

## Crossroads Community Church: New Commitments

Pastor Don opened the service, thanking God for the blessings He has bestowed upon us; and for the strength God has given us for the trying and difficult times.

We ask God to help us walk in a closer relationship with Him following His will with obedient trust. Pastor Don prayed for our past mistakes and sins to be put behind us and to allow us to confess any bad feelings we may be harbouring.

We pray for a renewed spirit and reverence with God in the name and authority of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

As we continue to move through each day, there are some scriptures laid out that, if followed, could make a difference in our lives and our relationship with Jesus Christ. The Bible does not necessarily speak on resolutions, but there are several references to new beginnings as stated of Jesus in Luke 3:23.

In Genesis 12:1-31 God promised to make a great nation from Abram's family, and all families on earth would be blessed through him. Jesus Christ was born through Abram's family, born to save humanity. Because of Jesus, we are all able to have a personal relationship with God and be blessed beyond measures. The above scripture tells Abram to leave his home. Abram was obedient and stepped out in faith. Don't let insecurity prevent you from following God's lead to a place of greater service.

A few weeks ago we heard some testimonies where some from our own congregation stepped out in faith; out of their comfort zone to move closer to Jesus, trusting in Him.

As we move closer to Jesus Christ, we must put our past failures behind us.

In Philippians 3:13-14 the Apostle Paul advises us on forgetting the past and looking ahead. Paul had held the coats of those men who had stoned Stephen, the first Christian martyr.

He had reason to forget his past.

We have all done things we are not proud of, but our hope in Jesus Christ allows us to move forward with God's forgiveness when we accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour. We move out of our comfort zone to a life of faith and obedience. Receiving Christ's forgiveness permits us to forgive ourselves, forget our failures and serve God.

The next step in our relationship with God is giving up our grudges.

Colossians 3:13 reminds us to forgive others as God has forgiven us.

Realizing God's infinite love and forgiveness can help you do the same for others; just as it says in the Lord's Prayer.

Matthew 6:12-13 A grudge is a resentment cultivated in our hearts against someone else; an unforgiving spirit leading to unforgiving attitudes and actions. However you do not know what is happening in another person's life. Grudges are dangerous and destructive: they destroy marriages, friendships, churches, etc. They are also self-destructive.

Holding a grudge will hurt you as much or more than the person you are holding the grudge against. Ask God to help you release any grudges you may be holding and enjoy new relationships stemming from forgiveness.

Remember the parable Jesus told about the servant who was forgiven a large debt by his King and then turned around and demanded smaller debts from fellow servants.

The King found out and threw the servant in prison.

Matthew 18:23-34 Jesus said an unforgiving spirit over the debt not paid, landed this servant in prison. Unforgiving spirits always put us in prison: prison of anger, guilt and depression. The Lord isn't instructing us to ignore what has happened or condone, it only to forgive.

Colossians 3:13 If Jesus Christ can forgive us our sins, surely we can forgive much minor grievances from our spouses, children, friends even co-workers.

Our third commitment is the restoration of our relationships. In the phrase 'do all that you can' from Romans 12:14-18 God is challenging each of us to do 'all we can' to repair broken relationships. Over time, some relationships have gone askew either because of what we have done or what others may have done to us.

Regardless of what has happened, there are always two sides. When God's word says to live in peace, He is saying you caused the rift or even part of it, then you have a responsibility to do everything you can to restore it.

Proverbs 3:3-4 reminds us we will find favour with God and earn a good reputation if we maintain loyalty and kindness.

'I'm sorry' are the two most difficult words to say.

How many relationships could have been saved if only those two words could have been uttered?

We have all been accountable for making cutting remarks and adding fuel to fire.

Have you ever noticed you tend to say the most hurtful and selfish things to those you love the most? It is also the most difficult to ask for forgiveness from those you love. One of the most significant things you can do is to admit past errors and humbly seek forgiveness from the ones you have offended or hurt.

Finally, turn your back on those things in your life that are displeasing and disobedient to God's will. Romans 6:1-29 refers to what Christian writers used to call 'besetting sins'.

These mean sins that followers of Jesus Christ are prone to do time and time again. Once we accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, when we are born again, we begin a new life; new ways of looking at life. A lot of features change; we try to become more Christ-like. However there is something in each of us that we continue to struggle with - perhaps envy, a quick temper, cutting tongue.

It could even be addiction problems, pornography or spending beyond your means.

In Romans 8:5-6, Paul divides people into two categories: Those dominated by sinful natures and those controlled by the Holy Spirit. We would all be in the first category if Jesus hadn't provided us with a way out. Once we accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour we must consciously choose to centre our life in God.

Perhaps if we asked ourselves, 'What would Jesus want me to do?' when the Holy Spirit challenges us, step up eagerly and quickly. God wants us to turn our backs on sin; stop letting it throw us off course from the life God has planned.

Philippians 4:13 explains we gather strength through Jesus Christ. Asking God's forgiveness for whatever sin, He will provide you with the strength to resist it and you will be truly happy with your relationship with Him. Philippians 4:13 reminds us time is running out and we need to decide soon what relationship we want.

Accept the forgiveness that is yours and forget your transgression. May God richly bless these words in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.