

## **Renewal - Part 1**

*Isaiah 65:17-25*

**God will renew your broken past.**

- *Isaiah 65:16-17, 19*

**God will renew your broken dreams.**

- *Isaiah 65:20, 22*

**God will renew your broken relationships.**

- *Isaiah 65:23-24; Ephesians 2:12-13; Romans 5:1*

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**West Valley Church**  
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## **Renewed**

### **Isaiah 65:17-25**

We had a great time together last week for our Easter Sunday celebration, didn't we? I'm thankful for all of our pastors and staff and our many, many volunteers who made that day happen for us. And how fun was it to have Easter in our newly updated Worship Center!

We talked last week about the new life we can have because of Jesus and his death and resurrection. Hundreds of us made the decision to either come out of the grave or to stop wearing grave clothes. We stepped into this transformed life that Jesus died and rose from the grave to give us. But what does that life look like? What can we expect from this renewed life in Christ? We talked last week about taking off the grave clothes and being clothed in the righteousness of Christ, as the Bible says, so what does that look like? That's why we are starting this series today – to explain and explore what a renewed life looks like.

Today I want us to see God's heart for you and for your renewal as he's revealed it in His Word through the Old Testament prophet Isaiah. Isaiah shows us a God who takes things that are broken and puts them back together again. Isaiah 65 shows us three areas of our lives where God promises to bring renewal. Let me give you a head's up: usually when people read this passage I'm about to read, they assume it's only talking about heaven, but it has as much to do with our lives *today* as it does heaven someday. This describes to what God wants to do for you *today*. The passage we are going to look at is about Jesus, and what he came to do in our lives in the present, not just in the future. Would you help me honor God's Word by standing as I read this to us? Here's what God says:

"Look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth, and no one will even think about the old ones anymore. Be glad; rejoice forever in my creation! And look! I will create Jerusalem as a place of happiness.

Her people will be a source of joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and delight in my people. And the sound of weeping and crying will be heard in it no more. No longer will babies die when only a few days old.

No longer will adults die before they have lived a full life. No longer will people be considered old at one hundred! Only the cursed will die that young!

In those days people will live in the houses they build and eat the fruit of their own vineyards.

Unlike the past, invaders will not take their houses and confiscate their vineyards. For my people will live as long as trees, and my chosen ones will

have time to enjoy their hard-won gains.

They will not work in vain, and their children will not be doomed to misfortune.

For they are people blessed by the Lord, and their children, too, will be blessed. I will answer them before they even call to me. While they are still talking about their needs, I will go ahead and answer their prayers!

The wolf and the lamb will feed together. The lion will eat hay like a cow.

But the snakes will eat dust. In those days no one will be hurt or destroyed on my holy mountain. I, the Lord, have spoken!" (Isaiah 65:17-25, nlt)

Thank you; you can be seated. Remember as we get into this – even though it talks about heaven, it has to do with your life today, too!

I'd encourage you to open our app to the sermon notes page, or get your journals and take notes; whatever you need to help keep track with me the three areas of our lives that God promises – promises! – to bring about renewal. First...

## **1. God wants to renew your broken past.**

The greatest obstacle to happiness that many people face is not their present circumstances and it's not the uncertainty of the future; it's the impact of the perceived reality of their past. Millions of people live miserable lives because they are haunted by something that happened to them many years ago. Maybe it was something they did that they regret. Maybe it was something they *didn't* do that they regret. Maybe it was something that happened to them or was done to them. It could be big or small. I've seen some people stew over a perceived slight or what they thought was a rude comment, and then harbor it for years. I've seen others toil under the trauma of neglect or abuse. Whatever it may be, the past has the power to keep us stuck and keep us from moving forward from something that happened, or some horrible things done to us, and it has the power to destroy our lives in the present and the future. But thanks be to God who sent Jesus who can break the power of the past and bring renewal to our lives. Let's look at verse sixteen again in that passage we read:

"I will put aside my anger and forget the evil of earlier days. Look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth, and no one will even think about the old ones anymore." (Isaiah 65:16-17, nlt)

God is in the business of making things new. This is talking about how he can heal our past.

I remember when I first became a Christian and began reading the Bible – I read it every night until I fell asleep, I'd read it first thing in the morning and then during breaks at school. And I remember how surprised I was the first time I read the letters of Peter. They were obviously written by a man who was confident in his role as a leader. And I remember thinking, "Is this the same guy that denied Christ three times? I'm sure the people he's writing to must've known he did that – it's in the Gospels. Shouldn't Peter be embarrassed? Isn't he ashamed of his mistakes?"

