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[00:00:05] We're in Isaiah chapter 43. If you have your Bible, turn to Isaiah Chapter 43. And today. You know, of course, we're we really want encourage you to always bring your your Bible with you. We, for sure, support digital Bible. But, you know, my my feeling is there's nothing better than having the book in your hand. And just turn to Isaiah, chapter 43 today on the screen. This was what I was going to say. Although we want you to have your Bible. It's up on the screen today because I want to make sure we all get our eyes on this. I'm going to start in verse 16. And so let me pray for us and we'll read the Scripture and Heavenly Father. Thank you. Oh, God, we thank you. We just were singing it. We sang it a bunch. And we're going to say it again. Thank you, God, we're blessed. We are so blessed. You have been so good to us in so many different ways, Father. You have upheld us in the fiery trial. You have strengthened us when the waters seemed that they were going to overwhelm us. God, you have been steadfast. Even when we've struggled and failed, you've never faltered. And for that today. Oh, God, we say thank you. And we pray that your spirit would just sincerely and deeply move in this time in our hearts, God, that we would not hold anything back and got it. Not just that we would make some room for you, but that all the room would belong to you. All of it. God, we have no right. We have no right just to increase the amount of space that we give you into our lives, because all of that space really does belong to you.

[00:01:54] And so, Father, please speak to us and bring that new work of your spirit. We pray in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. To start in verse 16. Because it's really good. The Bible says this thus says the Lord who makes a way in the sea and a path through the mighty waters. Somebody say Amen to that. Who brings forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power. They shall lie down together. They shall not rise. They are extinguished. They are quenched like a wick. And then he says, Do not remember the former things nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing. Now what shall spring forth? Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. We know what kind of miracle that is. Let me pop back to verse 18. Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of all. Behold, I will do a new thing. When, when? Now it shall spring forth. Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. You can have a seat today. Hey, who doesn't want that, right? I mean, who doesn't want to let me. Let me frame it in the positive. So you have something to respond to. Who does want that? Do you want that? You want that new thing. You want that new thing that God desires to do. That new outpouring of God's Holy Spirit. Listen, to get to that point, to get to the point of that fresh work of God's Holy Spirit in our lives, we have to be willing to walk through change. And this is exactly what God was speaking to the nation of Israel.

[00:03:34] God doesn't just start with verse 18. I mean, verse 18 is awesome. Some of you probably have a memorized or maybe, you know, you put it on a screensaver or it's on a card on your refrigerator, right? This beautiful promise that God is going to do something new. But I just want you to know, before you get eight. Before you get 19. Excuse me. You have to have 18 before you get to the promise. There has to be a change. And this is what God said to Israel. He said, Don't remember the former things nor consider the things of old. So in other words, I have this new thing that I desired to do. But before you get to the new thing, you are going to have to deconstruct from the old thing. Right? There was that tendency within Israel to look back to what God had done in the past and to fixate on it, to kind of be obsessed with it. Listen, there's no doubt it was good. It was amazing. But their their whole perspective had become so connected to what God had done in the past. They were unable to move forward in their present. They were always talking about what God didn't did then for them, God was the God of then instead of the God of now. And it wasn't just what God had done then, it was how He did it. Well, that's what God did then, and these are the methods that He used. And all of that became an obstruction as good as it was. God says, you have to deconstruct yourself from the fixation of yesterday's miracle and the way that I did it. And you need to open yourself up today to be reconstructed so that you're prepared to receive the good thing that I have for you.

[00:05:09] Now, listen, I just used the word deconstruct, and I know for some of you, you probably you got a little triggered because if you're paying attention to create Christian culture in our country, you know that that term is really it's odd. My view is it's a good term, but it's been hijacked and used in the pejorative sense because what you see today is you see people deconstructing. It's a very trendy term in pop Christian culture today. And over the course of the last 5 to 7 years, we've seen Christian celebrities like, well, we'll save that phrase for another time, but we've seen Christian celebrities deconstruct their faith. And so this process of deconstruction has led them to a place where either their belief system no longer resembles biblical, it no longer has biblical resemblance they've created a new belief system doesn't really resemble the Bible anymore, or they have altogether abandoned the faith entirely. And so that's the framework that the word deconstruction has been used for. And today, when we talk about deconstruct, that absolutely is not what I'm talking about. Now, some of you might be thinking, yeah, we've seen Christian celebrities like Joshua Harris or Kevin Max from DC Talk basically deconstructed and abandoned the faith in pastor. What's happening to the faith is the shift thinking. And I just want to say to you, Christianity can hold up under the scrutiny and it has survived and flourished for 2000 years. Just because a couple of Christian celebrities abandoned their faith does not mean the ship is sinking. Okay, I just just to set your mind at ease. I love what Peter said. You know, Jesus and John chapter six. He said some really challenging things. We'll talk about that when we jump into our study on John.

