Title: The God of New Beginnings

Text: Lame. 3:19-25; Jn. 8:3-11; 2 Co. 5:17; Luke 22:54-62 Jn 21:15-17; 1st Jn. 1:9

Introduction: Are you thankful this morning that God is the God of new beginnings?

 That no matter how many times that we may fail, may fall short of the mark, fall flat on our face, that God always has a new beginning for us if we but reach out and embrace Him.

 A Famous world class figure skater was once asked how she learned to skate….

 Her reply was by getting up each time I fell down and trying again.

 This same principle applies to us as Christians.

 Even though we may find that we fall flat on our face in our walk with the Lord, if we keep getting back up and trying again we will become an accomplished Christian, because our God is a God of new beginnings.

 The prophet Jeremiah understood that God is a God of new beginnings…

 Israel had been taken captive, Jerusalem destroyed and the people enslaved…All because, as a Nation they had turned from God, fell flat on their face in their relationship with him and refused to repent..

 As Jeremiah has seen this once great nation of his fall under the mighty judgment hand of God he laments over her….

**Lame 3:19 (NIV) I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall.**

**20 I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me.**

**21 Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope:**

**22 Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassion’s never fail.**

**23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.**

**24 I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion;**

**therefore I will wait for him."**

**25 The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him…**

 Jeremiah was having the worst days of his life. He and his entire nation had just fallen as a nation.

 The city that they loved more than any other, one that was holy to them, Jerusalem, had just been destroyed and now they were being taken off into Babylonian exile.

 So Jeremiah laments, he weeps bitterly over the fall of his nation. But even in the midst of this great adversity Jeremiah finds hope. He finds something of comfort to hang on to…

 **3:19 (NIV) I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall.**

**20 I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me.**

**21 Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope:**

**22 Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.**

**23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.**

 The great hope that Jeremiah had to hang on to even in the midst of great adversity was the hope, the promise that…**Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassion’s never fail. They are new every morning;**

Jeremiah knew that if they, as a people, would once again get back up by turning back to God that His grace would be there for them because His compassion’s never fail but are in fact new every morning!

 That every new day holds out hope because of Gods great love and compassion for us.

 I want to look at two examples of the love and compassion and grace of God from the New Testament this morning that show us that.. **Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassion’s never fail.**

**23 They are new every morning;** and that His faithfulness is indeed great!

The first is the Woman caught in adultery…

**John 8:3 (NIV) The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group**

**4 and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery.**

**5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?"**

**6 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.**

**But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger.**

**7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."**

**8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.**

**9 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.**

**10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"**

**11 "No one, sir," she said.**

**"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."**

 This woman was an adulteress! May very well have been a prostitute that the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees used to try to set Jesus up.

 I believe that she would represent the unsaved. One who was lost and separated from God by her sins.

 Jesus looks at and knows the heart. He knew what the Pharisees and Religious leaders where up to. He knew that their main interest wasn’t in righteousness or upholding the law but in finding a way to entrap Him.

 Jesus also knew the heart of the woman who was brought before him. Evidently He saw a heart that was ripe for repentance, ripe for the reception of Gods compassion and grace.

 When Jesus confronted the men that had brought her to Him about their own sin, conviction filled their hearts and one by one they dropped their stones and left….

 The woman was the true winner that day because she discovered that the mercies of the Lord never fail and that, in fact, they are made new every morning.

**Jesus said: "Woman, where are your accusers? Has no one condemned you?"**

**11 "No one, sir," she said.**

**"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."**

The loving and compassionate words from the God of new beginnings--- **Neither do I condemn you,"**

**"Go now and leave your life of sin."**

Regardless of how many times we have failed God, regardless of the terrible things that we may have done,these are the very words that Jesus has for each of us as we turn by faith to Him-- **Neither do I condemn you," ---. "Go now and leave your life of sin."**

What He was in effect saying was, neither do I condemn you now go and start anew, begin anew for I AM the God of new beginnings. My mercies never fail and My compassion’s are made new every day.

