

## A NEW BEGINNING: BE BETTER!

Scripture used: [Isaiah 43:16-19 \(NIV\)](#)

### OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon continued our sermon series on *A New Beginning* this week with an exhortation to have high expectations for ourselves to grow into who God made us to be (little by little getting better each season) and to play our position on God's team. We continued to look at God speaking to His people in Isaiah. God's people have been snatched out of the city of Jerusalem and are now living in exile. God speaks a prophetic word to them just as God is speaking to us in the midst of our suffering today. In [Isaiah 43:14](#), God reminds His people that He is their Redeemer. God is at work behind the backdrop, creating the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, bringing forth a more equitable, just, and compassionate world. God is working in us, through us, and for us. God wants to transform us; to make us fruitful in the land of our suffering. God invites us to play a role in God's redemption plan and to be transformed in the process.

### KEY POINTS

- 1) **A Commitment to Be Better** We need to have a firm commitment to be better as a process of entering into God's purpose for our lives. God is recruiting for His team - for the Kingdom of God. God is calling some Christians to get off the bench. God is calling others who already have a heart for good works to enter into a personal relationship with their Redeemer God. Since it was Super Bowl Sunday, Pastor Hurmon demonstrated his point with Tom Brady's career. Despite being the 199th draft pick of his NFL draft class, Brady has enjoyed unparalleled success, because he has been committed to improving in small ways every year, being committed to getting better. We may never know Brady's level of public success, but God can unlock the personal greatness that is inside us because it was the God of the universe who breathed that greatness into us. Despite our past sins, past traumas, or present age, God can use all of who we have been and who we are to reveal His redemption plan to the world.
- 2) **A Commitment to Serve** Service is the key to unlocking our internal greatness. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Everybody can be great... because anybody can serve." [Matthew 20:26](#). Each of us is like a puzzle piece - the missing part that fits into the whole puzzle of God's redemptive plan. You want to understand how you fit in to the whole. Serving others gives you a sense of purpose, but sometimes, you will run into thankless people. If you are serving your Redeemer, you will have the endurance needed to press on because you can trust that God is using you to bring life, to make rivers in the dry land.
- 3) **A Commitment to Empathy** To be better on God's team involves a commitment to empathy. At the heart of the Gospel is a God who leans into empathy. ([Isaiah 53:4-5a](#).) Empathy requires us to seek to understand before being understood. Pastor Hurmon drew upon some recent conversations around race to offer some specific language to enter into dialogue across differences. "*Here's how I am hearing that as a \_\_\_\_\_ . Am I hearing that correctly?*" Please help me to understand that perspective."

### DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Do you have a plan or process to "be better" in your own life? If yes, what are your current aspirations? If no, why not? If you struggled with this message, share about it knowing it's a safe place!
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - The Bible equips us to understand the power of God's forgiveness and healing. To be a part of God's redemption story means deepening our sense of self as God's chosen people. We are loved sinners. Read, meditate, and reflect on the following scriptures. [2 Corinthians 5:17](#); [1 John 1:9](#); [Isaiah 43:24b-25](#); [Isaiah 1:18](#). Be sure to leave some time for silence. Listen for the Holy Spirit. Share what God revealed to you through these passages. How do these verses inspire and empower us to be better? How does God's call for us to be better intersect with the invitation He gives us to serve? Share your thoughts about how your gifts intersect with the world's needs. Have you ever experienced burnout as a result of service? What does it mean to lean into God's power rather than our own? How can we remain faithful when, by all appearances, we are struggling or failing?
- 3) **DO** - Pastor Hurmon challenged us to consider: *What does living with empathy and the expectation to be better look like in your life?* Pray for the grace, courage, and wisdom to dialogue across differences. Pray for the strength and humility to double down in your commitment to be better, and your expectation for greatness as you play your position in God's redemption plan.