[00:07:02] And there were people who. Called themselves disciples that were like, Man, that was just too hard. I can't handle that saying. And so they left Jesus. They stopped following him. And Jesus said to his disciples, Are you guys out, too? You know, I mean, he didn't say it like that word for word, but that's how I'm putting it. Are you guys out, too? And Peters response was, Lord, to whom shall we go? He said to Jesus, You have the words of eternal life. Also, we have come to believe in to know that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And I love that man that is just so solid. Like, really, it doesn't matter if everybody abandons you because where else are we going to go? You alone have the words that lead to a relationship with a father, this everlasting life. And you are the one we know whom he is sent, so. Yeah, that's right. So I'm going to just propose to you today that there is a healthy deconstruction and reconstruction. And honestly, as we have been going through this study, this this act, this study probably should have happened on the front side, but I would say better late than never. I want to define for you today deconstruction and reconstruction. I'm going to give you kind of a complicated definition, and then I'm going to boil it down into very, very simple terms for us in a way that we can apply. So to deconstruct means to examine the original premise and identify current practices that obstruct its fulfillment in order to reconstruct a new solution that corresponds more faithfully to the original. Well, I got a name in on that today. I'm surprised. Let me let me say it again.

[00:08:41] In summary, you're like, no, please don't like don't say it again. But I'm going to to deconstruct means to examine the original premise and identify current practices that obstruct from its fulfillment in order to reconstruct a new solution that corresponds more faithfully to the original. So in simple terms, in our study of the church, it means this to examine the church based on what Jesus established and make any necessary changes in order to be fully pleasing to him in every way. Right. I mean, this is yeah. Might be a little more easy to amen. Right. But this has been the idea. We're recapturing the vision that Jesus had for his church to deconstruct and to reconstruct means to examine what we do based on what he initially said, and then to make the evaluation. Are we off track? Are there things that we are missing? How can we do things better so that ultimately we are pleasing to him? Because that at the end of the day is what we want to do. That's what this process has been. It's been a process for us as a church community. And I do pray it's been a process for you as an individual. My hope, our hope as we put this study together, was that there would be real significant change, that we would be honest, authentic, transparent before the Lord align our lives next to His Word and identify any area or any lifestyle or any way that we're thinking that may not be congruent with what he initially wanted and then to be strengthened by the Holy Spirit to make those changes. Now, the reality is this the church has gone through this process of deconstruction and reconstruction over and over again for the last 2000 years.

[00:10:28] I'm going to give you two big examples today, and of course, there are many more smaller examples. But for instance, the Protestant Reformation in the 14th century, there was a Catholic monk whose name was Martin Luther. He had this revelation that the Bible did not teach salvation through works or through religious efforts. It's an amazing story. And of course, you could research this online or you can buy the biography that's called Here I Stand, which gives you just a beautiful historical review of the life of Martin Luther. And, you know, it really was this phrase in the scripture that was quoted by Paul as he was reading it, The judged shall live by their faith. I mean, it was just like God spoke. It was a spiritual epiphany. There was an absolute awareness that the Roman Catholic Church had been teaching a different gospel. They had been teaching a gospel of works and religious efforts. And then on top of that, they had created all of these unbiblical traditions. And so what happened while through Martin Luther and some of the other reformers, they deconstructed those false traditions and the false view of a works based gospel. And God did a new thing. God didn't God didn't rebuild the Catholic Church. He started the Protestant Reformation, you know, whereas he was desiring to do a work through the church because the church had become so settled in its rituals and traditions, God had to move outside. He had to raise others up an example. Well, that's a little closer to home is the Jesus movement in the sixties and the seventies. There was a group of people that God wanted to reach. Right? They were the hippies. We have a couple of hippies here today.

