

THE Day of Covenant

[\(Jer 31:31-34, 2 Cor 2:13-17, Mat 14:22-33\)](#)

In the eternity past on the first day of the first year God said, "Let there be light," and there was light and every good thing came into being by the power of His word. Even when things went bad because of the ones whom He loved most, the ever compassionate God of glory, grace and goodness decided to make all things new ([Rev 21:5](#)). This is what the Bible, the book of God's eternal covenant with us, is all about.

On the first day of this year, God is promising us in the Old Testament lesson to be our God and to take us back like a loving husband who takes his wife back even though she played harlot by forsaking Him. God is giving us yet another chance to become His people by knowing Him and live.

In the Gospel lesson God is calling us to do extraordinary things which we can never imagine to do like walking on the water which Peter did when he decided to come out of the boat trusting in the word of Jesus. All the apostles are like water walkers and victors in the battle with the devil in winning back the occupied lands from Satan spreading the aroma of the knowledge of Christ everywhere they went. This is today's epistle lesson.

Today God is promising us to be our God and make us His people and help us to do extraordinary things like walking on the water and give us victories in our battles with our adversary devil. So let us not be any lazier sitting in the boat doing nothing but step out of the boat like Peter and inherit what has been promised like Paul through faith and patience.

**The Old Testament lesson: [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)
Let us circumcise our hearts and renew our covenant.**

New Year is the day of circumcision of our Lord Jesus as a baby of eight days. Circumcision is a sign of ratification of what God had promised Abraham i.e to bless him and make him a great nation ([Gen 17](#)). From that time onwards it has become a lasting Covenant sign of the people of God the Jews. So in order to become God's people we need to circumcise our hearts by repenting for our sins and unfaithfulness to our God .When God our maker is bearing us like a husband we like the people of Israel have broken all the marriage vows like a faithless wife and has played harlot ([Isaiah 54:5](#)).Every time we participate in the communion and live as we like not caring for His word we are breaking the covenant. Even then God is ready to forgive our sins and never remember them again. He wants to make Himself known to us .He wants to write His laws on our hearts and put them in our minds. He wants to be our God and take us back as His beloved. All this He can do only when we want Him to do that in our lives.

So let us fear God and say yes to Him and renew our covenant on this first day of the year. Then this year will be a safe, surplus and satisfying year of wisdom, wealth, prosperity and honor ([Pro 9:10](#), [14:26](#), and [Pro 27:19-23](#)). That does not mean our life will be easy like a joy boat riding. We will never fall sick. We will have no more financial crises and difficulties. No, we may be hard pressed from all sides and the storms of life may strike us with strong winds even when we are doing God's will like Peter and other disciples in today's Gospel lesson. But the Lord who has promised never to

leave us or forsake us will always be there when we lose every hope of survival to save us and lift us up.

**The Gospel lesson: [Matthew 14:22-33](#)
Let us attempt to do great things for God**

This year Jesus wants us to go to the other side just as he has sent Peter and other disciples in a boat in this portion. As we start our journey into this year doing the will of God, we are sure to have unexpected depressions and Rita storms but Jesus is asking us to be courageous and not to fear for anything. Somebody has noticed that there are 365 “fear nots” in the Bible, one for each day. Jesus is not only asking us not to fear but also asking us to attempt to do some impossible things like walking on the water like Peter. John Ortberg in his fantastic book (everybody must read this book) “Get out of the Boat” said that Peter’s walk on water was an invitation for everyone to step out in faith like Peter to experience something more of the power and presence of God .May we desire more of His presence and power this year. Water walking is a picture of doing with God’s help what we could never do on our own.

In the preface of this book the author excellently presents the consistent pattern in scripture of what happens in a life that God wants to use and improve. Let us follow the pattern.

