

THE FIRST 15

Monday, December 30, 2024

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Today is Monday, December 30, and as a new year begins we explore what the Bible says about new beginnings.

OPENING PRAYER

As I enter a time of prayer, I pause and become still. I calm my thoughts and silence my mind. I breathe deeply and slowly, and center myself upon the presence of God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Holy Lord, in the peace of these morning moments, I long to experience Your presence. Come Holy Spirit, reveal the new things you want for me in this new year. Enable me to hear the message You have for me in the name of Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

REFLECTION

A Covenant is an agreement or contract that God initiates with humanity. There are many Covenants in the Bible: with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David. In the institution of the Lord's Supper, Jesus creates a New Covenant in his blood. The Bible contrasts between the Old and New Covenants, demonstrating the superiority of the New Covenant God made with humanity through Christ.

At the Last Supper, Jesus chose a loaf of bread, blessed it, broke it into pieces and gave it to His disciples. All the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper (Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:14-20) as well as the early account of the church sharing in Holy Communion (1 Corinthians 11) include these four actions – choose, bless, break, and give. Jesus himself was chosen, blessed, broken through his suffering and death and given to the world. We, as Christ's followers, are also chosen, blessed, broken and given. Christ is broken for us and we in turn are broken for others. (Henri Nouwen, *Life of the Beloved*). When we offer ourselves to God in this new year of 2025, He takes all of us including our brokenness and lovingly transforms us into something beautiful and new.

The words of the Covenant are passed on to me as the same words shared with Christian believers through the centuries. The bread is Christ's body broken for me. Jesus was betrayed, hung on the cross, shed blood, suffered and died. This offering is for me, unworthy as I am to receive it. The cup is Christ's blood shed for me. The New Covenant is a covenant sealed in Christ's blood. The Old Testament Covenants required the shedding of the blood of animals for

the forgiveness of sins, now Jesus' blood is shed on my behalf, to forgive my sins, even mine. I consider the many sins I have committed throughout my life until this very moment. I remember the many times I have trespassed against God and others. In awe, I consider the possibility that all my sins could be forgiven and erased through the shed blood of my Savior.

I seek what the Lord has for me in this new year of 2025 and I want to fully embrace God's plan for my future. I consider how I have been blessed by Jesus in the past and give thanks. I ask for God's blessing for my future. I pause to consider my brokenness. I have places that have been broken by the world, broken by relationships, broken through loss and broken by circumstances. There are broken pieces of my heart, broken dreams, grief and regrets. I give all my brokenness to the Lord. I offer myself to God a living sacrifice in union with Christ's offering for me and pray God will use me in the upcoming year for His kingdom.

Ask: How does the reality of the New Covenant in Jesus Christ inform the state of my soul? What new things might God have for me in this upcoming new year?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

God, thank You for Your gracious mercy offered to me through Your son Jesus. Enable me to receive the truth that is passed on to me from former generations. Help me to comprehend the amazing grace given to me through the breaking of the bread and offering of the cup. I envision myself in Your New Covenant. I invite You into my circumstances and situation. I ask You into my heart and soul. Thank You for choosing me and calling me Your beloved child. Thank You for blessing me. Take the brokenness of my soul and use me to serve Your kingdom for Your glory. Amen.