



40.DAY 2023

40.DAYS 40.VOICES 40.PRAYERS

DAY 32 | AUGUST 1

From My Father's God to My God

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BIBLE READING

Isaiah 43:19 | "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

We often get excited with the new. New year, new season, new things! The assumption? "New" equals "Good".

But I recently read through the book of Joshua and Judges again. And it hit me that new wasn't always good. After Joshua's generation had passed, a new generation arose who repeatedly failed to drive out the inhabitants of the promised land (JUDGES 1:19-35). Why?

They neglected the Covenant of old. God's Covenant made with the generations who had gone before them (JUDGES 2:1-15).

It was a new generation that forgot the amazing things He had done (JUDGES 2:10). They didn't treasure the promises of old (JUDGES 2:1). They didn't follow through on His commands (JUDGES 2:2). Instead, they abandoned Him (JUDGES 2:12), turned from Him and turned to idols (JUDGES 2:11).

I saw two critical calls from Judges 2:

1. To return to the Lord.

Turn from idols, repent and witness how the Lord rescues us in His compassion.

2. To remember the old.

In each new season, it can be tempting to assume the best is yet to be.

I confess to my excitement over new things – new dreams, new visions. But will I have the humility to first look back and see to the fruition of the old? To champion the dreams God has placed in generations before and be faithful to live by His promises?

"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." (ISAIAH 43:19)

My job isn't to seek out a new thing. The New Thing is His doing. The New Thing belongs to Him!

In a world that clamours to be the first, the leaders and the pioneers, will I be satisfied if I weren't the Catalyst or Cause of transformation, but simply a part of it?

Our task is to return to the Lord. And remember His promises of old just as the Israelites did at Gilgal (JOSHUA 4). So, rather than seeking out something new, I want to be faithful to cling onto God's promises, live in simple obedience and see the fulfilment of the "old". In doing so, we will witness a new thing because the Lord will make a way.

Joshua didn't step into leadership to seek out a new vision or a new land. He persevered in leading the people into the same vision, the same land the Lord had promised through Moses!

In 2024, the LoveTimor Vision turns 20 years old. The call went out in 2004 for the Church of Singapore to adopt this nation as our own and send out missionaries to love East Timor. It was a bold vision for the Church to love our neighbour, Asia's youngest and poorest nation, and to see her transformed by the love of Christ.

I arrived in Timor just last year as a new missionary stepping into a 20-year-old vision, inspired by many who have sown into this land. We now see churches in every district and disciples in various spheres of society. I asked the Lord: "What's next?"

The word I received was: "There is more. We're not done yet!" The vision is no longer new. But as we remember the old things, the Lord will do a New Thing!

I recently met a 75-year-old Timorese man living in the rural mountains of Timor. He cannot read nor write. Yet he yearns for God's Word. He prayed for years for the Lord to send pastors or missionaries so that he may hear His Word. The Lord answered.

Now he listens intently to every sermon – and immediately goes into the villages to share all he learnt, with a heart burning to make disciples.

Twenty years on, let's not forget Timor. We're not done yet. The harvest is not only ripe, the harvest force awaits! Pray into a season of witnessing a nation of disciple-makers to come from this nation.

The late Pastor Rick Seaward shared in 2018: "[Singapore is] called to challenge other cities and nations to be Antiochs." If our call is to be an Antioch of Antiochs until Timor herself becomes a sending nation, we're not done yet!

Let's pray:

Lord, may we be found faithful. Help us return to You and remember the old, as You do a new, eternal thing to bring salvation to the nations.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

REFLECT

- 1 Are you ever tempted to dwell on new things and forget the former promises and moves of God?
- 2 Why is it important that we continue to cling onto the promises of God as we step into new seasons?
- 3 How can you be a part of God's call to make disciples of the nations?

PRAY

- 1 Pray that God will show us how to persevere in the ongoing fulfilment of His old visions while being open to His new works.
- 2 Pray for God's guidance and blessing on East Timor, asking Him to open opportunities into communities, resource the Kingdom work and raise up disciple-makers for and within the nation.
- 3 Pray for persistence in fulfilling God's visions when the going gets tough and slow, trusting that what we sow, God will harvest in His time. "God's work, done God's way, will never lack God's supply." (HUDSON TAYLOR)