

April 6, 2025 - Lent 5, Pastor Ventura
A New Thing in This Old World Isaiah 43:16–21

Dear friends in Christ,

Grace and peace from the Lord, who is doing all things new!

This the fifth Sunday in Lent, we are getting closer to the day when our joy and son will burst to the sims, Easter Sunday. And that expectation just gets expounded when we hear the prophet Isaiah saying “Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth”! Its coming!

Or as some people like to say, “the best is it to come!” No, I’m not talking about any material prosperity, as people always refer to when they say, the best is yet to come. No, it is something else entirely, something better, something never seen yet, is coming, in other words through the prophet God is saying “You ain’t seen nothin’ yet!”

And then later in the Book of revelations, we hear Jesus saying: “Behold, I am making all things new.” (21:5) God indeed is doing something new in this old world.

Now, what does it mean God is making a new thing, and Jesus saying I’m making all things new?

Some of you might remember a few years ago a restored a fiber glass boat. Previously I had shared with you the lessons it taught me, and the process of restauration helped with my sickness back then. But what I haven’t shared, or at least not that much, is what went into it. The restauration started with a vision. I had the vision of being on the water on a boat with a motor not just paddles, being there fishing, and doing it with family, children, and even grandchildren, and friends. Then, it continued with a bit of imagination, what if I do this or that... where you can not only fish but even take a nap on the boat... so the project continues. No, I’m not done yet by any means, I’m still learning, and will continue to work on it...

But here is the crazy thing, the boat was dumpster worthy object. There was nothing good to look, it was in a bad shape, terrible shape. There was a big hole in it, rotten inside, mice nest and other debris, layers of it, broken, the motor wasn’t working either. It needed a miracle really, to restore it. But sometimes miracles don’t haven overnight. And that was another thing, time, I needed to spend hours, and hours to bring to what is now. And still need’s lots but, at least it floats, and is doing what I intended at first. I heard somewhere someone say, “Love is more important than skill.” Love for my family, love for fun, and love to bring something from the past back to life, is what made me learn some skills along the process. But I’m not alone in this. In the process I learned that there

are clubs that own this specific type of boats. Well then, I want to be part of the club then!

So, when God says, I make all things new; that is what God means. God takes that which is old, or broken, and makes it new. God would not take an old boat and throw it in the dump. It is not how God works, to throw it away and start all over. No!

He didn't through the people of Israel away when they failed to do God's will. No, even though and because of their sins, they found themselves exiled in Babylon, their nation, their homes, their temple destroyed, their pride shattered to pieces. They are dumpster worthy. And God could have said, I want to destroy all traces of the people, annihilate the name Israel all together. But he didn't

For sure Israel got what they deserved, what their sins deserved, they dug themselves a hole and fell into it. Despite God continually calling them to repentance, despite God wanting to bring them back to his undeserved grace. They didn't listen. But here we are, God is wanting to restore them. God is "making things new." He is not making a new nation, no! he is not making a new boat. No. But he is taking that which is rotted, scarred and broken down and restoring the people to its original unique beauty, as God had designed it first. "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth!"

Now, in many ways our lives could be like that old boat, or like the people of Israel. Our lives become rotten and coated with layers of junk, and debris; broken to pieces, or holes all over. Some have been like that for years, others just recently found themselves broken and overburdened.

Broken and overburden with what? Maybe it is layers of anger, bitterness and cynicism, where there is little joy in our lives. Maybe bad habits that we can't shake that easy and now we have become slaves to them. Maybe we haven't had the time to take care of ourselves enough that now we have become people of short fuse, unable to be productive as needed.

Last summer when one of my sisters was visiting us up here, I took her along with Ofelia and Rebeca on a boat trip to Sturgeon Lake. That was the plan, but a few seconds after the boat was on the water and the motor working fine, it stopped working. It was strange because the motor is fairly new, why would it not start again? Tried as much as tried, it didn't work. Like a dog with its tail between its legs, put the boat back on its trailer and came home. Disappointed! With my ego crashed! Maintenance is very important as I learned the hard way.

