



Something New | Jill Johnson | 5.13.18

LG Weekly

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following question:

If you could share three pieces of advice with your younger self what would they be?

SHARE

Welcome to our teaching series, Just Getting Started.

On the cross Jesus boldly proclaimed, "It is finished." As followers of Jesus, the work of the cross is complete, our sins forgiven and we have become new creations. As a result of the perfect work of Jesus, now we can boldly believe what the apostle Paul says when he writes, "the old is gone, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The work on the cross is finished but God is just getting started with us.

Hebrews 10:14 tells us, "For by one sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy."

Even though we have been made perfect, day by day the gospel continues to make us more holy. God is working in and through us, by the work of the Holy Spirit. Theologically this is called progressive sanctification, where we are becoming more like Jesus throughout our

lives as disciples of Christ. So, don't be discouraged with the ups and downs of life--God is not giving up on us. He is a faithful Father who promises that He will finish what He has started (Philippians 1:6).

God develops our faith, purifies our motives and shapes our gifts for His glory. He is just getting started with that anger issue, addiction problem, impatience, envy, pride, or lust. You can name a struggle but God has given you a different name...son and daughter. The story is far from over and God desires more than anything for you to experience freedom in the finished work of the cross. He is just getting started.

"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk, but of power." 1 Corinthians 4:20

Read Isaiah 61:3

In this week's message, Jill shared about the hope that wells up while Jesus is actively creating something new within us. As spring arrives, flowers begin to blossom, oak trees stand tall in strength, and new life bursts forth around us. One thing we have come to know about life is that life begins small and almost imperceptible. Jill used the analogy of a seed. Seeds are small and fragile, and when placed outside their most natural environment, can stay dormant for hundreds or thousands of years. Yet inside that seed, new life is waiting. When the seed is planted, well-watered, and able to receive rich sunlight, the seed will break open with new life. This new life is purposefully and intentionally created to bring beauty into this world.

Our own hearts are much like the soil. God, who is a good Father, intentionally plants love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control within us. God has placed His beauty, full of hope and grace, and His splendor within us for His glory and our good. He is our good Father who tills the soil, plants the seeds, and brings fresh water while knowing full and well that His splendor will be seen through our lives.

While growth may be small and seem slow, God, who is the good gardener, is beautifully and intentionally planting, watering, and shining His radiance on His work. Oaks of righteousness are being planted for His glory and splendor. As the Apostle Paul writes to the Philippian church, "I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

We know God is always at work in and around us. Share a time when you have seen God's faithful work in you that produced something new and beautiful. With that said, we know God is working right here and right now.

What is God birthing inside of you right now? Is there something in your life you sense God is wanting to do and it's bursting to get out?

GROW

Read Deuteronomy 11:10-12

In Egypt, the Israelites could depend on the Nile for continual water supply. In contrast, living in Canaan meant depending on rain from the heavens, which meant a dependency on God to provide. Israel was trading in captivity for freedom; self-sufficiency for tender care. In Deuteronomy, God calls Himself the Gardener--the One who will tend to His people and bring about the best harvest.

When a gardener tends the land, he sees to it that the seed has access to two things: light and water. As we see in Scripture, we are promised that our Gardener will supply both to us so that we may thrive. Without a doubt, God wants His people to grow and flourish. He wants His people to be a beautiful display of His splendor!

If you have any doubt of your value, know today that you have incredible worth in the Kingdom of God. If you feel like that hard, forgotten, and insignificant seed locked away in hiddenness, pursue your Gardener. Jesus is the Light and when you bask in him, the warmth of his love will break away the shell. The Word is water to your soul and when you cover yourself in His promises, possibility bursts forth.

Today, pursue these two things. Allow the Gardener to tend to your heart, soul and spirit, allowing what's in you to bloom and flourish in strength and for His glory.

How might you bask in the light of his presence this week? Make a commitment to activate a habit that will cultivate intimacy. It could mean starting your day with 10 minutes in prayer. It could mean listening to worship music on your way to work instead of the radio. This is something that will lend to setting your heart on Jesus.

What is a Bible verse God is using in your life right now to speak tenderly to your heart? If you don't have one, that's ok! There are seasons when this happens. If there isn't a verse, will you commit to finding at least one this week that you will memorize or write down and place in a visible spot?

MOVE

Read 1 Peter 2:9-10

God has called you out of darkness and into the light. You are an oak of righteousness; a city on a hill. There is work to be done and we have been invited to join in His redemptive work, in the world here and now! No longer can you remain hidden. No longer can you pull back from offering the world what God has put inside of you. It's time to step into the light of His love, go public with your faith, and let the world see God's love through you!

What does that mean for you this week? How are you going to use what is inside of you to show God's love to the world? Making a meal for a neighbor? Taking a coworker out to lunch? Sharing how God has turned your life around with a stranger?

PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying with and for each other. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to share more freely.

TO GO

“Before we could know God, He cared for us. He hid each of us away as a treasure until He brought us to be. God says that He fashioned each of us with awe and wonder.” -Linda Dillow

Writer - Brittany Rust and Michele Williams | Editor – Ryan Wekenman

