

# “Behold, I Am Doing a New Thing”

“A New Thing” Series, August 8 & 9, 2026 | Isaiah 43:1-7, 16-21

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## Have you ever been in exile?

**Isaiah saw exile coming for his people.**

Isaiah lived through years when Judah seemed secure and then through decades when the Assyrian empire was a constant threat. God showed the prophet clearly that Judah would survive the Assyrians, but Judah would keep disobeying God, and judgment was coming. More than a century later, the Babylonian empire would rise, conquer Judah, and carry the people away into captivity. The Exile would last seventy years.

**In the movie *Up*, Carl is in exile in his own home.**

The Pixar classic starts with Carl and Ellie getting married, building a home, and building a life. Ellie is a dreamer, full of life and color. Carl is more of a realist. They dream of having children but are unable to, and of traveling to Paradise Falls but never make it. Carl and Ellie spent decades together and grew old together. Then Ellie died, leaving Carl alone in their home—away from Ellie, away from Paradise Falls, and surrounded by a city that no longer feels like home. That’s a kind of exile.

**The third grade was like exile for me.**

I went through an obnoxious phase. By May Day, I had alienated a lot of people. May Day was our school’s biggest day. Every grade prepared a special program for the parents. There was a King and Queen of May Day, and every class selected pages to serve in their court. My class chose our page by lot. Our teacher put slips of paper into a crayon box, and one had a big black dot on it. Each student drew a slip of paper, but no one drew the black dot. The box made its way around the room back toward me. I would draw last. Kids started cheering, “Draw the dot so it’s not Rob.” I drew the dot.

**When have you been in exile?**

Did you get divorced and suddenly find yourself alone? Did you lose a job and find yourself suddenly surrounded by bills you don’t know how you’ll pay? Did you find yourself in the desert of disease? Exile isn’t just being plucked out of your home country. It’s the experience of being taken away—away from the familiar, away from security, and feeling far from God.

**Exile doesn’t have to be the final word on us.**

God showed Isaiah what comes next. It’s good news—to the people who would be sitting in exile in Babylon and to us. We get to come home! You get to come home.

**God loves you and has given everything for you.**

**“Fear not,” God says—correcting a lot of lies we believe.**

In chapter 42, God said that the Exile was His doing for His people’s discipline. **Isaiah 43:1** begins with a very different word:

But now...

God is doing something new:

... thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob,  
he who formed you, O Israel:

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name, you are mine."

God corrects the lies we believe about Him. We believe that He's not good, not powerful, not loving, but He reminds that He is the Creator who made creation, His people, and each of us.

"Fear not ..."

because He is good and has seen us.

"... I have redeemed you ..."

means that God has paid the price to bring us home. Then He tells us who we are:

"... you are mine."

We are, always have been, and always will be God's beloved children. God just rewrote the lies we believe.

### **God proposes an exchange.**

This exchange is baked into the word "redeemed" back in verse 1. That word implies that we have gotten ourselves into trouble—debt or bondage of some kind. God is our closest relative who steps forward to pay our debt so we can be free. Judah had gotten itself into the Exile because of its sin, and God Himself will ransom them from their bondage. In the Exodus He gave Egypt as a ransom for their freedom. Now He's saying that He would give something infinitely precious to buy our freedom. That's pointing to Jesus and to the cross.

### **Jesus is the Great Exchange.**

We were in exile—in bondage to sin, death, and evil. We minimize sin and its consequences, but the Bible makes clear that death is the only way to pay for sin. We have sinned, so someone must die. The Father sent His Son into the world to take our sin on His shoulders and die on the cross in our place. God the Father gave His Son in exchange for our forgiveness. Jesus gave His life in exchange for our freedom. Does that not make you stop and marvel?

### **God's love and truth can open our closed hearts.**

We can close our hearts because we think God is distant and uninvolved; then we learn that He is right here with us. We convince ourselves that He despises us, then realize that He loves us! We tell ourselves that He can be cruel; then we see that He has given everything for us. Perhaps this exile that we find ourselves in is something we've done to ourselves. Maybe if we open our closed hearts, we can come home.