How can he write with that kind of authority knowing how badly he messed up?" The reason Peter was able to make such a comeback is because God renewed Peter's broken past. Peter made mistakes – huge, colossal mistakes – and God renewed him. And Peter isn't the only one, either. Paul had a past, and God renewed him. David had a past, and God renewed him. Moses had a past, and God renewed him. Rahab had a past, and God renewed her. Mary Magdalene had a past, and God renewed her – I could go on and on, because the Bible (and all of Christian history!) is full of stories of those whose broken pasts have been renewed by the power of God – my story is included in that, and so can yours be – that's what God does!!

I've had people say to me, "I've made a terrible mistake and now I will have to live with the memory of this for the rest of my life." And that's probably true; we very well may have to live with the consequences and the memories, but we *don't* have to live with the guilt and shame and bitterness and pain and bondage. That's why Jesus came to this earth. Isaiah says:

“...the sound of weeping and crying will be heard in it no more.”  
(Isaiah 65:19, nlt)

God will renew your broken past.

*Pause; think about the brokenness in your past – perhaps long ago or not too distant past. Maybe you need to confess it. Maybe you need to ask God to heal you and let go of it. Maybe you need to forgive...Trust God that the sound of weeping and crying will be no more.*

Secondly...

## **2. God will renew your *broken dreams*.**

Two weeks ago we were at our Church of the Nazarene District Assembly, where each of the over 70 churches send pastors and delegates to take care of district business and have worship services, and one thing they do every year is a time in a service called the “Memorial Roll” – a meaningful, meditative reflection on those we love in our church family who have passed away in the last year. There were far too many names from our church over the last year. Some of those deaths were expected, some were unexpectedly tragic, and yet all are terrible losses. For us, just last week we got the news that my Aunt Charlot – my dad's only remaining immediate family member – passed away. Her health had not been great for the last few years, but this was not expected, and it all happened within two days. It was quite a shock and very sad. I'll deliver the message at her service on May 8<sup>th</sup> in Vancouver, so I appreciate your prayers. This past year has been tough on our church. But I can guarantee you that all of us will experience some kind of loss in the year to come.

But there is another type of grief that is like losing what you had, and it is losing what you will never have. Let me give an example of what I mean: I remember sitting in my very first class as a freshman in college. I was a ministry major, but I had only been a Christian for a year and a few months (remember I did not grow up

in the church). It was a class on Christian Education in the Church. The very first day of class, the professor was talking about how Christian education begins in the home, so he asked us students to share the things their parents did with them growing up to help them learn about Christ. The students talked about posters with Scripture hanging on the walls of their homes, about little plastic bread loaves with Scripture cards in them. They talked about having family Bible times and praying together as a family. They talked about going camping over weekends and having worship around the campfire. I didn't say a thing. I couldn't. I had no idea that people did those things; I'd never heard of anyone ever doing that. My family never did. The more they talked, the more I realized how much I missed out on as I was growing up, and what I would never, ever experience in my life. I began to weep and had to leave the class because I was grieving what I would never have. Thankfully my parents later professed faith in Christ, but I would never experience what all my Christian friends had just taken for granted. I grieved what I never had.

Maybe you experienced some kind of loss – maybe it was a horrible loss of something you had or something you will never have, and that changed your life so much that it altered your future, and you will never be the same. That's what broken dreams are. And that's something God understands. After all, he had dreams of what this world would be like, and what his relationship with us would be like. Those dreams were broken by us because we sinned and keep on sinning. A lot of this passage is about God's dream of what the world was supposed to be, and his desire to get us back to that original dream that we broke. God also experienced brokenness when Jesus came to this broken world. Jesus felt each and every loss we feel. But he doesn't just feel helplessly hurt, nor does he leave us feeling that way. He gives us hope:

“No longer will babies die when only a few days old. No longer will adults die before they have lived a full life. No longer will people be considered old at one hundred! Only the cursed will die that young!” (Isaiah 65:20, niv)

Of course, that will be true in Heaven someday, but what about here and now? Death causes us to experience the pain of broken dreams, but God can renew our hope. He promises that death is not the end; it is the beginning. Because Jesus came to earth, lived, and then died, but then rose from the dead, death is no longer the end – death is no longer the great enemy and the ultimate end that is to be feared. Death is a *beginning, because Jesus gives us life on the other side of death*. With Jesus, broken dreams are only the beginning.

By the way, broken dreams are caused not only by an untimely death or loss, but also by an unfulfilled life. You might feel you haven't lived up to your potential, but God offers us hope here, too:

“No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat...” (Isaiah 65:22, nlt)

Do you ever feel like that? All your work just goes to someone else? All your dreams come up empty. Maybe your dreams have been broken by death, or maybe they've been broken by life and the things that have happened to you, but God can

bring about renewal. That's what He does – He takes things that are broken and puts them back together again.

