

East Hill Church Sermon Discussion Guide: God is Doing a New Thing

Guest Speaker: Pastor Coco Jenkins

Date: January 28th, 2024

Introduction:

In a heartfelt sermon, Pastor Coco Jenkins addressed the congregation of East Hill Foursquare Church, emphasizing the continuous work of God in initiating new phases in our lives. She began by acknowledging the recent challenges faced by the community, drawing parallels to the isolation experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent storms. Despite these challenges, she highlighted God's sovereignty and control, reminiscent of Jesus calming the storm. Pastor Coco then seamlessly transitioned into the heart of her message, inspired by Isaiah 43:18-19, focusing on the theme "God is Doing a New Thing." She set the stage for a deep dive into understanding God's transformative work in our lives, encouraging the congregation to look forward with anticipation and faith.

Key Verses:

Isaiah 43:18-19 (NIV)

18 "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. **19** See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."

Context and Reflection:

- **Historical/Cultural Context:** These verses were spoken to the Israelites during their captivity, offering hope and a promise of restoration.
 - **Theological Significance:** Represents God's ability to bring change and renewal, emphasizing His creative power to transform circumstances.
 - **Application to 'God is doing a new thing':** Encourages us to look forward to the transformative work God is doing in our lives, leaving behind past limitations.
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Exodus 6:9 (NIV)

9 "Moses reported this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their discouragement and harsh labor."

Context and Reflection:

- **Historical/Cultural Context:** This verse occurs when Moses conveys God's promise of deliverance to the Israelites, who are disheartened by their bondage in Egypt.
 - **Theological Significance:** Highlights the challenge of receiving God's promises when burdened by suffering and despair.
 - **Application to 'God is doing a new thing':** Serves as a reminder to stay open to God's promises and actions, even when circumstances seem discouraging.
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Revelation 2:29 (NIV)

29 "Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Context and Reflection:

- **Historical/Cultural Context:** Part of the letters to the seven churches, calling for attentiveness to the Holy Spirit's guidance.
 - **Theological Significance:** Emphasizes the importance of spiritual discernment and responsiveness to God's communication.
 - **Application to 'God is doing a new thing':** Encourages us to be attentive and responsive to the new directions and insights the Holy Spirit provides.
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Psalm 145:18 (NIV)

18 "The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth."

Context and Reflection:

- **Historical/Cultural Context:** A Psalm of David, expressing God's faithfulness and nearness to those who earnestly seek Him.
 - **Theological Significance:** Affirms God's availability and responsiveness to His people.
 - **Application to 'God is doing a new thing':** Assures us of God's presence and guidance as we seek Him in our journey towards the new things He is doing.
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John 4:13-14 (NIV)

13 "Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, **14** but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'"

Context and Reflection:

- **Historical/Cultural Context:** Jesus speaks to the Samaritan woman at the well, revealing Himself as the source of living water.
 - **Theological Significance:** Illustrates Jesus as the source of spiritual satisfaction and eternal life.
 - **Application to 'God is doing a new thing':** Symbolizes the refreshing and renewing work of Christ in our lives, leading us to new spiritual heights.
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2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NIV)

16 "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. **17** For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. **18** So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."

Context and Reflection:

- **Historical/Cultural Context:** Paul writes to encourage the Corinthian church amidst their trials, focusing on eternal hope.
 - **Theological Significance:** Emphasizes the transient nature of earthly struggles compared to the eternal glory in Christ.
 - **Application to 'God is doing a new thing':** Encourages us to focus on the transformative and eternal work of God in our lives, beyond temporary challenges.
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Revelation 21:5 (NIV)

5 "He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!' Then he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.'"

Context and Reflection:

- **Historical/Cultural Context:** Part of John's vision in Revelation, depicting the final renewal of all things by God.
- **Theological Significance:** Symbolizes God's ultimate restoration and renewal of creation.
- **Application to 'God is doing a new thing':** Reminds us of the grand scale of God's renewing work, not just in our lives but in all of creation.

Forget the Former Things: Do Not Dwell on the Past

Pastor Coco eloquently urged us to let go of our past, referencing the Israelites' experience as a metaphor. She reflected on how Israel, despite their past victories like the crossing of the Red Sea, struggled to embrace the future due to their attachment to these former glories. Pastor Coco highlighted a profound truth: "Nothing fights a new move of God, like a past move of God." This part of the sermon served as a powerful reminder that dwelling on past achievements or failures can hinder our spiritual progress and blind us to the new paths God is carving out for us. She encouraged us to acknowledge our past but not be bound by it, using examples of personal struggles and societal challenges to illustrate how past experiences can condition our expectations and limit our receptiveness to God's new directions.

Discussion Questions:

1. **Reflecting on Letting Go:** How does holding onto past experiences impact your spiritual growth and ability to embrace new things from God?
 - **Follow-Up:** Share a personal example of a past experience you had to let go of to move forward in your spiritual journey.
2. **Learning from the Past Without Dwelling:** In what ways can we learn from our past experiences while ensuring we don't dwell on them?
 - **Follow-Up:** Discuss how you can apply this balance in a current life situation.
3. **Breaking Free from Past Victories or Failures:** How can we avoid the trap of letting past victories or failures define our current faith journey?
 - **Follow-Up:** Consider a time when either a past victory or failure influenced your decisions. How did you overcome this?