### **God will bring you home.**

#### **God was going to bring the exiles home from Babylon.**

Look at God's promises in **Isaiah 43:5-7**:

"Fear not, for I am with you;

I will bring your offspring from the east,  
and from the west I will gather you.  
I will say to the north, Give up,  
and to the south, Do not withhold;  
bring my sons from afar  
and my daughters from the end of the earth,  
**everyone** who is called by my name,  
whom I created for my glory,  
whom I formed and made.”

God was promising the exiles that He would bring them home to the land and to Him. He’s promising life and renewal after exile as they wait and prepare for Messiah’s arrival. And He is promising that wherever and whenever His people are in exile, He will find them and bring them home. What a promise, because it is a promise to us as well.

### **Jesus gathers us from our exile in the land of sin.**

Sin is a kind of exile. It separates us from God. It makes us blind to the reality that God exists and is blessing us. It can make us deaf to His voice calling us to accept forgiveness and come into a relationship with Him. Sin puts us in chains. You know it if you’ve ever struggled with an addiction to a substance. Lust can also become a prison, as anyone who is addicted to pornography can tell you. Envy is a prison, and many of us are caught in it as we scan social media and wish we were someone else. Pride convinces us that we’re running the prison. It’s all just living in exile—away from God’s presence and away from life. Jesus can break our chains and bring us home from exile.

### **God will bring you home from wherever you’ve gone.**

God will show you His goodness; He’s right there in front of you. All you have to do is open your eyes and see Him. He is already speaking to you, calling you to Himself; He asks that you let your ears hear His voice. God crossed the gulf between Heaven and Earth when Jesus took on human flesh. He did everything needed to bring any of us home. Now the Holy Spirit is constantly working in the world—calling us to God, convincing us of our need for Him, convicting us that we can’t save ourselves, and offering us forgiveness and freedom. It’s like the Holy Spirit is sitting beside you right now. If you’ve withdrawn into anger and bitterness, God can find you. If you’ve covered your life in trash, God can sift through the garbage to find you.

### **Desmond Doss shows just how far God will go to bring people home.**

Doss’s Christian faith made him a conscientious objector during World War II. He didn’t avoid serving. He enlisted, seeking to become a medic. Despite immense pressure, Doss made it to the Pacific theater and was at the Battle of Okinawa. His unit scaled Hacksaw Ridge—a steep cliff leading to a plateau—into ferocious fire. Bullets flew, but Doss stayed, carrying out the wounded one at a time on his back. He went back over and over praying, “Lord, please help me get one more.” He rescued roughly 75 men. That’s how far Desmond Doss went to bring his comrades home.<sup>1</sup> Will God go that far to bring you home? That far and farther.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2016/11/04/500548745/the-real-hacksaw-ridge-soldier-saved-75-souls-without-ever-carrying-a-gun>

## Don't let the past become a prison.

### God calls us to let the past be a prelude, not a prison.

The past that God is talking about is the Exodus, when He rescued Israel from slavery in Egypt. Look at **Isaiah 43:16**,

Thus says the LORD,  
who makes a way in the sea,  
a path in the mighty waters ...

He's saying, "I am God who parted the sea so that you could walk through on dry ground!" In everyone's memory, the Exodus is the greatest thing God ever did. But then, in **Isaiah 43:18**, God says,

"Remember not the former things,  
nor consider the things of old."

He's not saying to forget it. We want to remember God's mighty deeds. But God doesn't want us to limit what we believe He can do next—or to lock ourselves in a prison made from the past.

### Edmund Dantes let the past become his prison.

Dantes was the main character in *The Count of Monte Cristo*. He was betrayed by friends and put in prison, in solitary confinement. His life seemed over. Then he met the priest in the next cell. Together, they plotted to escape. As they dug their way to freedom, the priest educated Dantes and taught him how to be a gentleman. Before the priest died, he told Dantes where a treasure of immense value was hidden. After Dantes escaped, he found the treasure. He could have been free to start a new life. But he vowed to take revenge on the men who had betrayed him, and that consumed his life. Instead of letting the past be a prelude to a new life, he made it his prison.

