



## DEXTER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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**All Things New**

**January 4, 2009**

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**Revelation 21:3 – 5**

### **This year, transform everything.**

Revelation 21: 3 *“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with people, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” 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.” 6 He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. 7 You who overcome will inherit all this, and I will be your God and you will be my child.”*”

Something interesting happened to me this New Year’s Eve. We were up at my parents, and after a truly stunning game of charades, the thought occurred to me “This is the last year of the entire decade. You’ve got one more year before the decade is done. Go for it.” What was it *you* wanted to accomplish before this millennium decade is done?” Do you even *remember* what you hoped for that New Year’s Eve, 1999? (“We’re gonna party like it’s...”) Seeing in the new millennium was pretty cool. Remember what you wished for? First of all, that you wouldn’t really have to eat all that peanut butter you bought for Y2K. Or maybe you hoped that all the computers would stop working! Or that you were born for such a time as this, to live in two different millennia. (Or maybe that was one of those times you don’t remember anything!) ☺

- Tell someone near you what you still hope to have in place by the end of the decade (meaning by the end of this year).

This is it: your final chance to live the year you’ve wanted to live for the last decade: the future is here! And this is it...yikes! The problem is the *future* is here...but so are we. ☺ But the good news is, *so is God*... God isn’t just God of the millennium. God is God of today...*this* day! The question is, then why don’t I see Him?! If God really is “making everything new,” why don’t I experience it? My life is way too ordinary and way too full (meaning empty) and way too self-centered to become far-flung. Maybe you feel that way too...

I wonder if it doesn’t have to do with something Mark Batterson calls “The dictatorship of the ordinary?” You know, your life being run by details and nothing special. It was the Victorian-era poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning who wrote:

Earth’s crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush afire with God;  
But only he who sees takes off his shoes;  
The rest sit around and pluck blackberries.

Wouldn’t it be cool to be one of those people who looked at ordinary stuff and got inspired by it? Or saw the deep, hidden meanings in everyday things? But most of us don’t, because we’re under the dictatorship of the ordinary. Think about it...right now, you have no sense of motion. (Don’t worry—Leigh says most people don’t know where my sermons are going either! ☺). But the reality is that you are sitting on a planet that is

spinning around its axis at approximately 1,000 miles per hour. Planet Earth will make one full rotation in the next 24 hours. Not only that, but you are also hurling through space at approximately 67,000 miles per hour. (And you didn't have any big plans for today!) ☺ Before today is over, you will have traveled 1.3 million miles in your annual trek around the sun! (That's not counting the 32 million miles per day that the whole solar system is traveling through the vast expanse of interstellar space). More is going on than you think...

When was the last time you thanked God for keeping us in orbit? I'm guessing never. "Lord, thanks for keeping us in orbit. And I was a little nervous about making the full rotation around our axis today, but You did it again." Most of us don't pray that way. But isn't it ironic that we have a hard time believing God for the little stuff while we take the big stuff for granted? Come on. If God can keep the planets in orbit, don't you think He can reorder your life when you feel like it's spinning out of control?

Keeping the planets in orbit is a perpetual miracle of unparalleled proportions. So why aren't we overwhelmed with awe over how it all fits together? Why don't we ceaselessly praise God for our spinning globe? The reason is simple: we take constants for granted. And that's the problem with God. God is the ultimate constant. He is unconditionally loving. He is omnipotently powerful. And He is eternally faithful. God is so God at what God does that we take Him for granted. G. K. Chesterton said "*Grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. Is it possible God says every morning 'Do it again' to the sun; and every evening 'Do it again' to the moon? The repetition in nature may not be a theatrical encore.*" The Bible itself says it in Psalm 29:1

*"Bravo, GOD, bravo! Gods and all angels shout, 'Encore!'  
In awe before the glory,  
in awe before God's visible power."*

More is going on that you think. Revelation 21:3 "*Now the dwelling of God is with people, and he will live with them... They will be his people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. 5 He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"*" But when you forget that, when the sacred becomes routine, when you put your relationship with God in some kind of box, not only do we forfeit our spiritual adventure, but we start losing the joy of our salvation. But when you stop; when you allow anything but God to be your barometer, when you start setting your clock to something besides God, you lose all power to be made new.

Celtic Christians referred to certain places as "thin places." Natural and supernatural worlds collide. Creation meets Creator. Sin meets grace. You realize more is going on than you think. And God "*makes all things new.*" Don't wait to worship God until you reach the Promised Land. If you wait until everything lines up, if you wait until you "feel new," you'll never experience the miracle of faith. Imagine if 2009 is your divine appointment: Your "thin place," when you see with God-eyes, and look for God-sized miracles. And God really does make you new... Let 2009 be different. Let Him make you new. I read a formula: **Change of Place + Change of Pace = Change of Perspective**

This week, what if you found a new place to meet God. A Bible study? A Sunday School class? Regular personal quiet time in a different chair? Or begin looking for a mission trip? (We have a couple on the books) A natural spot to walk? What if you became a regular at a local mission, or ministry of this church? A change of place and a change of pace.

This week, what if you commit to a new pace? Instead of going to the internet or TV first thing in the day, go to the Bible. Get some vertical perspective on life, rather than just horizontal. Put it by a chair away from your bed. Claim your Daily Appointment With God. And what if you were to rest? What if you were to invest more time with God and with your family? (I'm talking about you, not your spouse!) Simple joy stuff. We have some retreats planned. Or what if you were to go home and book some time—evenings, mornings, lunchtimes, that you would rest and reflect. The newness that awaits you will never be discovered if you don't.

As we kick off this year, let me ask: How is your relationship with Jesus? Starved? Full? Maybe today's your day to begin...or reclaim. Remember, He's making all things new, and more is going on than you think.

Picture where you could be by the end of the year. Picture what it would be like after a year's worth of getting in harmony with God? Knowing His Word and His perspective, allowing Him to make you new? Think there wouldn't be some new stuff happening in our lives? What a great year for this to happen. What a great day for this to happen!

- *"This is the day...this is the day, that the Lord has made! Let us rejoice, and be glad in it."* Psalm 118:24 (That's no small feat!)
- *"The Lord's compassions never fail. They are new every morning."* Lamentations 3:21 (And that's no small feat either!)

Let us pray... God making all things new doesn't just happen. This isn't just happy thoughts. It's always tied in to the reconciliation we have through Christ and our redemption through His sacrifice.