[00:12:17] Welcome. You know, I mean, you can always tell when a hippie rolls in the room because they're still wearing the patchouli and. And that's good. Patchouli's back, by the way. So it was apparently a good trend to start. But there were these hippies, right? These dirty, barefooted, long haired young men and women. And God wanted to minister to them. God wanted to reach their hearts, but the church was resistant. The church had become so settled in its religious tradition that there was no space, there was no place for the hippies to be touched by the Spirit of God and to be touched by the Gospel. So what happened? God raised up a group of people who were willing to change the methods of ministering to people. God raised up someone like Pastor Chuck Smith. And there was a willingness, right? There was a willingness to invite these people in who had been shut out by the church, like if you were living 60 or 70 years ago now, if you're living in 1960 or 1970 and you were a hippie, you would have shown up at a church and there would have been this expectation, right? If you want to come in, you've got to dress a certain way. You've got to speak a certain way, you've got to act a certain way. You can't come in just as you are. You can't come in with all of the sin and all of the the difficulty that you're bearing. The doors were shut to those people. And God help us to never be in a place where we're shutting the doors to the very people that God is desiring to reach. And so what did God do? Well, God raised up people who are willing to open the doors to those who were considered unworthy or invaluable a generation that was just being written off.

[00:13:51] You know, people were thinking that the hippies had nothing to offer. And God's like, no, you know what? They have a lot to offer more than you realize. And so Pastor Chuck was willing to take steps where he modified methods of ministry to minister to a people that were rejected by the church. All of the contemporary Christian music that we are seeing today is connected directly back to Calvary Chapel, Costa mesa. And then there was a willingness to take a step and ordain pastors that were not professionally trained like this was anathema for the church 50 years ago. Like you would never ordain someone who was not trained in seminary. This is not an anti seminary statement, but it was an either or proposition. And what did what did Pastor Chuck do? Well, he started giving people opportunities that weren't trained professionally in seminaries, people like Greg Laurie and Raul Reese and Mike Macintosh. And the list goes on. Right. And we see from that because he was willing to deconstruct those traditions that were hindering the spirit of God from moving. God was able to do that new work, that fresh work. Now, while Pastor Chuck did that, he was also attacked by the religious establishment as a revolutionary. Like we look back on the time with rose colored lenses and we think, man, everyone, everyone embraced that. Right. And the answer is no. Not everybody did embrace that. The religious superstructure at the time resisted those things that were being done through through Chuck and other leaders. And they were branded as revolutionary. They were branded as unbiblical. And, you know, the same thing could be said for Martin Luther. He was ultimately excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church. And I just think, man, why are people so unreceptive to good change? Because that's a really that's a really sad situation to be in a place where you call yourself a follower of Jesus Christ and for him to want to do a new thing.

[00:15:48] But but to be in a place where you are not only resistant to the new thing that he desires to do, but you also miss it. How many people missed out on that new work of God's spirit in the sixties and the seventies because they were so obsessed with particular religious traditions? Why is that now? If I if I just said to you, hey, what do you guys think are the top three reasons why people are so unreceptive to good change? I'm not going to do that right now, but I think most of you would say, well, number one is fear. I mean, number one is fear. People have this false idea that change isn't good. Now, I just want to say this from my perspective, okay? Because I know you know this about me. I love change. I'm one of those people that loves change. And God bless you. I know like your some of you are probably tired of it, but I really I do love change. Some of us, we just don't like change. Some of us are we're super resistant to change. And sometimes that resistance is because we're just afraid. We have this false idea. That change in and of itself is not a good thing. The good thing is just staying right where you're at, staying faithful to the thing that's been established, and any deviation or departure from that just by nature is not good. Some of us fear that if we do acknowledge that something needs to be changed, it implies that there's something wrong. With us still. It's like, hey, you know what? We have this we have this inclination, we have this idea that this change might be good. But we're so concerned about our reputation.

[00:17:26] We're so concerned about how people are going to perceive us. We don't want to be in a place where we hate. We're going to embrace that because when we embrace that with one hand, on the other hand, we're saying, you know what, we've we've we've not necessarily been in the right place. I think that this happens pretty regularly on Sunday morning. You know, on Sunday mornings, we go to the scriptures and we give an opportunity to apply the word of God to ourselves at the end of each teaching, and sometimes with the opportunity for the seeker to be saved, there is also the opportunity for the saved to be renewed, right? I mean, God is speaking, God is convicting, and, you know, he's hitting your heart and you're like, man, that's me, man, that's me. And and, you know, there needs to be change. And then there's the invitation that's given. And in your heart, you're sitting in that seat. You're like, God, I know you're you're calling me to stand up and you're calling me to come forward. But if I do, everyone's going to know that there's something that's not right in my life. And I just want to say, what makes you different than the rest of us? Right. I mean, what what makes you what makes you different than the rest of us? Are you saying today that you and I have to be absolutely perfect before God for him to be pleased with us? Listen, when the Spirit of God is ministering to you and you step up and you come forward and you acknowledge that there's something wrong that is the very heart of God for you, because because repentance is a gift and all of us have something in our lives that we need to change, to repent, to hand over to the Lord.

