

SERMON SERIES: New Year Same God

SPEAKER: James Teutschmann

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Sermon Title

“New Year Same God”

Introduction

This week, we closed out 2024 with a focus on the consistency of God throughout all of our lives. With a new year comes a lot of excitement, joy, and anticipation. But it also comes with worry, uncertainty, fear of the unknown. We are reminded that regardless of the **New Year** that comes with all of those things, we worship the **Same God**. Our lives are in the hands of the Creator and King of the universe, and when we surrender the unknown to God and step into our “deserts” with trust in Him, He will do great and wonderful things in our lives. To get started this week, answer this icebreaker question with your group:

- What is one unexpected event from your life this past year that you found amusing or surprising?

Seek the Word

Read Exodus 34:6 aloud, then answer the questions below:

- How does God describe Himself to Moses? Why is it important for us to remember these attributes as we enter a new year?

Read Exodus 13:17-18 aloud, then answer the questions below:

- Why did God choose to lead the Israelites through the desert instead of the shorter route through Philistine country? What does this tell us about God’s understanding or our readiness for challenges, and our need for Him?

Read Exodus 14:10-12 aloud, then answer the questions below:

- How did the Israelites react when faced with the Egyptian army? What does this reveal about their trust in God, and how can we learn from their response?

Go Deeper

When the Israelites encountered the Egyptian army on their way to the Red Sea, they were afraid and they said it would have been better for them to stay slaves in Egypt (the known) than to risk dying in the desert (the unknown). Moses’ response is to be still and trust in God, to which God answers with the call to act according to His will. These are things that we are supposed to do in the deserts of our lives: be still, trust, and then act in God’s will. What is your natural response to being in the “desert” and what would it look like for you to instead respond like Moses?

Talk About It

- What areas of your life, as you look ahead to 2025, do you need to actively seek God's guidance in? What are some uncertainties or doubts you are wrestling with that you need to give over to God?
- Do you find it easy to be still and trust in God's provision or do you find it easier to try to take control of every aspect of your life? How can you instill the practice of stillness and trust in God this new year?
- Looking ahead over what 2025 has to offer– the known and the unknown– how are you preparing yourself and your life to be more aware of God's presence? How can your group help you to rely on God in both the known and the unknown?

Wrap Up

Reminder: God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Nothing about what is ahead in 2025 is going to surprise God, and it is in that where we can find hope. When we try to take control of our own lives, we end up wandering aimlessly in the desert, constantly living in fear of what is in the unknown. But taking the time to be still and trust in God allows His will to be done in our lives and His provision to reign over everything that can come against us. Let's enter 2025 as a people, as a group, and as a church who trusts God in the desert to provide and to save.

Challenge: For the rest of 2024, and the first week of 2025, set a specific time each day to be still before God. Use that time to pray, read Scripture, and reflect on the faithfulness of God in your life. Journal your thoughts and your prayers use those as viewpoints into how God is moving in your life.

Prayer: To close as a group, take some time to pray. Thank God for His unchanging nature and His faithfulness throughout this past year. Pray for the courage to trust Him in the coming year, asking for His guidance, protection, and provision in each member's life. Encourage each person to share one specific area where they need God's help, and pray for those needs collectively.

The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.