

Look Forward to a Wonderful Year in Christ

by Zac Poonen

This sermon encourages listeners to make a new beginning with God, claim His promises, and live in the Spirit every day, resulting in a blessed and Christ-centred New Year.

Scripture: Genesis 12:2, Exodus 3:17, Isaiah 6:1-5, Matthew 10:8, Luke 11:13, Luke 15:22, John 17:23, Romans 4:20, 1 John 1:9, Revelation 1:10

Topics: "God's Promises", "New Beginnings"

Description

Zac Poonen encourages believers to look forward to a wonderful year in Christ by emphasizing the importance of making a new beginning, claiming God's promises, and extending mercy to others. He reminds us that God offers His best even after our failures and that we can experience a transformative year by living in the Spirit and being worshippers of God. Poonen highlights the significance of trusting in God's blessings and being a blessing to others, urging us to let go of past grudges and embrace a life filled with joy, peace, and love. By focusing on God's promises and living out our faith, we can expect a year that reflects the goodness of heaven on earth.

Transcript

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1. Make a new beginning today: In the story of the prodigal son, we read that the father brought out the best robe for a son who had failed him so badly. This is the message of the gospel: God gives His very best even to those who have failed. They can have a new beginning, because God never gives up on anyone. This is a great encouragement for those who failed in the past year. Whatever your blunders or failures may have been, you can make a new beginning with God now. Even if you have made a thousand new beginnings in the past and have failed each time, you can make the 1001st new beginning today. God can still make something glorious out of your life. So be strong in faith and trust God to do for you the things that you considered impossible until now (Rom.4:20).

2. Claim God's promises: This New Year can be better than all the years gone by, if you claim God's promises every day. God promised to take all the Israelites into the land of Canaan (Exodus 3:17). Yet only Joshua and Caleb entered in, because they alone believed. What you believe in your heart, you must confess with your mouth (Romans 10:8, 9). Here are eight promises you can confess and claim this year.

1. God the Father loves me as He loved Jesus - so I will always rejoice (John 17:23).

2. God has forgiven all my sins - so I will never live with guilt (1 John 1:9 & Heb. 8:12).
3. God will fill me with His Holy Spirit - so I will be strong enough for every task (Luke 11:13).
4. God has determined all my boundaries - so I will always be content (Acts 17:26 ; Heb. 13:5).
5. God's commands are all for my good - so I want to obey all of God's commands (1 John 5:3; Deut. 10:13).
6. God controls all people and events that affect me - so I will always give thanks for everything (Rom. 8:28; Eph. 5:20; 1 Thess. 5:18).
7. Jesus defeated Satan and freed me from his power - so I will never be afraid (Heb. 2:14,15; Heb. 13:6).
8. God wants to make me a blessing - so I will be a blessing to others (Gen 12:2; Gal 3:14).

God's promise and our faith are like two electric wires. It is only when they touch each other (as in an electric switch) that the power begins to flow through the wires. So believe that everyone of these promises will be fulfilled in your life this year.

3. Be merciful to others: Never forget throughout this year, how merciful God has been to you. Then be merciful to others in the same way. You have received much from the Lord freely. Give to others also just as freely (Mathew 10:8). Release everyone who owes you anything or who has hurt you or harmed you in any way. Bury past grudges permanently and be merciful to everyone - and thus make a new beginning with the Lord today.

4. Live in the Spirit every day: When the apostle John was "in the Spirit", he heard the Lord's voice as loud as a trumpet (Rev.1:10). If you live in the Spirit every day of the coming year, you too will hear the Lord's voice every day, as loud as a trumpet, guiding you and encouraging you. Keep yourself in the Spirit every day then by being sensitive to sin and by walking humbly before the face of God.

5. Be a worshipper of God: God has called you first of all to be His worshipper - and that means to desire Him alone. You will then see God's glory just as Isaiah saw it. Immediately, Isaiah saw his own sinfulness too - and so will you (Isaiah 6:1-5). Be a worshipper then and cleanse away the areas of unChristlikeness that God reveals to you, in your life. God will then make you partake of His own nature more and more, every day of this year.

6. You can experience a foretaste of Heaven this year: Under the old covenant, Moses told the Israelites that God wanted their days and the days of their sons to be like the days of heaven upon earth (Deut 11:21 - KJV). This is much more the will of God for you in the new covenant. God wants you to have a foretaste of the joy, peace, love, purity and goodness of heaven in your home and in your church in this coming year. Jesus lived a heavenly life on this earth. If you fix your eyes on Him and follow Him, then every day of this year will be like a day of heaven upon earth for you.

7. Trust the Lord to make you a blessing to others this year: God told Abraham: "...I will bless you... and you will be a blessing to all the families of the earth" (Gen 12:2,3). That blessing is your inheritance also through the Holy Spirit (Gal 3:14). God wants to bless you by anointing your head with oil in such a way that your cup begins to overflow in blessing to many others. In Elisha's time, when God filled a poor widow's vessel with oil, she poured it out into the vessels of all her neighbours (2 Kings 4:1-7). There is

more than enough power and blessing in the anointing of God to bless every single person who comes across your path this year. You can bless your neighbours this year like that widow did. So keep pouring out into the lives of others. If, however, you selfishly keep God's blessing for yourself alone, it will begin to stink like the manna kept overnight did. The one who waters others, however, will be watered by God Himself (Proverbs 11:25). May that be so in your life.

May you have a blessed and Christ-centred New Year.

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