Can You PERCEIVE (Discern, Recognize, See)

In this segment, Pastor Coco challenged us to develop spiritual perception to recognize God's workings in our lives. She cited Isaiah 43:18b, emphasizing the importance of perceiving the new things God is bringing forth. Pastor Coco discussed the need for spiritual eyes, attuned to the Spirit and grounded in the Word of God, to discern His promises, character, and ways. She spoke about the distractions of modern culture, like excessive media consumption, that can dull our spiritual senses. Drawing on Revelation 2:29, she underscored the necessity of quieting the noise around us to hear the Spirit of God. The message was clear: to perceive God's new work,

we must draw nearer to Him, finding comfort, peace, and assurance even in our darkest moments, guided not by fleeting feelings but by the unwavering truth of God's Word.

Discussion Questions:

1. **Cultivating Spiritual Perception:** What are some practical ways to develop our spiritual perception to recognize God's new works?
 - **Follow-Up:** Share an action you plan to take this week to enhance your spiritual perception.
2. **Overcoming Distractions:** How do modern distractions impact our ability to perceive God's guidance?
 - **Follow-Up:** Discuss strategies to minimize distractions in your daily life to better hear God's voice.
3. **Recognizing God in Uncertainty:** How can we discern God's presence and guidance in times of uncertainty or change?
 - **Follow-Up:** Reflect on a recent situation where you found it challenging to perceive God's guidance. How did you navigate it?

He Always Makes a Way for Us

In this poignant part of her sermon, Pastor Coco reinforced the idea that God is a Way Maker, especially during challenging times. Using the metaphor of Israel's physical and spiritual journey through the desert, she depicted how God consistently creates paths in our most barren experiences, whether they are physical, emotional, or spiritual deserts. She reminded us that in times of loneliness, misdirection, and confusion, the only way out is by entrusting ourselves to God's guidance. This section was a testament to God's unceasing provision and direction, as He leads us from places of desolation to fertile ground, a journey that requires faith and trust in His divine plan.

Discussion Questions:

1. **God as a Way Maker in Difficult Times:** Share a personal experience where you witnessed God making a way in a seemingly impossible situation.
 - **Follow-Up:** How did this experience change your perspective on facing future challenges?
 2. **Trusting God in the 'Desert' Experiences:** How do you maintain trust in God when you find yourself in a 'desert' moment of life?
 - **Follow-Up:** What scriptures or spiritual practices help you stay focused on God's path during these times?
 3. **Learning from the Israelites' Journey:** What lessons can we learn from the Israelites' journey through the desert about God's guidance and provision?
 - **Follow-Up:** How can you apply these lessons to a current challenge or transition in your life?
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God ALWAYS PROVIDES

Pastor Coco's words in this section centered around God's unwavering provision, drawing from John 4:13-14's depiction of Jesus as the living water. She expounded on the symbolism of God making "Streams in the wasteland," illustrating how God brings vitality and hope to the most lifeless aspects of our lives. This part of the sermon served as a reminder of the hope that prevails even in the midst of hopelessness. She encouraged us to trust in God's miraculous provision, emphasizing that expectancy and faith are the breeding grounds for miracles. By citing 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, Pastor Coco highlighted that our current troubles are momentary and serve a greater purpose, fostering an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

Discussion Questions:

1. **Experiencing God's Provision:** Reflect on a time when you experienced God's provision in an unexpected way.
 - **Follow-Up:** How has this experience influenced your view on God's ability to provide in the future?
2. **Streams in the Wasteland:** How does the imagery of "streams in the wasteland" speak to you about God's ability to bring life and hope in difficult situations?
 - **Follow-Up:** Discuss a 'wasteland' situation in your life and how you can look for God's 'streams' in it.
3. **Miracles in the Mundane:** In what ways have you seen God perform 'small' miracles in your everyday life?
 - **Follow-Up:** Share how recognizing these small miracles can impact your daily faith walk.

Conclusion

Pastor Coco Jenkins brought her message full circle by reiterating the central theme of her sermon, "God is Doing a New Thing." She urged us to not only perceive but actively embrace the new works God is manifesting in our lives. With references to Revelation 21:5, she reminded us of Jesus' promise of renewal and transformation. The sermon was a powerful call to break free from the shackles of our past, to open our hearts and minds to the new things God is doing, and to trust in His unfailing guidance and provision, regardless of the uncertainties or challenges we may face.

Prayer Requests:

[Share any personal prayer requests, and pray over the week ahead]

References:

Primary Sources:

- **Coco Jenkins.** "God is Doing a New Thing" Sermon. 01/28/2024. Provided by Kelly Paxton and **East Hill Church**.
- **The Holy Bible, New International Version (NIV).** Biblica, Inc.™, 2011.

Secondary Sources:

- **Contextual and Theological Insights:** Based on general biblical scholarship and commentaries relevant to the verses from Isaiah, Exodus, Revelation, Psalms, John, 2 Corinthians.
- **General Sources on Biblical Studies:**
 - **Wright, N. T.** "The New Testament and the People of God." SPCK, 1992.
 - **Stott, John.** "The Cross of Christ." InterVarsity Press, 2006.

Linguistic and Grammatical Resources:

- **Strong, James.** "The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible." Thomas Nelson, 2010.
- **Vine, W. E.** "Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words." Thomas Nelson, 1996.

Collaborative Contributions:

- **LLM Contributions:** Based on a mixture of licensed data, data created by AI models, and publicly available data, synthesized for the study of the provided biblical verses.
- **LLM Training Data:**
 - **LLM Training Data.** Includes a diverse range of texts (books, websites, and other publications) up to April 2023.