

Slide JEREMIAH 18:1-6
BEGINNING AGAIN
January 8, 2012

There may be many of us here today, as well as many people you know who need or would like a new beginning. We may have suffered from some real struggles, tragic events, or failures and would like a do over.

Well there is Good News for us; **God is the God of second chances and God is the God of new beginnings.** Have you ever wished you could go back and start over? Maybe because of an unpleasant situation of your own making. IF only you could take the words back that you said, if only you could make different choices. Sadly, in most cases, it is impossible to go back and change what has been said or done. There is however one area of your life that you can have a new beginning: Your spiritual life can have a **FRESH NEW START!**

Isaiah 43:19 – See I am doing a new thing

The word which came to **Jeremiah 18:1-6**, from the Lord saying,

Slide (2) “Arise and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will announce My words to you.” (3) Then I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was, making something on the wheel. (4) But the vessel that he was making of clay was spoiled in the hand of the potter; so he remade it into another vessel, as it pleased the potter to make. (5) Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, (6) “Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter does?” declares the Lord. “Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel.”

God used a unique manner to teach Jeremiah a valuable lesson. Jeremiah is a true prophet with the people’s best interests at heart. **At this time he is very discouraged, it’s been a very disappointing time – as the people have decided for themselves how they should live.**

Jeremiah may have thought God had done all He could but the people failed to respond. He was also feeling as if he had failed and was able to be used by God as a prophet. **So God told him to go down to the pottery for an object lesson.** There he saw a potter at the wheel intently shaping a vessel. The potter’s foot was on the treadle moving the wheel around and around as the potter shaped the vessel. But just as the vessel seemed to be taking shape and becoming lovely, something unexpected happened: the vessel was marred. We are not sure just why, but it was marred.

Jeremiah probably thought the potter would reject the crumpled clay as if the material was now of no value. Instead he flatten it again, put it back on the wheel and caused it to take shape once more. He might have cast it aside with the waste. In utter disgust he might have abandoned it completely. But he did not and was only satisfied when he had put his best into it and brought out of the clay its highest possibilities.

It is this shaping and bringing out your highest spiritual possibilities that the Divine Potter wants

to do for you. He has a plan and purpose for each one of us. His plan is personal and His plan is definite. He alone knows our possibilities and He desires the best for each of us. If you are disappointed, if you are discouraged because your life has not shaped up to the Divine will, because you have not yielded to the pressure of His hand, or because your life is not what He wanted and wants it to be, then know that God has a message of hope and assurance for you. God is working on us – we are His workmanship. He wants to shape us according to His divine design and plan.

God here says, "**As the clay is in the potter's hand so are you in my hand.**" When our plans, hopes, dreams or life doesn't turnout like we desire, when we realize we are flawed. Likewise we may suddenly realize we haven't or aren't living up to God's Standards. **There is Good News: Slide God can remake us!** When we fall apart at the seams but God can put us back together again!

"We might wish that there were some wonderful place, called the Land of Beginning Again, where all our mistakes and all our heartaches and all our poor selfish grief's could be dropped, like a shabby old coat-- never put on again." We may have wished for such a place and **never found it, heads up church, the Bible points the way.** You can begin again by entrusting your life into the Master's hands (CIM). You can begin again by allowing God to shape your life by His skilled, purposeful, and loving hands.

Slide THIS PLACE OF BEGINNING AGAIN IS ON THIS EARTH

Some folks seem to expect a second chance after death. They contend this is one of the marks of God's goodness. Some believe we'll have opportunity to believe on Christ after rejecting Him here, on earth. **If that's you, listen up, THERE'S Not one word in all the Bible or Christian teaching, that justifies such a thought.** Instead, there is every warning against delay and presumption. We are slow to learn that God does not proceed according to our reasoning. Even if He did, this sort of argument is unreasonable. **Why did Christ come to earth live a perfect life and die for us here and now if there is to be a chance after death?**

Yet there is a place of beginning again, a place of second chances. Bless God that this place of beginning again is not far from any of us. One might be willing to travel far, and at great cost to find a place to beginning again. Yet sociological, economic or physical conditions might make it difficult or even impossible for many or most to reach or attain. So God in His infinite wisdom provides a better plan. He brings the chance to start over right to your very heart and puts no price on the privilege of entering.

He provides a door, the way to begin again, and this door is open to any who will enter it.

The lost man - his life blighted and ruined by sin, has the gospel invitation which calls him to start over again. **Isaiah 1:18 "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as wool, and tho they be red like crimson they shall be white as snow."** As far as the East is from the West, so far hath He removed our sin from us. One of the most beautiful facts related to salvation is the cleansing and removing of the past and a new life for the future. God offers us the chance to start all over again.