*Pray: Do you have broken dreams? Dreams that never came true? Perhaps great pain or loss has resulted in broken dreams. God is always present in every moment of time. God is present in that event from your past, right now, as much as he is present to you, today – right now. Ask the God of the past to go back to that broken dream, and to bring healing and hope out of it for your future.*

Notice, thirdly...

### **3. God renews your *broken relationships*.**

This is a powerful promise. These broken relationships can be friendships and even broken families. Many children today are born into situations where, from a sociological standpoint, they don't have a chance. Because of economics, or drugs, or abuse, or ethnicity, or politics, or lack of education, or a myriad of things, some children seem destined to mirror the miserable lives their parents have suffered. Many families seem to be falling apart (if they even started together). Even among those who manage to stay together, there are often such relational rifts that they might as well be strangers or even enemies. But it doesn't have to stay that way. God has the power to renew family relationships when they turn to him and trust him.

When she turned 21, Tammy Harris from Roanoke, Virginia, began searching for her biological mother. After a year she had not succeeded. What she didn't know was that her mother, Joyce Schultz, had been trying to locate her for twenty years.

According to the Associated Press story, there was one more thing Tammy didn't know: her mother was one of her coworkers at the convenience store where she worked! One day Joyce overheard Tammy talking with another coworker about trying to find her mother. Soon they were comparing birth certificates. After several probing conversations and an exchange of birth certificates and baby photos, it became clear that mother and daughter had been working alongside each other for six months. When Tammy realized that the coworker she had known was, in fact, her mother, she fell into her arms. "We held for the longest time," Tammy said, "It was the best day of my life."<sup>1</sup> If God can do *that*, he can renew your relationships, too. Isaiah said:

"They will not labor in vain, nor will they bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the Lord, they and their descendants with them." (Isaiah 65:23, niv)

God loves to renew broken relationships. I've watched couples that have already been divorced, accept Christ and then begin to put their marriage back together. I've even performed "remarriages."

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.apnews.com/54865c15168138bdd2c40810b7bd5a14>

I do counseling in an office with a sofa, and so many times I knew where the couple were at in their relationship by where the couple sat on that couch; if they sat together, that was a good sign. If one was at one end and the other at the middle, I knew who wanted to make it work. But there've been times when they would sit at opposite sides of that couch, nearly pushing with all their might against the arms as if they could stretch the couch to make them further apart from each other. But then I've watched as we've talked and prayed and they've confessed and forgave, that literally over time they would move closer and closer together, until they were sitting together holding hands.

God loves to renew broken relationships. I'm not just talking about marriages but all kinds of relationships.

But then what do you do when you want to see the relationship renewed with someone, except the other person does not? If that's the case, unless that person changes their heart and mind, God can't do anything about it. Even if that's the case and the other person doesn't want to renew things, *you* can turn to God, and he can renew to you a love toward that person that will open the door for them when they want to. But at least you can keep moving forward even though it hurts. And you can be sure that God will work in them, too, because God loves to renew broken relationships.

In even deeper ways than that, God wants to renew our spiritual relationships. Isaiah said:

“...for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them. Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.” (Isaiah 65:23-24, niv)

God promises that the gap that exists between himself and people will be bridged – and our broken relationship with him will be renewed. Since the days of Adam we have been separated from God, not only by Adam's sin, but by our own as well. God promised in Genesis 3:15 that this broken relationship would someday be renewed; and that's exactly what was accomplished through Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote:

“At that time you were without Christ. You were aliens rather than citizens of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of God's promise. In this world you had no hope and no God. But now, thanks to Christ Jesus, you who once were so far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (Ephesians 2:12-13, ceb)

God promises our relationship with Him can be one of peace, fellowship, and blessing. Unfortunately, these are not the words that many people use to describe their relationship with God. Many people view a relationship with God as a source of guilt and judgment and unrealistic expectations with rules and institutions. But those lies come from your unfounded fear of God.

*Everyone* has experienced a broken relationship with God (Romans 3:23), but God offers us renewal through the death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ. And he offers us peace in this world and with him. Again, Paul said:

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:1, niv)

*Most of all, God renews our broken relationship with Him. From there, everything else can be renewed.*

*Pray: start with your relationship with God – there can be no other relational renewal without the Great Renew-er. How is that relationship? Do you have one? Talk to God about renewing your relationship with him.*

*Then you can allow God to renew your broken past and your broken dreams.*

*Think of broken relationship (or pick just one). Ask God how if it might be renewed. Know he is likely going to talk to you about your responsibility. What do you need to confess to that person? What do you need to ask forgiveness for? What do you need to make right? Whether the other person wants it renewed or not, it doesn't remove your responsibility in restoration. It will never happen if you don't. But either way, you'll be free, and God will entrust to you a different relationship that can be even greater.*

Benediction:

*“The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.”  
(Numbers 6:22-26)*