

Foundations for a “Fresh Start.”

Last week we began a new series “Fresh Start” as a team we have a theme every month and our theme this month is “Acts in August”.

Seeing God at work in our lives as we read about in the book of Acts.

And as I was reading through Acts, it struck me that this is a book full of “Fresh Starts”...

This is where we first see the Power of The Holy Spirit unleashed in peoples lives, we see many thousands coming to faith in Jesus, and we see all kinds of miracle stories...

When it comes to a Fresh Start today in Part 2 were going to consider what the “**foundations**” of a “Fresh Start” are...

I know many people are desiring a fresh start...but how do we step into it?

Here’s a message I received

“Thanks so much for the message today... it was definitely a word in season. I’ve really been struggling during this season - with my purpose, with being more of an introvert, isolation, and have had some real low weeks. I don’t necessarily know how to change, but thank you for this word today, it has definitely been a great word in season.”

The key phrase here is “I don’t know how to change.”

This is a moment of honest reflection and I think many of us can identify with this.

So what do I do if I desire a Fresh Start where and how does it begin?

What are the foundations?

Let’s begin with what the Bible says:

1Corinthians 1:30–31 (MSG): ‘Everything that we have – right thinking and right living, a clean slate and a fresh start – comes from God by way of Jesus Christ. That’s why we have the saying, ‘If you’re going to blow a horn, blow a trumpet for God.’

Colossians 2:6–7: ‘And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.’

Begin by making more space for Jesus in your life.

How?

4 Simple keys...

- ***Spend time with God every day;***
- ***Read your Bible;***
- ***Pray about everything (Philippians 4:6,7);***
- ***Plant yourself in church-on-the-line.***

Every time you do any of the above, you are making space for the Holy Spirit to work in you and in your life.

Now lets consider 4 key foundations for a fresh start. We will keep looking at Saul who became Paul one of the most incredible Fresh Starts we read about in the book of Acts...

1. Heart condition over head knowledge

Romans were about Power, domination, control.
Greeks were about intellect, philosophy, learning.

But Jesus was about the heart. Jesus had all power and had all intellect and understanding and yet he focuses on the heart!

Saul who became Paul had power, Paul had intellect but he knew none of them would save him.

He gave up his power in the Jewish community and he knew his intellect had limitation but the Grace of God through Jesus was unlimited.

What's going on in your heart?

It doesn't matter how much Power you have, or your level of intellect, it's your heart that ultimately brings about real change in your life.

(NIV) Proverbs 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

We live in a world that longs for power and that wants to win arguments by proving superior intellect, but Jesus knew that the way to truly change starts in our heart.

2. Association over information.

There's a lot of information out there but it's who you associate with that makes all the difference.

Paul had to change some associations.

Paul had a lot of information but his associations were not helping him.

Paul had to change his associations, his friendships, the people he listened to.

(NIV) Acts 9:26 When Saul arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. 27 Then Barnabas brought him to the apostles and described how Saul had seen the Lord, who spoke to him on the road to Damascus, and how Saul had spoken boldly in that city in the name of Jesus. 28 So Saul stayed with them, moving about freely in Jerusalem and speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. 29 He talked and debated with the Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him. 30 When the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

Maybe you need to do the same?

3. Conversations over statements.

We live in a world of statements and opinions.

Social media is all about who can make the most emotive statement that will win the argument.

But I haven't seen it bring any change.

“Statements are designed to win arguments conversations are designed to bring change.”

Eg Luke 19 Jesus and Zacchaeus

Jesus could easily have made a statement publicly about Zacchaeus “you’re a thief, you steal off everyone, you’re selfish,

And the crowd would have cheered, celebrated and agreed. Yeah you tell him Jesus!

But instead Jesus says, “Zac I’m going to yourself for a meal!”

And the crowd matters and murmurs about how terrible Jesus is associated with Zacchaeus and yet we see the result of the conversation.

Zacchaeus says

Luke 19:8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, half of my possessions I give to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone, I will repay it fourfold.”⁹ Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man too is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Zacchaeus was changed not by a public statement shaming him and publicly humiliating him, but by a private conversation that changed his heart and then his behavior.

Zacchaeus experienced a Fresh Start!

What conversations do you need to have?

Rather than making a statement trying to win an argument, having an open conversation in love may be just what you need to begin a Fresh Start.

4. Humility over defensiveness.

Our final foundation for a fresh start is to have a humble heart.

You will find it hard to have a fresh start if your focus is to defend your current position. You need to be prepared to face up to where you may have made mistakes in the past without wanting to defend your position.

The Samaritan woman at the well a good example of this in the book of John.
John 4:13 Jesus replied, “Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. ¹⁴ But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.” ¹⁵ “Please, sir,” the woman said, “give me this water! Then I’ll never be thirsty again, and I won’t have to come here to get water.” ¹⁶ “Go and get your husband,” Jesus told her. ¹⁷ “I don’t have a husband,” the woman replied. Jesus said, “You’re right! You don’t have a husband—¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and you aren’t even married to the man you’re living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!” ¹⁹ “Sir,” the woman said, “you must be a prophet.

The Samaritan woman never tried to give reasons or excuses why she’s had 5 husbands, but she acknowledges that Jesus is a prophet, and in this conversation with Jesus, she gets a fresh start.

It takes humility to acknowledge that you need help, and it’s from this place where you can begin your fresh start.

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