



President Walton's January 2022 Message

All Things Renewed in 2022

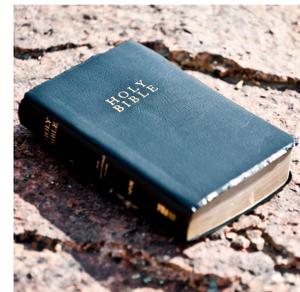


Happy New Year! What an exciting year we have ahead of us. As with the past few years, the year ahead will be filled with lots of changes—some which we will control, and many beyond our ability to control. We won't be able to control ever increasing prices or interest rates. We can't control the weather or, as we've learned, how disease will spread. What we can control is how we respond to the changes all around us.

In this year of Jubilee, the focus for the Florida-Georgia District is three-fold, which has a Trinitarian feel. First, we will emphasize a renewal of being in God's Word, making a commitment to read, mark, and inwardly digest it daily. You may have made a resolution to exercise more in the New Year, or to eat more fruits and vegetables, or to spend more time with the family—all good things. I would challenge you to spend more time in reading God's Word and in prayer.

We read in Hebrews 12:12-13, ***“For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”***

Like the steadfast love of the Lord, His Word is new every morning. His Word speaks directly to our faith and life. The Word strengthens our relationship with Jesus and with other believers. It shapes us as it permeates our entire being and allows the Holy Spirit to do amazing things in our lives. We begin to see the world differently and recognize that we are sent to connect people to Jesus.



In John 1 we read, ***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men...He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”*** John 1:1-4, 12-13. When we spend time in God's Word we come to find He is a sending God who has sent men and women into the world with the hope and promise of redemption and new life. He makes all things new. In fact, Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:17, ***“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”*** Jesus will make all things new in 2022 as we spend time in the Word and respond to the calling of God's Spirit remembering we are sent.



This is really the second focus for the District, to recognize we are sent by God to a world lost in the darkness of sin and fear. In just a few days we will celebrate Epiphany, which reminds us how the Light that shone in the darkness goes into the whole world. We now bear light for Jesus as His sent ones, empowered and renewed by His Spirit through His Word to proclaim the love and grace of Jesus! We are part of the great sending of God. It's how He shows His heart to the world

around us. It now beats through you and me. We have been chosen, redeemed and now sent, even as Jesus was sent and sent His disciples on Resurrection night to reach the world God so dearly loves.

The last emphasis I want to point to in the New Year is a motto which will continue to be a guide for me personally, and for our District as we head toward the Convention in June. It's simply this, in Jesus "All things will be renewed in 2022!" This is a reference to the changes all around us and up ahead in the future. In June we will celebrate the 34th Triennial District Convention, albeit a year late due to COVID. At this convention, in addition to electing new leadership to guide the Florida-Georgia District into the future, delegates will have an opportunity to chart the course for how together we will carry out the mission of God as His sent ones through resolutions, reports and jubilee celebrations. How is God going to shape our congregations and ministries as people delve into the Word of God and allow His Spirit to "mess" with our lives? All things will be renewed as we boldly move into God's future for the Florida-Georgia District. For me, personally, it will be a year filled with renewing as I look to the future Jesus has carved out for Edith and me. It's the proverbial step of faith as we put our trust in Jesus to guide us into the future, as a district, as ministries, and even as individuals. He will do great things as we confidently follow His lead and see our future fixed on Jesus!

So join me in this year of Jubilee, as God works in each of us through His Word, to send us to the world to connect people to Jesus as we are renewed day by day! Again, Happy New Year! It's going to be great as we walk in the light of Jesus and all things are renewed in 2022!

In His joyous peace,
Greg

