

**Sunday, January 4, 2026**

**New Year, New Life Celebration**

There's something about the turning of the calendar that stirs the human heart. A new year feels like a blank page. A fresh start. A chance to reset, refocus, and realign our lives. But as believers, we know something deeper: **God doesn't wait for January 1st to offer new beginnings.** He offers them every day through the finished work of Jesus Christ. This morning, as we stand at the doorway of a new year, we also gather around two powerful symbols of the gospel—**baptism and the Lord's Supper.** These are not empty rituals. They are living reminders that in Christ, **the old has passed away and the new has come.** As we stand at the threshold of a new year, we feel something stir in us. A desire for renewal. A longing for a fresh start. A hope that the coming year might look different from the last.

The good news is this: **God specializes in new beginnings.** Not just once a year, but every day, every moment, through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Today, as we celebrate the Lord's Supper and have already witnessed baptism, we are reminded that **the Christian life is built on God's promise to make all things new.**

## A New Year Awakens a Deep Desire for Renewal

- Every new year stirs hope for change.
- Scripture tells us renewal isn't seasonal — it's *spiritual*.
- **Big Idea:** God doesn't just give us a new year; He gives us a new life. Let's celebrate that today.

### Key Scripture:

**2 Corinthians 5:17...** *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”*

This is more than just a motivational slogan. It's not just a New Year's resolution. It's a divine declaration. In Christ, you are not a slightly improved version of your old self. You are not a spiritual renovation project. You are a **new creation**.

### In Christ:

**The old is not *improved***

**The old is not *renovated***

**The old is not *polished up***

**The old is gone. The new has come.**

**The two Ordinances of the Church found in the Bible are Baptism and The Lord's Supper/Communion.**

They are both **visible sermons, testimonies in a sense**—public, physical signs that proclaim the gospel.

## 1. Baptism: The Believer's Public Identification With New Life in Christ

Baptism is a picture of death and resurrection. It proclaims that the old life—marked by sin, shame, and separation from God—has been buried with Christ. And the new life—marked by grace, forgiveness, and the indwelling Spirit—has begun.

Paul says in Romans 6 that we are “*buried with Him by baptism into death*” and “*raised to walk in newness of life*.” Baptism is not a symbol of trying harder. It's a symbol of being made new.

### A. Baptism Is Obedience to Christ's Command

- Matthew 28:19 — “Go... baptizing them...”
- Baptism is not optional; it is the first step of discipleship.

### B. A Symbol of Union With Christ

Baptism is a picture of the believer's union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3–4).

- It symbolizes dying to the old life and rising to walk in newness of life.

### C. A Testimony of Personal Faith

Baptists practice **believer's baptism** only.

- It is the outward testimony of an inward reality—faith in Christ.
- It is not regenerative; it **follows** salvation, not causes it.

### D. Immersion as the Mode

Baptists insist on immersion because:

- The Greek *baptizō* means “to immerse.”
- Immersion best pictures burial and resurrection.
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### E. Entrance Into the Visible Church

Baptism is the believer's **public initiation** into the covenant community.

- It is the church's affirmation of a credible profession of faith, not merely an individual expression.

### The Old Has Passed Away

- Baptism symbolizes death to the old life and resurrection to new life.
- **Key truth:** What Christ has buried, we don't have to carry.

### Baptism says:

*I have died with Christ  
My old life is buried  
I have been raised to walk in newness of life*

As we enter a new year, baptism invites us to ask:

- What needs to be buried?
- What needs to be surrendered?
- What old patterns, habits, or fears need to stay under the water?

The new year invites reflection, but baptism invites transformation.

## 2. The Lord's Supper: The New Covenant Reminder

If baptism symbolizes the beginning of our new life in Christ, **the Lord's Supper reminds us that we are part of God's family through the sacrifice of Jesus**

Jesus said in [Luke 22:20](#)... *"This cup is the new covenant in My blood which is poured out for you."* (see also 1 Cor. 11:25)

A covenant not based on our performance, but on His sacrifice. Not on our promises to God, but on God's promises to us.

When we take the bread and the cup, we remember:

- Christ's body broken for our past
- Christ's blood shed for our future
- Christ's presence with us in the present

Communion is not a moment of self-condemnation. It's a moment of grace. A moment to remember that we are forgiven, welcomed, and held by the God who makes all things new.

## The Lord's Supper: A Memorial and Proclamation of Christ's Sacrifice

### ◆ A Memorial, Not a Sacrament

Baptists emphasize Jesus' command :*"Do this in remembrance of Me."* ([1 Cor. 11:24–25](#)) The Supper is a **memorial meal**—a deliberate act of remembering Christ's body given and blood shed.

### ◆ A Proclamation of the Gospel

Paul says, *"You proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."* ([1 Cor. 11:26](#)) The Supper is a **visible proclamation** of the gospel every time it is observed.

### ◆ A Time of Self-Examination

Paul's warning in [1 Corinthians 11:27–32](#) calls believers to examine their hearts, repent of sin, and renew fellowship with Christ and one another.

### ◆ A Symbol of Unity

Because the church partakes together, the Supper expresses the unity of the body of Christ. It is a family meal for the covenant community.

## As we begin a new year:

- We don't start with resolutions.
- We start with remembrance.
- We start with grace.
- We start at the table of the Lord.

## The Lord's Supper reminds us:

- We are forgiven
- We are welcomed
- We are sustained by grace
- We belong to a new covenant family

**Communion is not about what we promise to God.  
It's about what God has promised to us.**

As we take the bread and the cup today, we remember:

- Christ's body broken for our past.
- Christ's blood shed for our future.
- Christ's presence with us in the present.

Though distinct, Baptism and the Lord's Supper form a theological pair:

Ordinance	Symbolizes	Timing	Meaning	Audience
Baptism	Beginning of the Christian life	Once	Identification with Christ; entrance into the church	New believers

Ordinance	Symbolizes	Timing	Meaning	Audience
Lord's Supper	Continuation of the Christian life	Repeated	Ongoing remembrance, proclamation, and renewal	The gathered church

## Together they form the bookends of discipleship:

- **Baptism** says: *"I belong to Christ and His church."*
- **The Lord's Supper** says: *"I continue in Christ and in fellowship with His church."*

These Two Ordinances are:

- **Gospel-shaped** (they tell the story of Christ's death and resurrection)
- **Church-centered** (they belong to the gathered body, not individuals)
- **Obedience-driven** (they are acts of discipleship)
- **Identity-forming** (they shape the believer's understanding of belonging to Christ)

They are not empty rituals—they are **embodied theology**, shaping the church's life around the gospel.

## 3. A New Year: A New Way of Living

The world approaches the new year with resolutions—promises made in the strength of human willpower. But the gospel offers something better: **resurrection power**.

Paul says in Romans 6:4 we are to “*walk in newness of life*.” That means the Christian life is not about turning over a new leaf. It’s about living out a new life. We step into this New Year as **New Creations**, held by a **New Covenant**, walking in **Newness of life**, empowered by the **Spirit who makes all things New**.

As we step into a new year:

- We don’t step in alone
- We don’t step in unchanged
- We don’t step in uncertain of God’s love
- Step into the new year as a new creation.
- Leave the old behind.
- Embrace the Grace that carries you forward.

**TAKEWAY:**

The new year is not about self-improvement. It’s about Spirit-empowered transformation to ‘*walk in newness of life*. The world approaches the new year with resolutions. But resolutions rely on **willpower**. The gospel relies on **resurrection power**.

**In Christ, we don’t turn over a new leaf. We live out a new life.**