[00:19:04] Yeah, I think sometimes the fear is that the new thing is a bad thing because it's a new thing. Some of us are like, Man, if it's new, it can't be good. If it's new, it can't be true. Now, I just want to say to you, it is important to say not all change is good, right? Not all change is good. If the new thing is not a biblical thing, then it's a bad thing, right? If the new thing is not a biblical thing, it is a bad thing. And I'm not talking today when I talk about change and deconstruction. I am not talking about the orthodox and essentials of our faith. I'm never talking about changing the Scriptures or changing the nature of God, the Trinity, the days of Jesus Christ, the atonement of Christ on the cross, the community that we have as brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ. The reality that after this life, some of us will spend time. Some of us will spend eternity with God in Heaven. And then some of us, because we've not put our faith in Christ, will spend eternity in a place of condemnation and suffering. Like, we don't deconstruct those things, but there are so many other things that God is constantly changing in our lives. Living things change and the church is a living thing. When living things cease to change their dead things. So sometimes, sometimes we're unreceptive to change because we're fearful. Sometimes we have a false framework. Sometimes we have a false framework. I talked about this last week. You know, there's a danger in having this us versus them mentality. We talked last week about the spiritual battle that we're in. And we do have an adversary.

[00:20:45] Right. In a sense, there is an us versus them, but the US versus them is God against the adversary, right? God in his angels and his people against the principalities and the powers, the rulers of darkness, because we don't battle against flesh and blood, but principalities and powers. If there is an us versus them, it's that. That is why the weapons of our warfare are not carnal in nature, but they're mighty in God. We never frame the US versus them as we people are group against everybody else's group. And sometimes I think that in the current Christian culture, that's what we've boiled it down to. Our group is right, your group is wrong, our group is true. Your group is false. And listen, while there is some sense of truth to true and false, the danger is this when we place ourselves in the framework as always being right, we stop being open to the reality that we possibly could be wrong. So it makes sense that I just go in a big circle. All right. I'm just saying to you, we can become so prideful that we're too prideful to change. We positioned ourselves, as always, in the right place. Everyone else needs to change. But we don't need to change. Now, if that's your mindset, I just would say, how is that working in your marriage and how is that working in your friendships? How's that working in the church? If everybody is wrong and you are always right, then you are wrong. And this, this, this. But I hope that made sense. And just authentically before you like that's been the process for us as a as a senior leader team. For me, as a senior pastor going through this study, it's like, okay, God, you know what? I know me, I know me.

[00:22:40] And I can be wrong and I can have bad motivations and I can I can get so caught up in what I think is your thing that I'm not realizing that maybe your thing isn't meant for right now. Maybe your thing is a good thing, but it's not our thing for the moment. And so, God, you know, I just want to be transparent before you. Here it is. Here we are. Sifted out. Sift it out. God, I know your word says the heart is deceitful and wicked above all things. Who can know it? And there's a proclivity in my own life towards sin, and I have to acknowledge that sincerely before you, because I bear a great responsibility as a husband, as a father, and as a pastor. And I don't want to be in a place where I'm leading people the wrong way. And so that sincerity before God is a good thing, it opens the opportunity for the spirit of God to speak. The final thing today, as far as why sometimes we're unreceptive to good change, is familiarity. So you have fear, you have false framework and you have familiarity. And this last one simply is this Sometimes we don't change because we like it the way it is. Sometimes we are unwilling to do the new thing that God setting before us because, well, you know what? This is the way we've always done it. This is the way we've always done it. We planted a church, Rachel and our kids did years ago in New England. And and this was a common saying in New England, like, you would want to do something new to reach the community. And and, you know, the that the old, stodgy New Englander would come along and just say, well, I don't know why we would do it.

