

When New Began To Be

by Fred Tomlinson

This sermon delves into the remarkable faith of Old Testament figures like Abraham, David, Daniel, and Esther, highlighting their unwavering trust in God despite facing immense challenges. It emphasizes the radical faith required in the New Covenant era, pointing to the transformative power of encountering the Holy Spirit and stepping into the new promises and blessings made available through Christ.

Scripture: Genesis 22:1, 1 Samuel 17:45, Daniel 1:8, Esther 4:16, Matthew 1:1, Ezekiel 36:26, 2 Corinthians 6:4

Topics: "Faith in Adversity", "Transformative Power of the Holy Spirit"

Description

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Transcript

Well hello, my name is Fred Tomlinson and it's a pleasure to be able to share with you today. My mind has gone back to the Old Testament as a starting point and I have found myself thinking about the remarkable faith of so many of those men and women who lived under the Old Covenant. Their faith was utterly remarkable and at the same time as we read it and we read the accounts and the stories we find it to be profoundly challenging to our own hearts.

You know, just to give you an idea, I was thinking about Abraham as an example and you all know the story, I won't take more than a moment to refer to that, but the setting that I read about in the 22nd chapter of the book of Genesis and it starts out like this, now it came about after these things that God tested Abraham and said to him, Abraham, and he said, here I am, and he said, take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I will tell you. So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey and the verse continues but I'll stop there. I'm talking to you about stunningly remarkable faith in God, that God would bring this before Abraham as a challenge as we're told there in the text, a test that we just can't even begin to enter into its depths.

It's been suggested that maybe, and no one knows for sure, but maybe Isaac was, he could have been in his 30s somewhere at this time and God issues the statement to him and defines what is required of him and this thing that strikes me so much, we read through the first two verses which I've just read to you and

then we come to verse three which starts off like this, so Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his ass and so on. Truly amazing faith in God. Or I could be thinking of David, I'm thinking of that moment when he has come to see Goliath challenging the children of Israel and we read about that in, I'm thinking in chapter 17 of 1st Samuel and the text reads like this, then the Philistine came and approached David with the shield bearer in front of him and when the Philistine looked and saw David he disdained him for he was but a youth and ruddy with a handsome appearance.

The Philistine said to David am I a dog that thou comest to me with sticks and the Philistine cursed David and his gods. The Philistine also said to David come to me and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and to the beasts of the field. Then David said to the Philistine you come to me with a sword and a spear and a javelin but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts the God of the armies of Israel whom you have taunted.

This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands and I will strike you down and remove your head from you and that text continues. Again a young man with such remarkable, remarkable faith in God or I'm thinking of another young man his name was Daniel and his story is a wonderful story I'm just breaking into this also in the same way I've done with the other two and without trying to tell you why this came about I read in the first chapter of Daniel when he's required to do a certain thing which is too detailed to mention now but here's Daniel's response. Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat and so on goes that story just men here who are totally given over to God and with faith amazing faith in God and then I'm thinking of one more I'm thinking of a woman their name is Esther and in Esther I read this in the 16th verse of chapter 4 where as the result of certain events she has decided that she's going to go into the throne room of the king and speak with the king and that would be a fearful thing to do to approach the king was to risk her own life and she says and thus I will go into the king which is not according to the law and if I perish I perish wonderful these are some of the people of God in the old testament people under living under the old covenant it's interesting the apostle writing the book of the Hebrews and in writing he's countering the the unbelief with the necessity of radical faith in God and he drives home his powerful message and powerful challenge by saying to them in the first part of the chapter imagine yourselves living out your lives in in a huge arena and imagine that you're surrounded by the hosts of witnesses and he brings them a catalogue of these faithful old covenant saints he said just imagine being in that arena you're living out your life and you're surrounded by these kinds of people I'm not suggesting that this is happening literally but the picture he brings before his people and before us is striking we ourselves me myself you yourself we're living out our lives to all intents and purposes as we choose to express ourselves and involve ourselves but this inspired apostles saying just picture this just picture that this crowd of saintly people who lived under the old covenant were all watching you watching how you live watching how you behave and how you react to your various situations and in this 11th chapter of Hebrews which you will be familiar with I'm sure he moves through a number of people one or two that I've alluded to already but he moves on in the second half of the chapter and in the second half of chapter 11 he speaks of these who suffered I don't know just breathtaking suffering that they they passed through but nevertheless they're catalogued here they some of them died the most gruesome deaths but they're catalogued here with those who are of faith they died in faith it didn't appear that they won some great victory they perished in a dreadful manner but the spirit of God has inspired the apostle put them all together here catalog them together and in that great chapter which perhaps I'm encouraging and inspiring you to read uh the apostle breaking in on that later list of names uh he pauses and he he's clearly um moved deeply in his heart as he's mentioning these people so much so that he adds a parenthesis in his sequence of statements and in verse 38 he makes this statement he says of whom the world was not

