

“Untouched Snow”
by Sermon by Paul Goodman

I remember well, making our shapes, walls and tunnels in the snow as a child. I loved to envision great kid architectural wonders which we worked hard to construct.

But I always was bothered by the messed up snow some of which was made dirty by the leaves and dirt underneath.

I found myself looking forward to new snow or finding a part of the yard that was pristine.

Untouched snow is a new opportunity! A new beginning!
Untouched snow is what we take pictures of!

A New Year has come
We have something that clicks with Untouched Snow!

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A bit of amusement can be found in a dictionary search of the word “resolution”
First definition: *a determination to do something.*
Last definition: (birthed out of our hi-tech world) - *visual clarity*

We begin the New Year with a resolution (determination) to loose weight and by the end of the year failure is evident with visual clarity.

Resolutions have that reputation of quickly fading into the background of the racing year.

After the experience of a few years, they become a thing to do or something to make jokes about.

Like the comic: three 55 gallon drums sitting in a row. One is marked bottles, another paper and another New Year resolutions.

POINT

But the “Untouched Snow” of a New Year
inspires us! Fascinates us! Cheers us! Gives a sense of hope!

HOW DO WE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE UNTOUCHED SNOW IN LIVE?

Some of us are thinking: Plow it all! Salt it good!! or go to Florida!!!

HOW DO WE TAKE ADVANTAGE? TWO THINGS TO KNOW ONE TO DO

I. GOD PLANNED FOR US TO EXPERIENCE A NEW BEGINNING

Our Creator made untouched snow

A Creator makes new things

He loves beginnings: The Seasons, Births, New plants

The First book of the Bible: Genesis (beginnings) – untouched snow!!

God looked at what He did and saw that it was GOOD!

When God begins something fresh – He means it to stay fresh - good

Our ancestors ruined the beginning and their children continue to do the same.

Our broken world is no longer untouched snow

Our rebellion has soiled and ruined the beautiful new snow!

We feel and experience these realities daily

Even this did not hinder Our Loving Father who provided the Ultimate in New Beginnings at great cost: Jesus Christ

The rebel in us that dirties and ruins can be put to death – forgiven.

There must be an end for a new beginning:

We can see that in Creation: again the seasons, biology etc...

We see that at the Cross – when “it is finished” a new beginning was made possible

God who is the one who made all from nothing -has made it possible to have “Untouched Snow” again!

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old has gone, the new has come (II Corinthians 5:17 NIV)

Have you experienced the Ultimate New Beginning?

The **Fresh Snow of Receiving Jesus Christ** as your Savior and Lord places in your life? complete **forgiveness**, clean as new snow, the **source of empowerment** by way of the Holy Spirit to keep it like that.

II GOD PLANNED THAT WE THRIVE IN OUR NEW BEGINNING

God has provided that for those who already have a personal Relationship with Christ. Those who have experienced being made new and have made even a slight mess can see the beauty of Untouched Snow again in their lives.

It is all too easy to get the same attitude with our relationship with the Lord, that comes after many years of failing to keep New Year's resolutions.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9 NIV)

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires (II Peter 1:4)

If you have experienced this New Beginning –

If you are now in Christ as Paul often put it in the New Testament

Are you living in the Fresh Snow that He provides?

III. WE NEED TO LIVE IN THE NEW BEGINNING

How can I take advantage of the untouched snow that Christ gives me when I first come to him and how can I keep it fresh this new Year?

"But this I call to mind,

and therefore I have hope:

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases,

his mercies never come to an end;

they are new every morning;

great is your faithfulness.

'The LORD is my portion,' says my soul,

'therefore I will hope in him'" (Lamentations 3:21-24).

I remind myself of this which gives me Hope:

The unchanging Love and Mercy of the Lord will never end

They are new and fresh when I wake every morning

The Lord is always faithful

My soul tells me that the Lord is what I really have so that is where I will put my hope.

We are bombarded daily with small questions. They seem to increase annually! Take out or Eat in? Would you like green soap or tan soap? Would you like a red or blue toothbrush? Do you want that in plastic or paper?

We need to begin the habit of asking Significant Questions

Questions cause us to reflect. Important in a culture that increasingly distracts us away from reflecting. While reflecting we often can better hear the Holy Spirit's voice and become more sensitive to what He wants to do in our lives.

Some Ground Rules for Questions:

1. They should be based on truth.
2. They should keep an eye to the main thing
3. They should touch on items that are important.
4. Write them on a card or page in your Bible/ Frig/ Car Dash
5. Ask them daily - start the day or end it.

Take a book of the Bible and you can form many questions. An easy one is James: Did I face my Trials with Joy? (1:2) what it does for me in the end
What did my tongue do today- Build and Encourage or Burn and Destroy?
Did I show my religion (faith) worthless with my mouth today?
Did I live my religion (faith) in a pure manner today?
Did I act and plan with arrogance or in humble wisdom today?
Did I look in the mirror and walk away forgetting to deal with the reality that I saw? Did I live by faith today?

Make this a year when instead of resolutions, you establish a few daily questions that direct, remind and stimulate you in keeping things with the Lord new every day. God loves us to live in that untouched snow. Asking key questions will help us to remember and urge us to live in what the Lord has provided for us.

He is the one who will make that permanent some day:

Rev 21: He makes all things new and the spoiled will be wiped away for always.

Always New – Always Fresh

A READING AT THE END OF COMMUNION

We will never be Satisfied

Until evil and wickedness is wiped out
Until all pain and suffering is banished
Until all mourning and death is a forgotten thing
Until we have live in true and enduring peace
Until righteousness reigns among the nations
Until the Lamb is given the praise of which He is worthy
Until the new order of God is ushered in forever

We have to go back to Life after this service:
some to difficult situations at home,
some to jobs that do not inspire and others to look for a job,
some to situations of difficulty and strife,
some to the wrestling with the consequences of sin ,
some to dealing pain and loss

BUT WE MUST NOT FORGET

THAT WE HAVE A DREAM

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I remind you today, we have a dream!
And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, we still have a dream!

We have a dream today! He will make all things new! Revelation 21:5

We have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight;
"and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together." Isaiah 40: 5

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing before His throne with new meaning.

Let us speed up that day when *all* of God's children from every tribe and nation will sing and celebrate before his throne

*Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!
The lamb has made us free indeed!
Thank God Almighty He is making all things new!*

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The same one that promised to make all things new quickly added:

It is done. I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all of this and I will be his God and he will be my son.

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters, and all liars – their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death