[00:24:14] We've never done it that way. We've always done it like this. And, you know, that's a really difficult thing to lead people through, you know, because sometimes the truth is we're so focused on our own comfort, our own familiarity. We want to know what to expect. We don't like the unknown. We're afraid of what we might lose. We're afraid of the unknown. Like I said, we're afraid of the potential response of others. Maybe we're afraid of the truth. And so we create this little comfort zone for ourselves and we're just unwilling to budge. It's kind of like, you know, our lives are a cabin on a cruise ship and we've got this beautiful cabin that we've made for ourselves. You know, it's comfortable and we know what to expect. And it it meets all of our desires. And that's great. Unless a cruise ship is the Titanic. I mean, you can be comfortable, but if you're comfortable on your way to hell, that is not a good thing. So, listen, I think fear, I think false framework, I think familiarity, all of this, all of those things can hold us back from making changes that God desires to make in our life. I think the process is important because it clarifies our mission. It clarifies our mission. We should be always asking as Christians and as a church, what am I doing this for and why am I doing this? What am I doing this for and why am I doing this? I think asking these questions signifies an honest reappraisal, critically evaluating the various elements of your faith rather than settling for an unreflective approach to God. Let me just say that again. I think those questions what am I doing this for? Why am I doing it this way? When we ask those questions, it signifies an honest reappraisal, where we're critically evaluating the various elements of our faith rather than settling for an unreflective approach to God.

[00:26:10] Because an unreflective approach, unreflective approach to God is the worst place that we could be. You know, there are churches that are filled with people who have not faithfully reflected on their relationship with the Lord. And if you're not thinking in those terms, you can become nothing more than a religious robot, like you're going through the motions. And the motions seem good, you know, like here you are, your present on Sunday morning. You come consistently, you're disciplined, but you're not really sure why you're here. And the truth is this you watch other people get all of this download from God, and you leave your present, but you leave and you're not really seemingly getting anything. There's no real transformation. And as you walk, walk out, you think, Well, you know what? I really don't know why I was there and I really didn't get anything. But I hope it counts. I hope it counts. I hope it counts for something. And I just would say, like, what does that even mean? What does that even mean? When you're in a place where it's like you're thinking that this religious offering to God, this ritual that you've been following somehow hopefully must mean something to him, you know? Well, hopefully he'll just take into account the fact that I was present. And even though I really didn't get anything from it, my life was never transformed. Maybe just because I was present is going to count for something when I stand before him, you know, maybe God will say, Well, you're not really as bad as all the other people that never went to church, you know? At least you went to church, bro, you know, at least you stood and raise your hands during the time of worship.

[00:27:49] And, you know, you know that that counts for something. I mean, you could have been like him or you could have been like her, but you were disciplined and you weren't. And I just want to tell you today, like, that's not even the gospel. That's not even the gospel. The idea that somehow we could have this religious offering before God that would pacify him and pacify our guilty heart. It absolutely means nothing like that. Goes back to the concept of a false gospel in Roman Catholicism. Your efforts don't save you. The effort of Christ on the cross for you is what saves you. And so I presented I presented two questions, and I want to answer them today for us just so that we can close the loop on this. Right. What am I doing this for? It's good for you today to sit here and just to reflect on that. What am I doing this for? Hopefully, if you're saved, the answer is you're doing this because you've been rescued. You're doing this because he delivered you. You're doing this because you've been forgiven of your sins. You're doing this because he reached into a pit of sin, the miry clay, and he graciously and mercifully pulled you out of that place and you set your feet upon a rock and he washed you any cleansed you with the water of his word. He's adopted you into his family. You sit here today as a son or a daughter of the living God. Your destiny in heaven is settled because he on the cross said it is finished. you love him. You're here today. You're here today. Look, you. You got up today and you came to church and, you know, your wife didn't have to arm tie.

[00:29:35] You were kick your butt out of bed. You didn't have to be cajoled. You didn't have to be. You didn't have to be manipulated. You didn't have to have that done because you're like, man, I can't wait to be with the community of God's people to give God the praise that He deserves because of how good He has been to me. I can't wait. I can't wait for the first song to start. Like you're you're like a horse. Just, you know, at the gate, waiting for the gate to swing open so you can lift your hands and praise God for how good he has been to you. We love him because he first loves us. I would rather I would rather have a church of 50 people who have that type of heart than a church of 10,000 people who have no idea why they're sitting in a church in the first place. So maybe that's you. Maybe. Maybe that is you. You've been saved. And you're here because you love him and you love his people. Maybe today you're a seeker, and so you're not saved. You haven't experienced Christ in that regard. But you're present because you have questions. You know, there's an emptiness in your heart, this pursuit that's compelled you to pursue him. And so here you are. You're pursuing him and you're seeking answers to these questions. You have guilt and shame that you need alleviated. You have a need that needs to be met. And here you are. You've been present and questions have been being answered. And that is a good thing as a seeker to have your questions answered. But listen, don't find yourself in a place where after he answers one question, then it's the next question, then it's the next question, then it's the next question.