worthy I mean it just reads like this to give that even more significance and others had a trial of cruel mockings and scourgings yea moreover of bonds and imprisonments they were stoned they were sawn asunder were tempted were slain with the sword they wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins being destitute of tormented of whom the world was not worthy they wandered in deserts and in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth listen to this now and all these having obtained a good report through faith received not the promise God having provided some better thing for us that they without us should not be made perfect how remarkable and I think I think you know in in the flow of the chapter I only read to you several verses but in the flow of the chapter as we're caught with the the feeling and I think the emotion of a inspired man of God as he works through these accounts and then he comes to what is in our bible the 39th verse and it's like there he just adds the I don't know the ground slam as it were when he says that all these in spite of their great faith in spite of these remarkable lives that were lived before God and by faith in God they receive not the promise and then the 40th verse again it where he says God having provided some better thing for us I think before moving on I want to just add this and we must note this this doesn't mean that they miss out in the end the people of faith mentioned there will be where we will end up if we're faithful to God and so on but nevertheless there's that there's the the stories referred to there's their faith alluded to and then there's this enormous challenge they receive not the promise God having provided some better thing for us you know and then the writer has said something else in the fourth chapter of the same epistle the chapter starts off like like this he says let us therefore fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest any of you should seem to come short of it and that's the challenge that's my starting point here with you in this session we're surrounded by this great cloud of witnesses these great saints of faith and yet they could not experience what God has made available through the redemptive work of Christ for you and for me and this apostle is saying here you really need you really need to be afraid you really need to face this challenge that that God has left something that they in spite of everything and their great faith they couldn't experience they couldn't enter into and God has made it available for you it's in the light of that kind of challenge we remind ourselves that there are so so many today who are professing believers in the Christian gospel but their life seems to display anything but that radical faith that we're referring to here that was found in the old testament saints who could not experience what we may experience you know the tragedy is added for us today because i think so many people today they give little or no thought to how their own lives are going to work out in the future in other words what i'm saying is they give little or no thought to the fact that a judgment day is coming we don't like to think about that we want to get on with you know we change the channel go to another speaker let's hear some of the more dramatic message or something that this is too challenging but this is real this is the word of God and you know but in the unfolding of the old testament and we know this very well don't we that God provided prophets and they brought many different words and many different statements from the Lord were prophesied but you remember that there was one particular theme that comes through time and again through those old testament prophecies and it's this it's God speaking he says i will do a new thing and for the people who heard the prophecy at the time for them of course it would perhaps have particular significance and meaning and encouragement for them with the idea that God was going to deliver them from Babylon's captivity or what have you but in reading those prophetic statements we sense that there's a depth of significance wrapped up in those passages somehow they seem to speak to our hearts because of the position in history in which we stand in other words we're standing on this side of that cross that my brother was singing about a few minutes ago standing on this side of the cross we look back at those prophecies and we understand things that the people who heard the prophecies at the time could not possibly have understood they would apply them to their immediate situation they had an application to their immediate situation but we look back and we think of the we think of the ultimate deliverance that

