

New Year, NEW MISSION 2026

Isaiah 43:14-21

Happy New Year *Chinese New Year* "Year of the Rat" This year=Year of "snake" For us, last yr Disc. This time last year, same Sunday, first Sun. in Jan. 2025, I preached Col. 1:27-28: Year Discipleship
28 We proclaim [Jesus] Him, admonishing [warning] every person and teaching every person with all wisdom, so that we may present every person complete [perfect/mature] in Christ.

I asked four questions:

- What do you want to be different about this year in 2025?
- If you were to assess your spiritual condition, your walk with the Lord, your daily consistency as a follower of Christ How are you doing?
- What do you need to change in your weekly rhythms in order to become more faithful to the Lord?
- What would you need to stop doing, or begin doing in order to make time every day to pray and spend time in God's Word devotionally? **Well, how did you do?** What was different for you sp?

**If in Jan. 2027 -your spiritual life is not better, we are failing you; or YOU are failing you.

You should ask for a refund ☺ *****THE PATH DISCIPLESHP PROCESS: For EVERYONE!**

SO what is the message for our lives this year? What is the call to our hearts Now? If last year we were to focus on Discipleship, this year we need to focus on "**MISSION.**" One of our 7 values: (**Word, Prayer, Gospel, Discipleship, family, unity and Mission**) =we r a MISSIONAL church -adv. gospel

In 2026, we are to focus God's **MISSION**: What is His Mission for us in 2026?

1. **Disciple your heart** -How will u **Grow** sp.? Word; Prayer; GROUP; Leading
2. **Engage in the WELL:** Get off the sidelines, get involved; **Known** in Comm.; serving; Join, go w/
3. **Sacrifice to accomplish His Mission for family/church family:** What will you need to give up 2026 to say fully say yes to the Lord? What will you need to say NO to? What will Sacr. Cost me??
*How do we accomplish this practically??? **It's about obedience to the Lord.** Saying **YES** to **HIM**....

- Refocus your **heart** on where God is leading. WHO has the loudest voice in your life? What is He...
- Reallocate your **time** -more time *with* the Lord; More time engaged in His Presence/Mission
- Realign **priorities** -what needs to move up in importan this year; sched; sports; leisure; *mission*
- Reinvest your **money**/assets/resources into God's Mission: His church, Missionaries, ch. plt, proj
(If you have never given, give. Put the Lord to the test: -Luke 6:38 Jesus: "give & it will be given to you; They will our into your lap a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over; For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you." The Lord doesn't NEED ur \$; He wants your heart; BUT, when He has your heart -*He will have* your money -It's all His already!
=If you've never given, give. If you give sporadically, give regularly; If you give regularly, give a tithe; If you give a tithe, give more than a tithe. **SACRIFICE. Not equal gifts; but equal sacrifice!**
- Reengage your experiences, knowledge, failures, YOUR story.

*this going to be a year of stories and testimonies...we want to hear/be encour. in what God is doin

-Re-engage with **others** in Biblical Community -Sp. investment (discipleship); Groups;

Your sacrifice is part of your worship; your worship is fueled by your Joy; source of Joy **satisfaction**
If you are finding your satisfaction in anything other Jesus - counterfeit pleas./idols/false Joy

What does God say in how we refocus and re-orient our hearts toward HIM / His Mission?
READ Isaiah 43:14-21 Isaiah 43 is addressed to **Israel in exile** (Babylonian exile) (6th century BC). God's people have **lost**: God's Presence/blessing. Their land; Their temple; Their king; Their national identity. They are tempted to believe that: *God is finished with them; Their best days are behind them; Their story ended in judgment*

"14 This is what the Lord your **Redeemer**, the Holy One of Israel says: "For your sake I have sent to Babylon, And will bring them all down as fugitives, Even the Chaldeans, into the ships ^[d]over which they rejoice. **15** I am the Lord, your Holy One, The Creator of Israel, your King."

16 This is what the Lord says, *He* who makes a way through the sea
And a path through the mighty waters, **17** Who brings out the chariot and the horse,
The army and the mighty man (They will lie down together *and* not rise again;
They have been extinguished, *and* have gone out like a wick): **18** "Do not call to mind the former things, Or consider things of the past. **19** Behold, I am going to do something new,
Now it will spring up; Will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness,
Rivers in the desert. **20** The animals of the field will glorify Me, The jackals and the ostriches,
Because I have given waters in the wilderness And rivers in the desert, To give drink to My chosen people. **21** The people whom I formed for Myself Will declare My praise."