God also offers a chance to begin again to the fallen Christian, to the back-slidden failure of a Christian, one who has started well, but has yielded to the lure of the world, the flesh, and the devil. God offers the opportunity to begin again to the one who has missed the mark of true and worthy discipleship, and has thus become a hindrance to others, rather than an asset to the cause and Kingdom of Christ. If this is your condition, God holds out His hands to you and beckons you to this place of Beginning Again. **"Forgetting the things that are behind, reaching forward. . ."** (Phil. 3: 13;). As surely as pardon awaits the guilty sinner so surely forgiveness of your every mistake and failure awaits you in this place of beginning again.

Before clay is glazed and fired, the potter may reshape and redo the pottery, if it is spoiled, marred, or won't take proper shape. That is what Jeremiah saw when God instructs him to go to the potter's house. There he saw the potter working with the clay. It got messed up, so the potter had to reshape and remake it. God says, "That's what I'm trying to do with the house of Israel. They're flawed and marred. I want to remake them, if they'll let me. I want to make them into the beautiful creation I want them to be." God offered them a chance to begin again. God through Jeremiah is trying to warn Israel of the destruction that is coming, but they did not listen. Will we listen today?

God offers you the opportunity to begin again. To begin again by yielding your self and your life to His skilled, purposeful, and loving hands. Yet this place and time is where we must begin again. We will not be offered another chance at salvation after we died. Nor will we be offered another chance at sanctification after we died. Once we stand before God and our life and work is tested by fire it will be too late to be remolded. . If you want to change your eternal destiny or your eternal design, earth is the place. To begin again by yielding your self and your life to His skilled, purposeful, and loving hands.

Slide THE TIME FOR BEGINNING AGAIN IS NOW

Many believe they will make a fresh start "sometime." Meanwhile, it becomes more and more difficult to break away. The longer we stay off the potter's wheel and out of His shaping hands, the harder to work the clay becomes, The number of people knowing themselves to be misshapen vessels is very large indeed--but most are not willing to start over, or at least not just yet. Maybe someday when they have done what they want they will yield themselves in faith to God's skilled, purposeful, and loving hands.

Paul proclaimed in **2 Corinthians 6: 1-2**, **"And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain— (2) for He says, "At the acceptable time I listened to you, And on the day of salvation I helped you." Behold, now is "the acceptable time," behold, now is "the day of salvation"— 2 Cor 6:2**

The time of salvation is now. Don't put off what you know you should do. Don't spurn the grace of God presently made available to you. Now is the time for beginning again.

People in foreign lands think of AMERICA as a land of beginning again. They are willing to

wait years to accumulate enough money to travel to America. They are willing to adjust to a new culture, learn a new language, start at the bottom of the ladder again. They are willing to face difficulty and uncertainty in their passport, visa, immigration procedures and so much more to gain entrance so they someday can begin life again here. Not so with God--He provides immediate entrance.

There is no better time for Beginning again than at the beginning of a New Year. As you examine your life in the light of the closing year, you think of the resolutions you attempted and fail last year. Don't be discouraged, don't give up hope - give God a chance, but do so now, today. Now is the right time to begin again with God. Why? That brings us to our third point.

Slide GOD HONORS THOSE WHO DESIRE TO BEGIN AGAIN

The Apostle PETER made a good beginning with loud promises, but as he went on he yielded to outward pressure, to the point of denying Christ. Suddenly he realized his failure and shed bitter tears. **He knew that he was marred, but God made him over again.**

PAUL was determined he knew best. He had given his very life to stringent religious preparation and was going persistently with great determination in the way he had chosen for himself.

Suddenly as the light of Christ shown upon his inner man he was caused to see the mistake he was making and he started all over again. This time though once so marred that he persecuted Jesus and His Church, he became pliable in the Master's hands and God made him over again.

God is in the transformation business. He sees in our clay the potential to be a vessel of honor. God doesn't need gold, silver, and a superstar. He simply says: Give Me your clay. God says:

I'll bring treasures out of trash,

I'll bring Jewels out of junk

I'll bring Riches out of Rubbish

I'll bring Diamonds out of Debris

Slide God builds His church with misfits and throw a ways: God says:

Give Me a murder like Moses, I'll turn him into a liberator.

Give Me a dreamer like Joseph, I'll turn him into a co-commander over Egypt.

Give Me a captive like Daniel I'll turn him into a prayer warrior.

Give Me a shepherd boy like David I'll turn him into a king.

Give Me a child like Jeremiah I'll turn him into a prophet.

Give Me a fisherman like Peter I'll turn him into an apostle.

Give Me a persecutor like Paul I'll turn him into a preacher. Give Me prostitute like Mary

All I need is for you to become a piece of clay.

God won't give up on us. God won't toss anyone out on the scrap heap. But He will let you walk away from His plan – disregard His call ... live your way, till you learn it's doesn't work. **Then God takes the clay we yield to Him and starts all over again rebuilding life after life, time after time. God is willing to start over again shaping you into another vessel as it seems best to Him.**

The only prerequisite is that you give Him control and let Him form the clay, that you give Him your life.

If you are ready to do that I invite you to come forward