**2Cor 5:17 (NKJV) Therefore, if anyone [is] in Christ, [he] [is] a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**

This woman caught in adultery deserved to be stoned according to the letter of the law, but God, in His compassion and love, offered her a new beginning in Him.

What this is is a neat picture of the forgiveness that all of us have available to us in Christ Jesus.

 For it was while we were yet sinners that Christ died for us….

 We don’t have to reach a certain level of perfection before Christ will accept us, but He meets us right where we are at.

 And we are all at the same place when we first meet Jesus-Separated from God and Lost in our sin, headed for hell and awaiting the sure judgment of God.

 But God has a new beginning for all who come to believe in and upon Him as the Lord and Savior of their life.

 Jesus has these words to say to each and every one of us if we simply come to Him by faith…..**Neither do I condemn you—now go and leave your life of sin.**

But the New Beginnings of God don’t just apply to our salvation experience.

 God always has a new beginning for us.

 Each and every day that we get out of bed as a Christian has the potential of being a day that is a new beginning.

 No matter how miserably that we may have failed God yesterday God holds out a new beginning for us today!

Peter—A close friend of Jesus—one who walked with Him and shared in His ministry for over 3 years once made the bold statement that he would literally die for Jesus…

 Note Peter’s response the night Jesus was arrested…

 **Luke 22:54 (NIV) Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance.**

**55 But when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them.**

**56 A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him."**

**57 But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said.**

**58 A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them."**

**"Man, I am not!" Peter replied.**

**59 About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean."**

**60 Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed.**

 Talk about falling short of the mark! Talk about falling flat on your face spiritually as a Christian!

 You can’t fall any flatter as a Christian then to actually denounce or deny Christ.

 To know Him and out of fear insist that you don’t.

 After Peter disowned even knowing Christ the third time it says that the rooster crowed and that Peter…

 Luke 22:61 remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times."

**62 And he went outside and wept bitterly.**

This is probably the ultimate failure as a Christian.

 It cut to the heart of Peter! When the impact of what he had just done, how he had disowned His Lord, hit him it says that Peter went outside and wept bitterly!

 He just didn’t go out and shed a few tears. He just didn’t fell a little bad or a little guilty about it, but it tore his heart out!

 He “wept bitterly!”

**2799 klaio {klah'-yo}**

**1) to mourn, weep, lament**

**1a) weeping as the sign of pain and grief for the thing signified (i.e. for the pain and grief)**

**1b) of those who mourn for the dead**

And he wept bitterly…

**4090 pikros {pik-roce'}**

**1) bitterly**

**2) with poignant grief**

This speaks of a gut wrenching heartache.

 Having ones heart literally broken.

 This devastated Peter! You can imagine how it made him feel…How can I ever serve Him now? I am a total failure! Worthless and useless for God to ever use!

 And that might have been true if it wasn’t for one simple yet glorious fact…

 That fact being…

**Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassion’s never fail.**

**23 They are new every morning; Great is His faithfulness!**

After Jesus had risen from the dead He had some unfinished business to do here on earth before He ascended to Heaven….

**John 21:15 (NIV) When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?"**

**"Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you."**

**Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."**

**16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?"**

**He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."**

**Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."**

**17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"**

**Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."**

**Jesus said, "Feed my sheep.**

Jesus’ unfinished business was to restore the hurting and broken Peter.

 To let Peter know that Because **of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassion’s never fail. They are new every morning; Great is His faithfulness!**

Peter had denied Christ 3 times---Jesus gave Peter 3 opportunities to confess his love for Him….

**"Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" Yes Lord I love you!**

 **Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?"**

**He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."**

 **The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"**

**He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."**

With each public confession of his love for Christ God was applying the healing balm of His grace upon Peter’s life and restoring Peter to close fellowship with Himself!

