING. WHETHER IT WAS TIME, TALENT, OR TREASURE, THERE WAS A COST. TODAY OUR SALVATION, OUR FORGIVENESS, OUR GRACE ARE A GIFT OF GOD, **BUT** THE PRICE WAS PAID ALMOST 2000 YEARS AGO WITH THE BLOOD AND LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST. SO IF A NEW BEGINNING IS AHEAD OF US, ANY PRICE OR INCONVENIENCE IT MIGHT COST+US IS NOTHING WHEN COMPARED TO THAT PRICE PAID LONG AGO.

ONE THE OF MOST AFFECTIVE THINGS WE CAN DO TO OVERCOME OUR NEGATIVE ATTITUDE IS TO CHANGE OUR FOCUS. TO STOP LOOKING BACK AND LOOK FORWARD!

IN A NEW BEGINNING THE QUESTION IS NOT WHAT HAS GOD HAS DONE, BUT WHAT IS GOD DOING IN MY LIFE AT THIS MOMENT **AND** WHAT DOES HE WANT ME TO DO FROM THIS MOMENT FORWARD? THERE IS ANOTHER OBSTACLE IN OUR NEGATIVE INVENTORY THAT GOES SOMETHING LIKE THIS, %GOD I HAVE FAILED IN THE PAST, YOU CAN~~t~~ USE ME+ I AM HERE TO SAY DON~~t~~ EVER LET PAST FAILURES KEEP YOU FROM NEW BEGINNINGS. (VIETNAM STORY) PAUL, PETER, AND OTHERS IN GOD~~s~~ HALL OF FAME MAKE UP THE STORIES OF THOSE WHO FAILED, BUT GOT UP AGAIN AND WENT FORWARD. I WILL REPEAT IT AGAIN %W WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE+FAITH IS A LIVING ELEMENT OF OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE. IT IS DYNAMIC, NOT STATIC. JUST LIKE LOVE IT IS NOT LIMITED AS A NOUN BUT IT IS A VERB TOO, IT IS AN ACTION FOR A BELIEVER. SO TOO IS FAITH, IT IS MEANT TO BE A VERB IT IS SOMETHING WE DO, NOT JUST SOMETHING WE POSSESS! AND IT IS NOT A VERB UNTIL WE SHARE WITH OR DEMONSTRATE IT TO OTHERS! WHEN WE ARE READY TO EMBRACE NEW BEGINNINGS THINGS ARE BROUGHT INTO SHARPER FOCUS. GOD DESIRES FOR YOU TO BEGIN ANEW AND WHEN FOCUSED WE CAN SEE THE POSSIBILITIES NOT THE PROBLEMS. GOD DOES WANT TO USE EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US HERE AT CENTENNIAL NO MATTER THE AGE, EXPERIENCE OR ABILITY. WE ARE NOT HERE BY A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE. GOD HAS BROUGHT US TOGETHER FOR A PURPOSE. SO IT IS IMPORTANT TO SEE YOURSELF AS GOD SEES YOU! THERE IS A SONG IN OUR BOOKS . SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL. A LINE FROM THE SONG GOES LIKE THIS %ALL

MY CONFUSION HE UNDERSTOOD, ALL I HAD TO OFFER WAS BROKENNESS AND STRIFE BUT HE MADE SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL OF MY LIFE+ NOW THAT DESCRIBES A NEW BEGINNING WITH THE LOVE AND GRACE OF GOD. THERE ARE EXCITING POSSIBILITIES THAT GOD HAS FOR US AND YOU AS AN INDIVIDUAL. OF COURSE I AM REMINDED OF ANOTHER SONG WE SING TOO . %HAVE THY OWN WAY, LORD+ WE PUT OURSELVES IN GOD'S HANDS TO USE, %WAITING YIELDED AND STILL+HE DOES HAVE A PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE, 2 CHRONICLES, BUT YOU STILL HAVE A CHOICE WHETHER OR NOT TO BEGIN IT.

A STORY IN CLOSING

The creator created people, gave them words for communication and thinking, settled them in the fertile valley at the foot of the mountains, gave them longevity and started to observe, how they will aspire to the development. The time has passed, but people did not develop. Their feet did not go beyond their village and did not climb up the mountains. Their eyes did not look at the sky and did not look in the Heart. So they became old.

The Creator decided to find out, what was the matter. He became a man and came to them as a traveler. Before sunset people gathered at the square to talk with the traveler. He described them a life beyond the horizon and suggested:- Do you want me to lead you there, and you will see how people live in these places? Oh, · they answered sadly, - it is late, we became old Then come with me to the mountains to look at the world from the top!· Oh, · they SAID, · it is too late, we have no energy ã · Look at the sky, · the traveler said them, · and I will tell you

about the life in the Kingdom of Heaven! They answered again:·
It is late; our mind will not understand your story ò

The traveler became sad. He decided to cheer people. · Let's
sing a song! · he said and was going to sing first, but people
noticed that the sun went down. · It is late, · the said, · it is
time to sleep ò · and went to their huts. The traveler shouted
them: · People, when life is continuous and infinite, it is not late
for any achievements! But they did not turn back. Then the
Creator told himself: · I will take away all words of limitation from
people: ~~late%not%impossible%far%high%hard%~~will not
understand%and will place in their hearts the joy of infinity. Maybe
they will perceive my Law: nothing is late, because there is no
end, there is only the beginning! He did so and waited for the
morning: will people change and will they go with him to the
mountains?

IT IS OUR CHOICE TO BEGIN ANEW, WILL YOU, WILL WE
ECHO THE WORDS OF JOSHUA 24:15 %~~B~~BUT AS FOR ME AND
MY HOUSE, CENTENNIAL, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD.+
AMEN.