was would be brought about by the promised messiah you know and then the man who is referred to as the greatest of the prophets of the prophets and i quote jesus was john the baptist and john the baptist pronounced this is he of whom i speak another verse of scripture we find is where we read that john saw jesus as he was walking and beheld him and said behold the lamb of god that taketh away the sin of the world this is he of whom i speak glory to god there have been questions people have asked and they'll continue asking i'm sure what did jesus mean when he spoke of john the baptist as the graciest of the prophets what about isaiah what about jeremiah what about ezekiel and so on but the fact is each of those earlier prophets they were able to bring the word of god as god quickened it in their own hearts and understanding but the fact is they could not do what john the baptist did john the baptist was the only one of the prophets mentioned that could actually point to the person of the lord jesus christ and say this is he what isaiah would call the new thing that god would do has come about the new had come and john the baptist said this is he amen you know as i continue reading and thinking over the scriptures i find myself thinking about one particular man a man he's clearly not the only one but he's a man who steps as it were through the new gate into the new covenant he stepped into the better thing as the writers of hebrews called it you know jesus as he set out with his public ministry he called the various men to be with him to be his disciples and he called 12 as you know very well and none of them appeared to be particularly remarkable they were just commoner garden men who were going about their particular business they were all workers god only calls people who are already working that's the testimony of the entire scripture but they they were working men they were engaged industriously in what they were doing what was their particular trade or whatever and so on but beyond that there was nothing remarkable about them it would seem and in calling them there was never a suggestion that anyone would be the leader of the 12 but having said that there's one interesting thing that has occurred to me and that is in the in the four lists of the disciples that i can find in each case peter is the first in the list we also know that he was one of the three that were privileged to have several experiences that were very remarkable but we won't digress to talk about those things but peter certainly seems to hold a particular place that's all that's all i want to say i don't want to raise him higher than i should but there's some reason why his name was first in each of these four lists that i've mentioned but what we also know about peter is that he's portrayed in scripture as a as an impetuous man he's he's always speaking out his mind he's an open book he just what he thinks he says and that wasn't always good but he acted he acted on impulse and and then we all are only too aware of the latter part of the gospel story regarding peter not the end but the later part where we hear him actually blaspheming and betraying the lord jesus three times i mentioned that i mentioned a couple of things i'm saying there was nothing remarkable about him at all he's probably a wonderful fisherman a wonderful husband and father maybe he was married we know that but uh you know he's just a man he's a man with some terrible flaws and failures and betraying christ was in our mind would rise to be top of the list i'm sure but you know watch watch him carefully as the story unfolds and as we as we do just ask yourself a question like this am i currently experiencing and enjoying all that has been promised for me as a child of god you know i see peter this is where i turn my camera on as it were with him and i see him enter a crowded public square and he calls the attention it's a feast time there's this the city is thronging with people i'm in the city of jerusalem and somehow or other he manages to call their attention he doesn't have a loud speaker system but somehow he calls their attention and that in itself was no small task i'm sure but here's this man virtually a nobody he's a fisherman from miles away up country yet somehow his life is just a flame he's got no theological qualifications he's never done anything like this before he doesn't stand there with some kind of crafted exposition of the sacred text um and yet his preaching is devastating his preaching is powerful it's it's a prophetic proclamation that he brings to the mass of people that are listening to him his his words cut like a razor his words cut to the quick to the heart and these devoutly

