

1. It's hard to believe that almost 12 months ago we began 2023.
2. The older I get the faster time seems to move along.
3. We started 2023 with a prophetic word from the Lord. Does anybody remember what that word is? **This is your year of jubilee.**
4. I haven't spoken about that subject specifically for several weeks, so I thought it was funny when last Sunday after the service, someone asked me. Are we done talking about jubilee?
5. Little did they know that we were going to wrap up talking about our year of jubilee today. In fact, it is the birth of Jesus that to me is the ultimate jubilee.
6. I will explain that a little more in just a minute. For now, let's go back and look at what the year of jubilee actually was.
7. One of the meanings of the word jubilee is the word freedom. **Leviticus 25:10-11 Sanctify the fiftieth year; make it a holy year. Proclaim freedom all over the land to everyone who lives in it—a Jubilee for you: Each person will go back to his family's property and reunite with his extended family. 11 The fiftieth year is your Jubilee year: (MSG Bible)**
8. In the Old Testament, before the children of Israel entered into the promised land, God gave strict instructions about how the land was to be divided between each of the tribes of Israel.
9. When each of them settled into their own land, they were living exactly in the place and the state of being where God wanted them to be.
10. It was essentially God's ideal inheritance and blessing for the people.
11. But as time passed on and as life was lived and as troubles and difficulties arose God's ideal vision for his people became marred. It became distorted.
12. Someone would run into trouble. Financially or otherwise, and so because they needed the money, they would sell parts of their land to others.
13. Some would sell crops from their land to others.
14. Others would sell the house they had been living in.
15. Still others, when extreme difficulty arose in their lives, would literally sell themselves or their children to their fellow countryman as servants.

16. In the case of a servant, everything they owned would be purchased, and everything, including the members of the family would become the property of someone else.
17. So over time, God's ideal, God's perfect plan, God's perfect inheritance would become all jumbled up and messed up and eventually it would resemble nothing like God intended it to be.
18. But in order to do a reset. In order to make everything right again and put everything and everyone back where God intended them to be, every 50th year they were to declare and observe a year of jubilee. A year of liberty and a year of freedom.
19. In the year of jubilee several things happened.
20. All lands that had been sold to someone else would revert back to the original owner.
21. Every house or piece of property would revert back to the original owner.
22. Every person who had sold themselves as a servant would be granted their freedom, and they could go back to the life they had before hardship came.
23. In its most basic terms, the year of jubilee was the year when everything and everyone would go back to living as God originally intended them to live.
24. Maybe by now you are starting to wonder. Ok pastor. I understand what jubilee means, but what in the world does that have to do with Christmas, and the birth of Jesus over 2,000 years ago?
25. I am so glad you asked. I believe the birth of Jesus has everything to do with jubilee.
26. If we go back to God's original intent for humans, and how he would relate to them, we see that God created us for fellowship and relationship with Him.
27. **Genesis 3:8** Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day...
28. In the garden of Eden, every day God would walk and talk with Adam and Eve, just like we might walk and talk with a friend.
29. But because of Adam and Eve's sin, that relationship and the fellowship was damaged and hindered.

30. God still loved his creation, but because God hates sin, it caused a separation between God and man.
31. And for thousands of years, that's how mankind lived. Separated.
32. But when Jesus was born in a manger, the separation was erased.
33. One of the names of Jesus is **Emmanuel**. Which means God with us.
34. Through the birth of Jesus, Emmanuel, God and man were brought together again. Relationship and fellowship was restored, just as God originally intended. That's jubilee.
35. But also, as in the Old Testament year of jubilee, the birth of Jesus brought a reset if you will. Things were made new.
36. What are some examples of things made new?

Time was reset.

1. The birth of Jesus literally changed how we consider time and years.
2. Everything that happened before the birth of Jesus is called BC. Before Christ.
3. Everything that happened after the birth of Jesus is called AD. AD is the abbreviation for a Latin phrase called anno Domini.
4. Anno Domini literally means, in the year of our Lord.
5. So, the history of the world is divided into the time before Christ, and the time since Christ.
6. Now, we know that in the AD timeframe, the years get bigger every January. For example. Last year was 2022. This year is 2023. And next year will be 2024.
7. But in the BC timeframe, the years decrease in number.
8. For example. It is believed that the garden of Eden was created in about 4,000 BC.
9. Moses, however, was born in about 1,400 BC. So, the birth of Moses was after the garden of Eden, but the yearly number was lower.
10. Have I thoroughly confused everyone yet?
11. The birth of Jesus reset time as we know it. That sounds like jubilee to me.
12. The same can be said about our relationship with Jesus as believers.

13. Most followers of Christ consider their life in their time before Christ, and since Christ.
14. Most of us, including me look at our lives before we met Jesus, and we think about what a mess it was. How lost we were. How bound we were.
15. And then, when we consider our life since believing in Jesus, hopefully we see that life as being completely different.
16. At least, that's what God intends.
17. **2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!
18. Through the birth of Jesus, and our acceptance of Him as savior, we are what Jesus called, born again.
19. **John 3:3** Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."
20. Through the birth of Jesus and his death on the cross, we are given the opportunity of a do over. A new beginning. A jubilee if you will.
21. Through the birth of Jesus, we get to experience the new beginning that all of us need. And that's jubilee.
22. As you celebrate Christmas this year, I encourage you to stop and consider the fact that through the birth of Jesus, we are given the opportunity to see restoration to the relationship that was broken.
23. You are a child of God because of the Son of God that was born in a stable and laid in a manger.
24. The birth of Jesus is our reset.
25. The second thing the birth of Jesus did was it...

