

Fresh Start: Opportunity VS Obstacle

2 Corinthians 5:17; Nehemiah 2:17

Jesus offers much more than New Year's Resolutions. He offers a fresh start, a new tomorrow!

2 Corinthians 5:17-20 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed a way; behold, all things have become new. 18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us; we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

According to this Scripture, what happens to the person who truly submits his life to Christ and turns from his old life to follow Jesus?

What ministry does everyone have who is reconciled to God through Jesus Christ?

How does verse 19 explain "the what" it means to be reconciled to God?

As Christ's ambassadors, what plea does God make to the world through us?

How important is it for us to get out the word of reconciliation?

Ask yourself: What kind of priority does it have in my life?

Nehemiah 2:17-20 Then I said to them, "You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach." And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king's words that he had spoken to me. So they said, "Let us rise up and build." Then they set their hands to this good work. But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they laughed at us and despised us, and said, What is this thing you are doing?...So I answered them, and said to them, The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no heritage or right or memorial in Jerusalem.

When other leaders mocked them, Nehemiah remembered what he had and what we have:

- We have a **heritage**: God's inheritance; **power for the future**.
- We have a **right**: as God's children; **power for today**.
- We have a **memorial**: a historical place; **power in the past**.

How does our future security affect our lives now?

What do you need God's power for today?

How does remembering what God did in the past affect you today?

What are some ways the power of our past might rule us today?

Evaluate this statement: I can't break the power of the past, but God and I can do it together.

You can be a victorious Christian if you are willing to:

- 1. Submit everything to the Lord. That means walking it out, not just talking about it.**
- 2. Trust in the Lord and His Word. Read and memorize Proverbs 3:5-6**
- 3. Pray to the Lord and keep on praying. 2 Chronicles 7:14**
- 4. Spend time with other true believers. Isolation is the enemy of God's people, and if you spend too much time with unhealthy people you will become like them.**
- 5. Live in the present, not in the past. Don't hide yourself from the light, like the cockroaches. Light exposes evil. Turn on the light of Christ in your life!**