[00:31:16] Here you are seeking God, and God does not want you just to seek Him in that way for the rest of your life, never making a decision to follow him. For some of you today, the truth is this God would say to you, I've given you all the answers you need. I've given you all the answers you need. Now you need to choose to follow my son. And so I believe we're here because of those two reasons. Why do we do things the way that we do? Well, we follow the prescription of scripture. I mean, we follow as closely as we can what the Bible has laid out. We are a Bible based biblical church that believes in the authority and the inspiration of the Word of God. And we've also sought to maximize our methods to reach our context. Every context has a unique need that needs to be met. There needs to be the willingness of the leadership in any given local context to be led by the Spirit of God so that the church is reaching the community by building bridges, not walls. All right. So the process is important. It clarifies our mission as we do that step by step. This keeps us prepared to receive the next new work that God has for us through His Holy Spirit. So as we're willing to be receptive to good change, as we are making sure we're clarifying our mission now, our hearts are ready to receive the new thing that God desires to do. I was thinking about this, this weekend, and I was thinking about the way that Jesus healed blind people. You know, as you read the scripture, some of you students of the Bible, no. Jesus never really healed blind people the same way twice.

[00:33:01] Right. I mean, he always was doing it a different way. And. And why did he do it a different way? Well, you know, there was the time where Jesus and his disciples were walking past a blind man there at the temple, and they had all these questions and Jesus healed the man. But the way he did it was he said to him, Get up, go down to the pool, asylum and wash. And when you wash, your sight will be restored. And so the blind man gets up, he walks down to the pool. So lo and behold, by the way, a long walk and, you know, a big decrease in elevation. If you go to Israel with us in March, you'll see that he gets down, he washes and he has his eyesight's restored. There was another guy that Jesus healed and it was a process, right? He didn't just get his sight back right off the bat. There was a little bit of sight. He saw men like trees walking, and then finally he received his full sight. And then there's the story of Jesus, you know, is this healing? This particular blind man, he spits on the ground, he spits on the ground, he makes mud, and then he spreads the mud over the eyes of this blind man. And, you know, I think it's a good question to say, well, why did he do it differently? Why did he do it differently? And the answer, I think, is twofold. One is this Each person needed to be met in a personal way. Each person needed to be met in a personal way. Each of those methods that he personalized meant something to those individuals and their history and their context. But I also believe he never did it the same way twice, because because he knew that we would create a ritual out of it.

[00:34:42] Like. Right. I mean, can you imagine, you know, like if Jesus every time that he healed a blind man, it was like you would walk into church today and there'd be a big bucket, a pasture spit over here, and then there would be a pile of dirt and then we would have an invitation. Right. And we would take a little scoop with the spit out and we'd mix it with a little dirt, and then we spread it on your eyes. We would make a ritual out of it. That's what would happen, because that's the way that we are as people. I just want to say thank God. Thank God he never did it the same way twice, right? I mean, that would just be nasty and there would have been no healings during COVID. So, you know, I'm. But but I think I think that I think that we need to guard ourselves against this because it is human nature to create rituals out of methods that we think are spirit led. Every generation must be led by God in how they bring the unchanging good news to the ever changing context that we've been placed in. Every generation must be led by God in how they bring the unchanging good news to the ever changing context that God has placed us in. By the way, these are our roots. These are Calvary Chapel roots. Calvary Chapel roots, our revolutionary roots. You know, Calvary Chapel was birthed out of this desire that God had to reach, like I said, a people group that the rest of the church, in a general sense, was unwilling to reach. And I was just recently listening to Pastor Chuck talk about this in a commentary. It was a commentary on Mark chapter two.

[00:36:31] We're going to embark on Thursday nights. And so, you know, I listen to Pastor Chuck from time to time and it's just so good, so rooted in the scripture. And I was listening to his commentary on Mark chapter two, where he was talking about old wine skins and the new work of God's spirit. And of course, you know, he's he's just reiterating this beautiful parable that Jesus gives about how God is always desiring to do a new thing. But the new thing can't be contained by an old thing. So if you're living in Jesus's time, you get this with this parable of new wine skin having to be poured excuse me, new wine having to be poured into a new wine skin because new wine ferments. And when new wine ferments, it emits carbon dioxide. And so when you take new wine, you have to put it in something, a container that's flexible, a container that's not rigid, a container that is has the capacity to change. And so all of that new wine had to go into the new wine skin because the new wine skin was flexible. It wasn't rigid, it wasn't restrictive. If you did put it into an old wine skin in old brittle, settled in its way, settled in its shape, wine skin, as you put the new wine in and it begins to ferment, ultimately the wine skin breaks. And so Jesus is simply saying this the old methods cannot contain the new thing. And Pastor Chuck, as he's as he's exposing this, he relates to what God did in the sixties and the seventies and how they learned that principle real time, that God had to circumvent the religious system at the time so he could do the new thing that he desired to do.