religious people are smitten in their hearts picture this and they said what should we do you know this this moment this activity these responses they all they transcend all things that are merely natural something supernatural is taking place here i'm remembering how that jesus spoke to peter earlier and he in the context of a broader statement which i won't quote we find these little phrases he said you are you shall be this was a prophetic statement from jesus you are this peter but you shall be something else altogether and i find that sort of being expressed here we know what peter was so far as the limited accounts are concerned in the text of scripture through the gospels and now we're seeing him here we're in acts chapter two of course that's what he was this is what he is today amazing i i hope i'm helping you to catch a glimpse of something that i think so few actually grasp and perhaps even fewer actually experience you be the judge but what i'm bringing before you just now is huge an entirely new element has come in to play and this fisherman peter has stepped into it he stepped into the new thing the new thing has taken over his heart and his life this man has been transformed by something outside of himself he's been transformed by god if we were you know just imagine i'm perhaps i'm stretching these a little too far here but imagine that we're with peter back then we've just listened to him preaching we've seen the response which is remarkable we've found a moment somewhat quietly where we can just ask a question we say peter what happened to you you know what i think he'd say because he would answer in the words of the king james bible he would say the holy ghost has come you know that which john the baptist prophesied about when he said that we will be baptized with the holy ghost and fire of the holy spirit and fire it happened to me that which jesus promised that which jesus called the promise of the father he said it's happened to me he said did you hear me when i was preaching do you remember the phrase i used when i said this that's happening because everyone was saying what's going on people thought we were all drunk do you remember how i responded says peter i said this is that which the prophet spoke of amen today peter would say i received the holy spirit of god jesus by the spirit of god is here he's transformed me glory to god this is huge on that day a new generation was born matthew refers to it right at the beginning of his gospel this is how he starts at the book of the generation of jesus christ the new thing had come the messiah the lord jesus christ the son of god he lived out his life he presented himself to the will of god and suffered at the cross his blood has been shed his blood has been presented in the most holy of holy places it's been received by his father the holy spirit has come and lives are being transformed by it this is the better thing that the old testament saints in spite of all their great faith and their love for god they could never have experienced because it was not available at that time but it's available to you and to me today a new creation began to be amen let me let me put it this way suppose should the lord cause your journey to converge with a true new covenant man or a true new covenant woman you'll quickly observe their radical abandon to god mind you they will never be arrogant and without exception they will walk with a limp god having touched that area of self in their lives i think back to jacob remember but the presence the presence that they carry is undeniably not of this world they bear in their body the marks of the lord jesus their lives are being lived out from a different songbook as it were they're commonly out of tune with the most popular choirs and they have they have little concern for conventional norms they their delight is in the fellowship of the saints but should it be required of them they're prepared to walk alone should you should you hear them preach you'll detect a distinction that their preaching will carry that certain sound clearly not the product of academia they're not cut and paste preachers like so many today they're not theological technicians they are as paul puts it on one occasion ministers of god they take they teach with boldness and with authority yet ever manifesting the tenderness of the lamb of god i was personally so privileged to meet such a man just six miles away from my home little did i know at the time the lifelong impact that meeting would make upon my life my entire life you know he introduced god to me i've listened to the bible i don't despise the days by any means i'm thankful to god for them but from my childhood i

learned the scriptures but that man introduced god to me as i've never known him before he showed the way he lifted up a standard he showed the way of god more perfectly he was a new covenant man you know at some point we have to be willing to to break rank with those who content themselves with making do with the old beloved the new has come that text from isaiah that i'm quoting it goes on to say shall you not know it in other words is it possible that you will miss it the new has come when you miss it and that's the question for you this morning or this afternoon or this evening whatever time it is where you are the new has come amen and i wonder i wonder today will this day be the day in your life when the new begins to be will you your eyes are opened and your heart is open to the new covenant to the new promises to the new thing that god promised he would do and is currently doing to the new heart to the new spirit to the holy spirit i quote from ezekiel 36 my dear friend open to it open to this truth beloved and may the lord succeed in making you to be a minister of god i'm quoting 2 corinthians chapter 6 and verse 4 you can find it there may the cry of your heart and all of our hearts together ring out in harmony as a prayer i quote him from amy carmichael i believe don't let me sing to be a clod make me thy fuel flame of god let me pray father we are totally dependent upon you and your holy spirit to speak into our individual hearts even when we read the scriptures even when we share them as we are enabled and within the limits of our abilities ultimately it must be you that speaks law you spoke through peter on the day we thought of together lord when you speak into hearts of those that are listening now and will listen in the future lord and wake up men and women to these great realities to this great challenge that there is that that you have purchased and made available for us to know and for us to experience let us fear lest any one of us seem to come short of it wake us up lord we pray and bring your people into the fullness of the blessing which is in christ and we pray in jesus name amen before i go can i just say excuse me if you'd like to continue to walk with me to walk together travel together i wonder if you do a few things for me you know if you're not there already will the youtube channel which has the title turn to the scriptures with fred tomlinson click on the subscribe button add a comment and maybe you'd like to visit the mckenzie fellowship which is the link is right there for you i'm having to hurry up because my voice is going um we've also or we are also in the process of making audio versions of these messages available as podcasts you can find the links on my channel and on the fellowship channel and that i know they're in a in a number of locations i don't understand all this other people have led me into this arena i hope there's no wild beasts here anyway may god bless you and take us all on in jesus name amen

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