### Have you ever let the past become your prison?

Sometimes the past is like a gilded cage. We remember the days when our kids were young, we went to church camp, or politics seemed simpler. Then we expect today to be just like that. We won't enjoy the present or let God do anything new in our lives. More often, the prison of the past is dark and musty. We're locked in a cell with hurts, failures, consequences, and pride. It's as if Mom walked out decades ago, and we were still sitting on the stairs watching her go. The past limits what we do here and now and what we'll let God do in us today.

### Getting out of that prison usually means letting something go.

What do you need to let go of—a bit of nostalgia, a hurt, a sin, pride? Do you need to let go of fear and trust God?

### Behold, God is doing a new thing.

We have been memorizing **Isaiah 43:19** for weeks,

"Behold, I am doing a new thing;  
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness  
and rivers in the desert."

God announces that He is doing a new thing. But He begins,

“Behold ...”

It’s a powerful word. It means, “See.” But, the kind of seeing God wants leads to action. See it and trust it—like a bridge that will hold you when you walk across it. See it, trust it, and do something about it. Behold, God is doing a new thing. What does He want us to do?

## **Come home.**

### **I met a man in Turkey who risked his life to go home.**

He grew up in a Muslim family. When he became a Christian, his father announced that the next time he saw his son, he would kill him. So, this man has lived for decades apart from his family. He became a pastor and raised his own family. Now, decades later, his own daughter is getting married. He wanted his father’s blessing on her, and he had to go home to get it. He met with his brother who warned him not to go home. He went to his father’s house, and family members begged him to leave before his father came home. “He will kill you,” they said. But he waited. His father came home, he asked the family to leave, and he bowed before his father saying, “If you’re going to kill me, kill me, but I want your blessing on my daughter before she gets married.” If he will risk his life to go home, how can we not go home when the way is prepared, the invitation is given, and our Heavenly Father will welcome us with open arms?

### **Come home to your Father’s presence.**

God loves you better than any earthly father could. He wants a relationship with you. He wants you to know His love, accept His love, love Him in return, and spend time with Him. This Relationship happens in worship, prayer, and Bible study. But it really happens when we change our minds about God. Instead of thinking about Him as distant, we recognize that He is close—even in our exiles! You could show that by being baptized—publicly declaring that you have come home to the Father through Jesus. We’re baptizing soon.

### **Come home to your Father’s people.**

The Church is filled with God’s sons and daughters. These are our brothers and sisters in the family of faith. They are walking the same journey and can help us on the way. Of course, they’re all imperfect people just as you and I are. Sometimes, they disappoint us. Occasionally, they hurt us. And then there are times when we just push them away because of something going on inside of us. Coming home to God often involves coming home to His family. You could show that by joining a group or becoming a member.

### **Come home to your Father’s way.**

You may have been in exile because you’ve been walking your own path, following your own will. To love God means to obey Him. We don’t do it to prove anything, to earn God’s favor, or to avoid punishment. We do it as an act of love. You could pick one specific thing to do that you know God wants you to do and do it this week as an act of love.

### **Come home to your Father’s work.**

God is on mission, finding people in exile and bringing them home. You could join Him on that mission. Sometimes we think that’s work for someone else to do, something we could never do. But

that's just us locking ourselves back in the prison of the past, refusing to believe what God can do next. God's work is something for all of us. How can you join Him in His work?

**God has prepared everything we need for the journey home.**

I used to run a relay race called Ragnar. Teams of twelve would take turns and run a total of roughly 200 miles. I would run three legs of roughly six miles each. Most legs had an aid station where you could get a cup of water. One year, it was over 100 degrees during the day. Even if you carried water with you, it didn't last. So those aid stations looked like "streams in the desert." God is making a way through the wilderness so that we can come home from exile. He gives us everything we need—like a water station on a hot day—so the journey is doable. He joins us in the journey—like someone running alongside you, cheering and reminding you that you can do it. You can come home!

**Don't delay.**

You may have been in exile for a long time. You've missed out on so much the Father has planned for you. You don't want to miss any more. You want to enjoy God's goodness now! And timing matters. We will all see Jesus someday. Maybe today. Come home today.