*THIS is God's answer to help us recenter our minds and hearts on WHO the Lord IS and what He has done! To help us respond rightly to our *next* step of obedience...To engage in His Mission....

-Notice what God says about Himself:

Vs. 15 *I am* the Lord, your Holy One, The Creator of Israel, your King." **16** This is what the Lord says, *He* who makes a way through the sea And a path through the mighty waters, **17** Who brings out the chariot and the horse, The army and the mighty man (They will lie down together *and* not rise again; They have been extinguished, *and* have gone out like a wick):

To Israel, His Covenant People – God reminds them that **He alone is sovereign**; that he alone is **Holy**; that He alone has **the universe in His control** ...including our lives and our future. **What does the Lord challenge Israel to do as they consider their next move of obedience to God?**

Vs. 18 "Do not call to mind the former things, Or consider things of the past. **19** Behold, I am going to do **something new**, -God says. Focus on me! You cannot change the past. You cannot change YOUR past. You can focus on the Lord and His presence. You can focus on your relationship with Him. You can focus on His power and His purposes – which will render Him glory.

-The Lord tells Israel to stop looking back. To stop dwelling on the past. (Past failures, past disappointments, past brokenness and past sins). **God deals bountifully in grace toward us: CROSS**

-We have all messed things up at some up. We ALL have a story. We *all* have real regrets and broken relationships and a list a mile high of "do-overs" – God says – look at me! Focus on me! Look toward your future and what is obedience right now. **What is your next step of obedience?** Quit looking back. Focus forward ***Lot's wife-salt**

-Phil. 3:13-14 "Brothers and sisters, I do not regard myself as having taken hold of it yet, but one things I do, Forgetting what lies behind and reaching toward forward to what lies ahead, I PRESS ON toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Our future is NOT behind us. Our future is built on the past (what Jesus has done for us); YET, His calling is that we would follow HIM now... (our future is in front of us). Jesus IS our future. He is calling us to focus on Him and where He leads us now... (not fixate on past; past failures; regrets) -focus ON HIM!

-Listen what God says to Israel. Trust me and watch....

Vs. 19: Now it *will* spring up; Will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, Rivers in the desert. ²⁰The animals of the field will glorify Me, The jackals and the ostriches, Because I have given waters in the wilderness And rivers *in the desert*, To give drink to **My chosen people**.

-God states that **He** alone can *change circumstances*. He ends wars. He overthrows nations. He defeats enemies. He leads us through valleys and brokenness to bring us to Himself for healing.

-God brings springs (refreshing cold life-giving water) *in the desert*. He is asking, do you see it? Do you see His hand at work? OR are you so focused on your problems, your pain, loss, suffering?

-Are you so fixated on your circumstances that you can't see where He's at work? Are you asking?

-Do you feel like your soul is desert? Do you feel alone, far off, desperate, discouraged, unlovable?

*This verse is His calling to you. This is His promise to you. This is His power *IF* you will repent/ and run to Him. What would stop you today from leaving everyone at the altar today? Receive Him

-God is saying that for His covenant people, He can provide renewal, hope, life-change, LIFE, peace, and JOY – and it's all found IN HIM. In a relationship with Him. In SATISFACTION in HIM

Vs 21: The people whom I formed for Myself Will declare My praise." -What is God after? Glory!!

What brings God infinite glory? The praise of His creatures...your worship. Your life, your sacrifice!!! You living on mission!!!! What have you been wasting your life on? What have you been wasting your praise on? What IDOL has replaced God's glory in your life.

-YOU were created for God's glory. Everything that exists was created for God's glory. Everything!

-Is. 43:7 "Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made."

Have you been wasting your life and breath on things which don't bring God glory! Isn't it time to get busy! Why are you here this morning?

-Confess. Repent. Ask for His forgiveness. His renewal. His presence. His Purpose for your life!

-What do you think is happening right now? It's a **battle**. It's a battle btwn the flesh/spirit. Between evil and righteousness. It's a battle for your soul. Will you put down your sinful habits, your secret sin, your idols, addictions, and life-altering sins; your alc. Addiction, porn, adultery,, illicit relationships, unhealthy relationships, toxic relationships.