 It is a restored Peter that boldly goes forth on the day of Pentecost and boldly proclaims the Gospel message to some of the very ones who nailed Jesus to the cross, leading over 5000 souls into the glorious Kingdom of God!

 What happened in the life of Peter that changed him from a man that cowered in fear the night Jesus was arrested, disowning even knowing Jesus three separate times, to becoming a stone on which Christ would build His Church?

 A man who would spend his life boldly professing the Gospel of Christ to a world that was very hostile to that message and who would later suffer the same kind of death that His Lord had suffered…being crucified on a tree?

 What happened to Peter was Grace!

 Peter experienced that **Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassion’s never fail.**

**23 They are new every morning; Great is His faithfulness!**

 What Jesus did for the woman caught in adultery and what He did for Peter, He wants to do for you and me.

 Even if we have fallen flat on our face, have failed God miserably and deserve to be utterly consumed by His justice, Scripture assures us that His love and compassion for us will never fail!

 They are new every morning! His faithfulness is great!

 And all that we have to do is reach out and take hold of it.

 To me, some of the most powerful and comforting words found in Scripture that speak to us of the love and compassion that God extends to us on a daily basis, a love and compassion that is indeed made new every morning of every day are found in:

1Joh 1:9 (NIV) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all UN-righteousness.

 When the Apostle Paul speaks these words he is not speaking to the world at large but he is speaking specifically to you and I the Church.

 And these are words of good news! These are words of great grace!

 That even if we fail God and fail Him miserably we still have an advocate with the Father. We still have one who stands in the gap to intercede for us.

 That as we confess and repent our sins before Him, nail our sin, our failure to the cross with all of our other sins and failures, that He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all UN-righteousness!

 By and through His grace we can be totally and completely forgiven! By and through His grace we can be restored to fellowship and right relationship with our creator!

 By and through His amazing, saving grace we can become vessels useful for His Kingdom! Vessels that become instruments of His magnificent grace in this world in which we are but just pilgrims who are passing through, pilgrims whose true citizenship is now Heaven.

 The same restoring grace that Jesus held out to the woman caught in adultery, and the same restoring grace that Jesus held out to Peter, He holds out to you and I today!

 That no matter how great our failures may be or how often we have failed Him, God is a God of new beginnings!

 **Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassion’s never fail.**

**They are new every morning!**

Because of the Great Love that God has for us God has provided a way of restoration for us regardless of how much we have failed Him….

 The way is through confession and repentance…

**Romans 10:9-10(NIV)**  **9That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.**

1Joh 1:9 (NIV) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

 Folks this is good news! This is great Grace! God is loving and compassionate and His mercies never fail but are made new to us each and every day!

 I would like to play a song of encouragement this morning that speaks of the last time any of us will ever fall as a Christian and that is on that day when we will fall on our knees before the King of Kings and Lord of Lords when we enter eternity….

 “The Last Time I Fall’ by Ray Boltz

 Maybe you feel like you have failed the Lord in some way this morning, possibly like you have fallen flat on your face in your walk with the Lord.

 Feel like you have disappointed Him and it has left you feeling like Peter--- hurting, ashamed and useless as a Christian….

 If you find yourself in that place this morning then know that…

 Because of the Lord’s great love you are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are in fact made new every morning!

 And that if you will but confess your sins before Him with a heart that is willing to turn from your sin, that He will forgive you your sin and cleanse you from all

UN-righteousness and restore you to the fullness of fellowship and relationship with Himself.

 Or maybe you find that you are like the woman caught in adultery, lost and separated from God, have never experienced the Saving Grace of God in your life…

 Then hear Him say to you this morning…Because of My great love for you, you are not consumed, because My compassion’s never fail but they are in fact made new every morning and this morning I hold out My compassion to you….

Accept it! Embrace it by accepting and embracing Jesus! Making Him, allowing Him to become the Lord and Savior of your life!

Prayer