[00:38:21] And I want to give you a quote from Pastor Chuck. This is a verbatim quote. And just in case you want to check this out later for yourself, you can go to blue letter Bible dot org. Open the Bible up to mark. Chapter two, The Digital Bible up to Mark chapter to go under commentary and then you'll see audio. Pastor Chuck. And you can click on the audio to stream it or to download it. And by the way, you can do that for his whole sermon series through the Bible. But he said this. He said. Religious systems get so said that to restore them is next to impossible. When God desires to do a new work, he usually moves outside of the boundaries of the established religious system because they can't handle the new wine. God wanted to save a bunch of hippies and old systems, couldn't handle long haired, barefooted kids. So God raised up a new work. This is where my prayer is. God keep us flexible. I don't want to get into a rut, a pattern or a routine that we would say This is the way we've done it or this is the way Chuck did it. I really don't want that. I want to stay flexible, to move as God's spirit moves. Blessed are the flexible for they shall not be broken. And I think look, I think that Pastor Chuck's words were prophetic because he knows that we have the tendency to make a ritual out of this new thing that God did right. Pastor Chuck and all of them went through deconstructing the old thing so that there could be a reconstruction for a new thing. But that reconstruction has become the old thing which needs to be deconstructed so that we can see God do the new thing.

[00:40:13] I think when we are open to this, it helps us remember who we're following. Listen, the truth is, a ritualistic approach to following men in his methods instead of Jesus will give you a comfortable and safe religious life if that's what you want. You can have this ritualistic approach to following man and his methods instead of Jesus. And you can have for yourself a comfortable and safe religious life. Something that the original disciples never had, something that they never had. Jesus didn't die to make your life safe. He died to make your life saved. Jesus didn't die to make your life safe. He died to make your life saved. In fact, he said this If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life, for my sake will find it. Look, you read the scriptures for yourself. The disciples were not looking to create some safe, religious, comfortable life where they could avoid their fears from coming true, where they could just maintain a familiarity with the methods that were established, or to live in some false framework. Peter had to get out of the boat. James and John had to walk away from their business. Matthew had to leave his wealth. Mary, the mother of Jesus, had to watch her son be crucified. Paul and Barnabas had to set out into the unknown to plant churches. The apostles had to die as martyrs. Nicodemus had to suffer loss of prestige as he took the body of Christ down from the cross. Lazarus had to die twice. John the Baptist had to reframe his messianic expectations. I'm just saying to you today, the safe box that you put Jesus in is going to be the very thing that keeps you from the new work that he desires to do in your life.

[00:42:07] You can't put him in a box. We were singing this today that we want to make room for him. But the truth is, we don't just give him more space. All this space is supposed to belong to him. We are supposed to follow him with reckless abandonment. We are called as disciples to lay our whole lives down and to save nothing for ourselves but to live for His glory. Coming to him with open hands and with an open heart. I just want to close today with a quote from one of my favorite books is The Chronicles of Narnia. You're like, Wow, you're really a really intellectual. Derek. Yeah, no, I love this book. It's really good. And, you know, C.S. Lewis was an intellectual, and he created this he created this fictional story that really was reflective of biblical truth. And you guys know the story, right? Lucy, she's the first one to discover this this new world. And as she's discovering this new world, she meets Thomas, she meets Mr. and Mrs. Beaver. And they tell her about Aslan. Who is this lion? He is the king of Narnia, and they want to introduce Lucy to Aslan. And so she says this. She says, I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion. She said, Is it quite safe? And Mr. Beaver, he says this safe question mark. Who said anything about safe? Of course he isn't safe, but he is good. He is the king. He is the king. Listen, take your whole life and place it in the safe hands of Jesus. Be willing to let him lead you wherever he desires. And when you're willing to do that, you will experience the new thing that God has for you. Let's pray together.