1. **There is always the call.** God asks an ordinary person to engage in act of extraordinary trust, that of getting out of the boat.
2. **There is always the Fear.** God has an inextinguishable habit of asking people to do things that are scary to them .It may be fear of inadequacy (Ex: Moses).Fear of failure (Ex :The spies sent out to the promised land).It may be fear of God (“For I know you were a hard man, seeking to reap where you did not sow”).But one way or another there will be fear.
3. **There is always assurance.** God promises His presence (Ex: Gideon), gifts needed to fulfill the assignment (Moses).
4. **There is always a decision.** Sometimes, as with Moses and Gideon, people say yes to God’s call. Sometimes as with the ten frightened spies or the rich young ruler in [Mark 10:17-27](#), they say no. But always people must decide.
5. **There is always a changed life.** Those who say yes to God’s call don’t walk the walk perfectly—not by a long shot. But because they say yes to God, they learn and grow even from their failures. And they become part of His actions to redeem the world. Those who say no are changed too. They become a little harder, a little more resistant to His calling. Whatever the decision, it always changes a life -and it changes the world that little life touches.

God is asking us to come out of the boat (we all refuse to come out of the boats of our convictions, comfort etc like the other disciples in the boat) and walk on the water. Peter was the first person who walked on the water in history. This he did by putting his trust in Jesus’ word and looking unto Him, the author and finisher of our faith. He began to drown when he took his eyes off Jesus in his natural fear of the raging wind .But it was not a failure. Jesus lifted him up and Peter was learning his lessons. In the same way God is asking us to venture out this year to do great things for Him.

Till Jesus called him, Paul was in his boat of Judaism .But when he heard his call he came out of the boat and became a person who alone could say, “Follow me as I follow Jesus.”In today’s epistle lesson God is assuring us victory when we go out into the world like Paul who had spread the fragrance of the knowledge of Jesus Christ everywhere he went.

**The Epistle lesson: [2 Corinthians 2:12-17](#)
There is no greater thing in the world than spreading the Gospel**

When we begin to do what Jesus Christ asked us to do, Satan won't leave us. He attacks from all directions. This is what happened to Paul .In response to the attacks on his character and authority; Paul explains the nature of Christian ministry illustrating with that of his own ministry. This is an important letter for all who wish to be involved in any kind of Christian ministry, because it has much to teach about how we should handle our ministries today. Like Paul, those who are involved in ministry should be blameless, sincere, confident, caring, open and willing to suffer.

Some preachers in Paul's day were peddlers of God's word, preaching without understanding God's message or caring about what happened to their listeners .They weren't concerned about furthering God's kingdom-they just wanted money. Today also there are still religious leaders who care only about money, and not about truth. Those who truly speak should have sincerity and integrity, and should never preach for selfish reasons ([1 Tim 6:5-20](#)). Therefore we should be like Bereans in examining the Scriptures daily to see what the modern preachers are saying is true ([Acts 17:11](#)).

When we preach the gospel, it is good news to some and repulsive news to others. Even then we need to preach the gospel like Paul .We are the ministers of new covenant. Let us remember that those who part take in the communion are supposed to proclaim the gospel till the Lord comes ([1 Cor 11:26](#)). Just as He used Paul in spreading the fragrance of the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus God is promising us also to do the same and give us victory where ever we go. May we always give the aroma of the word of God and not the smell of tobacco or liquor!

So let us be bold in enough to venture out like Peter and Paul in spreading the gospel. May God help us! Happy New Year!

Life Application:

1. Nobody can become new without accepting Jesus Christ as their personal savior .May God who said on the first day of the first year in the eternity past let light shine out of darkness, make his light shine in many hearts today!
2. We can be new and be transformed everyday only by renewing our mind by the study of the word to know the good, pleasing and perfect will of God ([Rom 12:2](#)). Let us all make a covenant with God to have quiet time on a daily basis during which time He can teach us. There is no greater thing we can do this year or any other time than gaining the knowledge of God.
3. John Ortberg in his book "Get out of the boat" said that Peter's decision to walk on the water is an example of extreme discipleship. May we become extraordinary disciples like Peter and Paul! Resolving to read good books like this book is one of the best New Year day resolutions one can ever make.