



## A New Beginning

*The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23, ESV)*

I always approach the week between Christmas Day and New Year's Eve with the same set of mixed emotions: On the one hand, the Christmas season is nearly over, and I actually enjoy taking the colorful decorations off the tree, hauling the "now nearly brown" pine tree out to the curb, and tucking the "Christmas Day Decorations" boxes neatly back into storage for the next year.

On the other hand, Christmas Day for another season has come and gone, and it always seems to pass me by so quickly. In fact, it passes by more quickly each year. Have you had the same set of mixed emotions?

I confess, I'm one of those people who likes to take my Christmas decorations down before the start of a New Year.

I often smile as I walk around my neighborhood, in mid-February, and see that one or two of my close neighbors have finally taken their dead, brown, fire-hazard of a Christmas pine out of the house and off to the curb, at long last.

I always breathe a quiet sigh of relief, as the real risk for nearby house fires has lessened, as a result. Mid-February just seems to work for them.

But, that's just not me. I like looking at the start of a New Year as a new beginning. I like that

new beginning to start with a clean slate, not to mention, a clean house.

Taking down my Christmas decorations when I do helps me to focus. That focus gives me a sense of joy and peace.

One of the greatest sources of joy and peace in our lives as Christ-followers is the absolute

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truth that we have experienced and now enjoy a new beginning in Christ Jesus.

Our "slate" and our "house," if you will, has been completely cleaned in him, and we are no longer bound to the rigors and rituals of "sin management" that we were once slaves to in our past, as part of various forms of toxic religion.

We live free and fully in Him. We live as new men and new women in his grace, every day of the year.

I love the poetic imagery of Lamentations 3:22-23. The lament as translated in the English Standard Version reads much less like an honest complaint and far more like a true confession of praise (no doubt, following a lament).

The writer of Lamentations, using the poetic imagery of a new morning, is praising the LORD for his great faithfulness, for his never-ending love and mercy:

***His steadfast love never ceases and his mercies never come to an end.***

Although the concept of time and the poetic imagery of a morning speaks to us as humans within our limited reality, for him, he lives outside of time and outside of limitation.

Christ Jesus has no beginning and no ending. We do, and we can begin again anew each morning, just as each morning begins a new day.

Despite our limitations, we live in a perpetual state of new beginning with him.

Whether we focus on our new beginning in him during the Christmas season, or just after, or on any day of the year, we feel his joy.

Whether we celebrate our new beginning in him while putting up our Christmas tree and decorations, or while taking them down, we feel his peace.

Our new beginning is recurring and perpetual, and it is meant to be enjoyed every morning of every day of the year.

Our joy comes from his steadfastness. Our peace from his never-ending mercies. We give thanks to God every day that we live in such a perpetual state of grace.

We give thanks for a new beginning in him. Great is his faithfulness! □

—Ed Dunn