Renewed our covenant of promise.

1. We get a glimpse of that newness in **Matthew 26:28** for this is My blood of the [new and better] covenant, (AMP)
2. What was the Old Covenant? Mankind's sin was covered by the sacrifice of an animal, whose blood was sprinkled on the altar.
3. In the Old Testament, relationship was repaired by the shedding of blood.
4. And the process of shedding the blood of the animal sacrifice was a tedious and labor-intensive process.

5. I have just finished reading in my daily bible time about all of the sacrifices and celebrations that the Lord instituted for the Children of Israel.
6. Animals had to be sacrificed every single day.
7. Every time a person sinned or became unclean, they had to offer a sacrifice.
8. Imagine what it must have looked like for a nation of over a million people all using one location, the tabernacle, and one altar as the place where all sacrifices had to be made.
9. Tens of thousands of animals a year sacrificed.
10. I encourage you to read this again sometime. I would say the scene almost resembled a slaughterhouse in the fact that there were animals being killed, cut up, processed, their blood being sprinkled on the altar, and then the waste had to be burned outside the camp continually.
11. Now I don't know how you grew up, but I grew up in a time when we raised our own beef and pork and all of the mess that came with it.
12. When I was a kid, we didn't go to the store and pick out a nice package of ground beef, we raised the beef. Cleaned up after the beef. Took the beef to the slaughterhouse. Then brought the beef home and put it in the freezer to last for several months to year.
13. There was a lot of labor involved to just eat good meat.
14. And under the old covenant, there was a lot of labor involved to constantly maintain and renew the relationship with a holy God.
15. But when Jesus was born, the blood that Jesus would eventually shed became a new and even better covenant.
16. The birth of Jesus and his eventual death on the cross, made it so that the work of salvation was completed by Jesus, and all we had to do was accept it.
17. The birth of Jesus is the fulfillment of John 3:16 for God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son.
18. Under the old covenant, forgiveness of sins required a lot of work on the part of the person seeking forgiveness.
19. But under the new covenant, all of the work was done by Jesus. The focus shifted from what we have done to what Jesus has done.

20. To me that sounds like jubilee.

21. **Titus 3:4-7** But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, **5** he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, **6** whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7** so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

22. We are incapable of earning salvation. We could never be good enough. We could never work hard enough. We could never be perfect enough. That's the bad news.

23. But the good news is that Jesus was and is good enough and perfect enough.

24. Under the new covenant there is no room for condemnation and there is no room for pride.

25. The birth of Jesus ushered in the opportunity for us to become heirs of the family of God simply because God loved us.

26. Jubilee. A new covenant.

27. And the final thing that the birth of Jesus did was...

It wiped our slate clean.

1. When I was a kid one of my favorite toys was the Etch a Sketch.

2. Anybody besides me have an etch a sketch?

3. The etch a sketch was this device where you could turn the knobs and make words and drawings and all kinds of cool images.

4. And if you messed up or you got bored, you could turn it upside down. Tap it on the back, shake it, and the screen would be wiped clean, and you could start over.

5. When my kids came along these little magnetic drawing boards were popular.

6. You draw on it with the pen. And when you want to start over, you slide the lever, and everything is wiped clean.

7. Whoever designed these was brilliant.

8. I would like to ask for 23 volunteers. What you are volunteering to do is this.

9. You are going to write a one-word answer to the following question.

10. When you accepted Jesus, what is one thing that was wiped clean in your life.

11. And then later I'm going to ask you to share your one word with the congregation. Do I have 23 volunteers?
12. Through the birth of Jesus, and then later on his death on the cross, we were given the opportunity to be cleansed and washed clean from every sin that was BC.
13. The blood of Jesus, the same blood that pulsed through his little body at birth. Is the same blood that wipes our slate clean.
14. **1 John 1:7-9** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. **8** If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
15. In a sense, it sounds too good to be true.
16. On the one hand, we wonder how could it be that simple? And yet that is exactly what Jesus has done for us.
17. Our life resembled this magnetic drawing board.
18. A jumbled mess. Dark and blackened. Squiggly lines all over the place. The proof of our failures right there for all to see.
19. But through the wonderful gift of Jesus, when we accepted him as lord and savior, our slate was wiped clean. We were made new.
20. We were white and clean and all new all over again.
21. You say, well pastor, that is easy to do with a little lever on a drawing board, but it is a lot harder to live out in real life.
22. My sins and my mistakes and my failures they follow me wherever I go.
23. The illustration of the drawing board is not to remind you that it is easy for us to have our slate wiped clean.
24. It is to remind us that wiping the slate of our life clean is supremely easy for Jesus to do.
25. In fact, it's already been done. The work is finished.
26. **All we have to do is put ourselves in the master's hands** and let him have his way in us. To allow Him to do what he wants.

Conclusion:

1. This Christmas, when you think of the birth of Jesus, let it be a reminder that your focus doesn't need to be on who you were, your focus needs to be on what the Lord is making you into.
2. And let it be a reminder that no slate, no matter how dirty and scared and marred, is too far gone for Jesus to wipe it clean.
27. Ask for the volunteers to share their word. When you accepted Jesus, what was one thing that was wiped clean in your life.
3. As we prepare to close today, I want to ask all of us to consider this last question.
4. What do you need him to wipe clean in you today?
5. John said earlier that if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves.
6. Who is ready to come out of the deception and admit. I need God's help today.
7. Raise your hand and let's pray.
8. Who will take one of these and share that illustration with someone this week?