

THE VICAR WRITES

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A DEEPER LIFE IN CHRIST

RETURNING TO OUR

first Love

New Year's Day is often a day of resetting hearts, making new commitments and renewing old ones. It's a day where one might also reassess the direction to go with regards to career or relationship. It's also a day where people look for a new start or a new beginning, especially if the previous year was a particularly disappointing one. What about you? What are your aspirations for the New Year?

For Cathedral – 2022 will be marked as a season of “returning to our first love.”

For some of us the very idea of throwing out an old calendar and starting on a new clean page is a poignant reminder that the new pages, like our lives can quickly become messy. Often the start of a New Year is a time of returning to our Lord

for a fresh start. Likewise, as we enter into the season of physical restoration, the Lord is also leading us into a season of spiritual restoration. Rather than just making a resolution to quit doing something or start doing something new, we will take the advantage of this spiritual impetus to face and deal with the deeper issues of our lives and return to our first love with Christ. This is the perfect season to rebuild our spiritual lives by going back to some fundamental Christian basics, including how we carry ourselves at work and at home. I call you to look forward to our sermon series this year – with the focus that is built on returning to our first love. Aided by the power of the Holy Spirit, our honest and whole-hearted desire to walk right with God will lead us to life and peace (2 Cor. 7:10).

As we look to the season of returning to our first love, we are still not out of the woods from the difficult season of the pandemic. We can draw many spiritual lessons from the books of Ezra and Nehemiah on overcoming this difficult season. The Jews faced opposition and great challenges to rebuild the temple and the walls of Jerusalem. We too will face challenges in this season of spiritual restoration. May God's words encourage us to push on, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." (Jam. 1:2-4).

Operationally, we will also see some changes in 2022 - with our onsite services moving temporarily from the Nave to CNS, and from CNS to Pavilion. It will be a season of adjustment and rejoicing. Rejoice - because we are given the privilege to worship our Lord, and to be able to continue with our onsite service despite the ongoing pandemic. I call us to remember our fellow brother



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and sisters in Christ in other parts of the world who are still unable to return to worship onsite since the start of the pandemic. My friends, "this is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps. 118:24). I ask for your patience and kind understanding as we go through these changes together as a family.

**“If you really want to be like [Christ]
by seeing him when he comes,
you’ll pursue being like him now. You will.”
In other words, this New Year is a reminder to keep Jesus
ever in the forefront of our minds.**

– John Piper