# Moving Forward: Leaving the Past Behind

## Part 4 – Embracing God’s New Beginning

Isaiah 43:18–19

## Theme:

God promises to do a new thing. In Christ, we are given new life — not defined by our past but secured in His redemption.

## Key Scripture:

“Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” — Isaiah 43:18–19

### 1. God’s Call to Release the Past (v.18)

* Israel in exile was weighed down by failure, shame, and loss of home.
* God says: Stop dwelling on the past; don’t let memories define your future.
* For us today: regret, shame, or nostalgia can keep us from moving forward.
* The cross cancels our debt (Colossians 2:14).

**Illustration**: The backpack of rocks—Jesus carries our burdens to the cross.

### 2. God’s Promise of Something New (v.19a)

* God promised a new exodus—deliverance from Babylon.
* This foreshadowed the ultimate new thing: Christ’s resurrection (Romans 6:4).
* In Christ we are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).
* God is Creator—He brings life where there is none.

**Story**: Stephen McWhirter—meth addict transformed into worship leader.

### 3. God’s Provision in Hard Places (v.19b)

* God promised a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert for Israel’s return.
* For us: wilderness represents impossibility; desert represents emptiness.
* Jesus is the Way (John 14:6) and the Living Water (John 7:38).

**Story**: Chuck Colson—from Watergate prison to founder of Prison Fellowship.

* Application: God carves a path even in crisis and brings refreshment to the weary.

### 4. God’s New Beginning in Christ

* At the cross, Jesus bore our past and failures.
* Through the resurrection, God brings us new life (Romans 6:4).
* The Holy Spirit is rivers of living water (John 7:38).
* Ultimately fulfilled in Revelation 21:5: “Behold, I make all things new.”
* Every believer’s new beginning starts at the cross.

### 5. Application for the Church

* The gospel message never changes (Hebrews 13:8).
* Methods can and should change to reach new generations.
* Warning: Don’t idolize traditions, buildings, or programs over the mission.
* Encouragement: Like in Haggai 2, God’s new work can surpass the old in glory.

**Challenge**: Are we more in love with our methods than with our mission?

## Conclusion:

Isaiah 43:18–19 is God’s call to release the past, embrace His new work, and trust Him to make a way in the wilderness. Our new beginning is found in Jesus Christ, who makes all things new (2 Corinthians 5:17).

**Reflection Questions:**

1. What do you need to release to move forward in Christ?
2. Where do you see God doing something new in your life?
3. What wilderness are you walking in, and how can you trust God there?
4. As a church, how can we remain faithful to the gospel while embracing God’s fresh movements?