Your worship is a battle cry. It's you declaring **war on satan, that he has no sway over your life; decisions; your future. Your worship is a declaration of war against all angelic powers against u!

That's exactly what God is declaring over His enemies

¹⁴This is what the Lord your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel says: "For your sake I have sent to Babylon, And **will bring them all down as fugitives**, Even the Chaldeans, into the ships ^[d]over which they rejoice. ¹⁵I am the Lord, your Holy One, The Creator of Israel, your King."

¹⁶This is what the Lord says, *He* who makes a way through the sea

And a path through the mighty waters, ¹⁷Who brings out the chariot and the horse, The army and the mighty man [Egypt] (They will lie down together *and* not rise again;

They have been extinguished, and have gone out like a wick): God's got this. Trust Him?

-The past is the past. The Lord is Redeemer. Savior. Helper. Advocate. Rescuer. What will u do w J?

APPLICATION

Isaiah 43: God is saying: *I am still your Redeemer; I am not finished. I am doing something new.*

In 2026, we are to focus God's MISSION: *What is His Mission for us in 2026?*

1. **Disciple your heart** -How will u **Grow** sp.? Word; Prayer; GROUP; Leading
2. **Engage in YOUR Church, the WELL:** Get off the sidelines, get involved; **Known** in Comm.;

- Where are you connected to this Body?** =*I am going to grow in Christlikeness best in community!* (i.e. who really knows you? Who is encouraging your spiritual growth? To whom are spiritually accountable?)
- Where are you using your spiritual gifts to serve this Body?** =*I am going to grow in Christlikeness best as I selflessly, sacrificially SERVE others* (Do you know what your spiritual gifts are? Do you know where or how to find out where to use them?) *To discover how I am spiritually gifted: www.spiritualgiftstest.com
- C. Either I am ready **to be discipled** OR I am ready **to disciple** someone else. But I need to be weekly engaged in discipleship: =*I am going to grow in Christlikeness best as someone walks & journeys with me in God's Word OR as I spiritually invest in others. EVERYONE needs to be in a discipling relationship (receiving AND giving)*

3. **Sacrifice to accomplish *His Mission* for your family and your Church family:**

A **DISCIPLE** is someone who is actively *following* Jesus, being *changed* by Jesus (transformed), and one who continues the mission of Jesus

*(Luke 19:10 =seek and save the lost) = rescue mission

In 2010, 33 Chilean miners were trapped underground for **69 days**. When rescuers finally drilled through, they did something intentional: they made the exit **too small to carry anything back up**. *Because some miners wanted to bring pieces of the cave with them—rocks, tools, reminders. But rescuers knew: *anything extra could slow or stop the rescue. They could not bring anything with them. Big enough for just their bodies. Everything had to be left behind for life to be gained.* What has God rescued you from?? What do you need to leave behind (sacrifice) in order to get ALL the Lord??

God has rescued us. Why do **we** want to go back and crawl back into the cave/darkness/uselessness.

Community Group Discussion Questions – Isaiah 43:14–21

1. In verse 14, God identifies Himself as “*your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel*” before describing what He will do.
 - Why do you think God begins with who He is rather than what He promises?
 - How does remembering God’s character shape our response to seasons of uncertainty?
2. God reminds Israel of the Exodus (vv.16–17) but then tells them not to dwell on “former things” (v.18).
 - What is the difference between remembering God’s past faithfulness and being stuck in the past?
 - Where have you seen nostalgia become a spiritual obstacle?

3. **God’s Provision in Unexpected Ways**

In this passage, God does not remove the wilderness—He provides **rivers within it**.

- How is this different from how we often pray for God to work?
- Can you share a time when God sustained you without changing your circumstances?

4. **Saved for a Purpose**

Verse 21 says God formed a people “that they might declare my praise.”

- How does this challenge the idea that salvation is only about personal comfort or rescue?
- What might it look like for your group or church to declare God’s praise more clearly?

5. **Letting Go to Move Forward**

The sermon illustration emphasized that some things must be left behind to step into freedom.

- What might God be inviting you to release in order to embrace what He is doing now?
- How can this group support one another in trusting God with that step?