[00:44:11] Father, thank you, God, for your word today and your word for us as a church and God, your word for us as individuals. God for our relationships. God for our relationship with you. And the truth is, we need your help. God, we can be so. So confused, we can confuse ourselves. We can reduce our relationship with you to. Comfortable religious traditions. That is never what you intended. And we can take this community of believers and shape it into something that the current culture says is successful. If we can be totally off the mark. And we're just coming with open hearts today and open hands and we're saying, have your way. Have your way. God have your way in our lives. If there are ways of thinking or ways of living or behaviors or expectations that we've created that just are thought even. Prayed for. Or not even in alignment with what your known will is. Show us today. Help us not to be held back by fear. Help us not to be resistant because we're prideful, help us to not worship our worldliness like the rich, young ruler did. Help us. US. Help us not to worship that. Help us to worship you. Today is we're just in this moment of prayer. First of all, it's this. If you're a Christian today, you're a follower of Christ. You know, you've believed in the gospel and you do have a relationship with God. But, you know, you've limited you have limited him. You have given him as much space as you've wanted to. But it's not been it's not been everything. Maybe the truth is that he's been speaking this to you. And every time there's a there's a call to be renewed as a follower.

[00:46:46] At the end of the service, he has been knocking on the door of your heart in this regard, and you've been resisting. Maybe there really are areas that need to be changed. Some of them. Some of them are bad. They need to be repented of. Today, if this is you, if God is speaking to you this morning. He is holding out to you this this new work of his spirit. You don't have to be afraid of God's will for your life and his plan for your life. And so as a Christian today. If you want to. Avail yourself to God that He might make those changes so you can get to the new thing. Would you raise your hand this morning? I want to pray for you. God bless you, all of you. Over here on my right. And here in the center. And in the back, on my left hand over here. On my left. In the back. Young man. Right here. On my left. God bless you. I see your hand in the back as well to stretch your hand up high. Thank you. God sees you today. You can put your hands down. Maybe. Maybe you've been a seeker. Maybe you've. You've been coming consistently. And. And we thank God that you're here and you've been. You have questions that have needed to be answered. The most important one is how can you have a relationship with God, a living relationship with God, where your life is influenced by heaven? And the answer is by putting your trust and faith in Jesus. That is the answer, and that is where it all begins. And all of those other questions will be answered down the road. But but today God says this to you.

[00:48:47] He says you need to choose today. That question has been answered. And so you need to choose this day whom you are going to follow. And God calls you to himself. He calls you to come just as you are. He calls you just like he called the hippies in the sixties and in the seventies, with all of this stuff and all of the baggage and all of the dysfunction and chaos. Listen, he loves you. And and he is prepared today to embrace you just as you are, as you put your faith in his son, who is the rescuer of your soul. And so today, Seeker, if this is you, I want to pray for you. Would you raise your hand? You just need to put your faith in Jesus Christ once and for all. God bless you. Here in the front. Thank you for raising your hand. Here in the center. I see your hand. Anybody else, you raise your hand up high. Maybe the truth is that you've substituted a gospel of works for a gospel of faith. You've been performing and your performances are going to do it. His will. Anybody else? Raise your hand. I see your hand and I see your hand. And I see your hand. Thank you. See your hand over here on my left. You can put your hands down and father, thank you, God, for these today. We're just so grateful for the moving of your spirit right here and right now. God, there's a new thing that you're doing in our midst, in Jesus name. Amen. And let's all stand together today. Yeah. Praise God for that word as God's touch in your heart. Hey, listen, Miriam's going to lead us in a song of worship.

[00:50:43] And what we're going to do today is this. We're going to invite those of you who raise your hand. Maybe as a Christian, you need that spiritual renewal. There is there is really the desire in your heart to give God everything you need to come forward. Today, you raise your hand. Maybe today you're a seeker and you know you need to take that step of faith and trust in Jesus Christ. The very first step of faith needs to be taken right here and right now, as though if you raise your hand, this is you. We want you to come forward today. If you didn't raise your hand and this is you, we want you to come forward as well. You can come to the front stand next to one of our follow up leaders, and then I'm going to lead you in a very, very simple prayer. This is. This is how we connect with the father. We pray in the name of the son. And pray, believing in him and all of the promises of God, the Bible says. Ah, yes. And a men for those who are in Christ today, the fullness of heaven and God's promises. Are going to invade your life. Prepare to be surprised. But the good things that God does in your heart, someone lead you in a simple prayer today. You make this your prayer to him. And pray with anticipation because he's going to answer. Father, thank you today. That you have spoken to me. Today I'm saying yes to your word. Today I'm choosing to believe in Jesus, your son. To be his follower. To live by faith. And to receive your forgiveness and all of heaven's blessings. Do this new thing in my life. I pray in Jesus name.

[00:52:46] All God's people said Amen.