Without the proper maintenance, we get hurt along the path of life, by our own actions or the actions of others that make us grow in distrust, or in emotional distress.

And then things brake. Like the brokenness of that boat, so we find broken families. Broken marriages. Broken dreams, broken lives. Broken people. Broken faith in God.

But here is the good news. What Isaiah spoke to the people of the broken and shattered people of Israel also speaks to us today. "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth." God is at work.

He is at work in our lives. He doesn't have a vision or imagination for things, no, he has plans for us, and more, he has a dying love for his Creatures, for you and me, just as he did for the remnant of the People of Israel.

If only Israel would know the plans for them, and live by those plans, I tell you, we would here a different story even today. But sin is what ruins it for everybody, as it did for them.

But God wants to make things new. By calling us to repentance he points us to all that detestable in us. And by the works of Jesus on the Cross, he restores us. Then as he comes to us, it is like layers, after layers of fiber glass to restore that boat, so it is Jesus working in our lives, it is like he puts on us layers of grace to make us Kingdom worthy! And in doing so, he fills all the empty wholes in our lives.

With his death on the cross, Jesus strips us of our burdens and pain destroying them there, then with his victory over satan, death and the world, he begins to give us a new life, his victory is our victory too. Now were there was brokenness and sadness, there is wholesome peace and joy. It is through Jesus Christ that God is making us new. And once that grace and peace renew us, then he puts on a fresh coat joy and happiness, like fresh paint that beautifies a newly restored boat.

This is what God does, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17) Paul says.

Those who are in Christ, how is that possible? Whell, baptism brings us into Christ. There that newness already begins to take please, as Paul also says: "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." (Rom. 6:4)

Now, if that's the case why is it that even when we are baptized we like we are still broken? Because we like to live in the past. Really? Think about it. How many of us don't like to say, oh those old golden days, how good they are. We reminisce times past. Why? Because we don't like to change! That's why.

It was the same for the people of Israel in exile. And I think it happened in a twofold way, first, they thought they had it better back in their homeland, and second, they were lamenting their present predicament, and thinking if only, if

only they heard God's words, if only they heard the warnings, if only they could change their destiny now.

Isn't that what happens to us too? First we oppose any changes, things we don't like, things that are foreign to us. Those we reject, no matter how good they can be. And second when realize we are in trouble, we wish we can change things, we wish we can time and go back then, if only we decided differently... so we get stuck in that mood, thinking and wishing.

But today, the prophet tells us: "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old."

He says, something is coming which is way better than you have experienced, even you ancestors. Being saved at the Red Sea? That's nothing. Having manna and water from a rock in the wilderness? That's small, compared to what is coming. You ain't seen nothin' yet!"!

Wait till the Messiah comes, then, then you will see what can do.

Because through Jesus, not only we are going to cross the Red sea, but we are going to cross from this wilderness into Heaven itself.

Yes, we were enemies of God, and maybe you are still even now, but see that Jesus is reconciling us to the Father. He is bringing us back to him.

He is wanting to make a new thing in your life. Not only restoring you to the special stages in your life but give a totally different life. He wants your marriage, your relationships, your friendships, your future, a totally different one, a kingdom worthy, full of life, joy and peace.

Are you broken to pieces? Do we feel there are layers and layers of dirt and debris that you feel you are dumpster worthy? Remember, that's what sin does. I so, also remember what Jesus says, 'I will restore you to the joy of your salvation.' Even now, on this side of eternity he says: "I the Lord God make all things new." And it's already happening. "now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" Isaiah says, "I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise."

And it is happening now, friends. Upon the forgiveness of your sins, its happening. Upon hearing God's word, it is happening. When you are joined with his body and blood in holy communion, is happening now. And if you were baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and in the real meaning of baptism, then it has begun. It is happening as you remember that your baptism, for water springing up for you. It's happening now.

Yes, indeed God is making things new! God is indeed God is restoring you to a beauty that you didn't even imagine you have. For it is the beauty that emanates from God, from God alone! Praise God for the new thing he is making in us!