

## REFRESH. RELEASE. RENEW.

DATE: SUNDAY, 23RD OF JANUARY 2022 | SERIES: BETTER TOGETHER - PART 1

**2 KINGS 23:3**

*The king stood by the pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the Lord - to follow the Lord and keep his commands, statutes and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, thus confirming the words of the covenant written in this book. Then all the people pledged themselves to the covenant.*

**ISAIAH 43:19**

*See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.*

**NOTES FOR LEADERS:**

We're excited about our 2022 church-wide series, PURPOSE! Please diarise the following dates:

- Tuesday, 8 February - day of prayer and fasting
- Sunday, 13 February - Purpose series launch

**START TALKING**

1. What one thing stood out to you from this weekend? (Vision 2022 sessions or the Sunday message).
2. What has been your highlight of the last month?

**START THINKING**

1. Some people seem to grow closer to God during tough times, while others draw away from him. What do you think causes these different responses?
2. Steve shared 3 key words as our theme for 2022: Refresh, Renew & Release. Which one of those words/ideas is most meaningful to you right now?

**START SHARING**

1. Read 2 Kings 23:3. This was King Josiah's response after finding and reading the scrolls (Bible) in the temple. What do you find inspiring about this? How does this apply to us today?
2. Read Isaiah 43:19. What new things do you feel God wants to do in your life this year?

**START PRAYING**

Lord Jesus Christ, thank you for never giving up on us and always moving us forward. Refresh us supernaturally with streams of living water. Like Josiah, we want to renew our commitment to you - our King, our Master, and our Guide. We want to live connected to You and follow your nudges. We are done with passionless living. We want our lives to be devoted to you. Help us, please, Holy Spirit. Amen.

**START DOING**

1. Who are you going to invite to join you for the PURPOSE series? This week, take some time to pray about it and ask God to guide you. Make a list of names.
2. Is God nudging you to lead a PURPOSE series group for 6 weeks? Email Nikki at [nikkit@cityhill.co.za](mailto:nikkit@cityhill.co.za), and she'll help you with all the information you need to get started.

# SUMMARY

## OF SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

This Sunday, Steve shared a message on what we believe God is saying to us for 2022: Refresh. Renew. Release.

### 1. REFRESH

*The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.*

*Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. Isaiah 35:1-2.*

Over the last 22 months, many of us have experienced a wilderness season in some areas of our lives. Isaiah had a prophetic picture that God wanted to do something supernatural in the desert. In a place where there should be no water, God says He will bring refreshing.

The people Isaiah was speaking to understood the area's geography that he was referring to. They knew how dry the desert region was and how harsh the conditions were in the desert. To survive in the desert, you conserve your energy, water, and food. The problem with "desert" thinking spiritually is that we can go into 2022 carrying the trauma of the wilderness of the last 2 years.

Isaiah says that God will do something supernatural in the middle of the desert: *Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.* Isaiah 35:6.

We believe that one of the things that God is saying is that He wants to refresh us supernaturally when On the outside, when everything looks like a desert season, on the inside, there is a well of living water that wants to gush out.

In the Old Testament, we come across Elijah. God tells him to go to the wicked king and say to him that there will be no rain because of God's judgement over the land. For 3 and a half years, there is drought (1 Kings 17 & 18). At the end of the 3 years, God sends Elijah to confront the evil king, Ahab, about being the cause of problems for the people of Israel. Elijah challenges Ahab to a demonstration of his deity, Baal, versus the God of Elijah at Mount Carmel. The challenge is to offer sacrifices to their respective gods and see which starts a fire to prove their power. Ahab's prophets pray for hours to Baal, but nothing happens. When it's Elijah's turn, God sends fire followed by rain ending the long drought. The nation turned back to God that day.

After this, the wicked queen, Jezebel, sends a message to Elijah to say she's out to kill him because of what he did. Elijah flees into the desert and lies down under a tree, and prays: *'I have had enough, Lord,' he said. 'Take my life ...'* 1 Kings 19:4.

We often have seasons like this where we've had enough of the difficulty and trauma of the season we're in. That night, he goes to sleep, fully prepared to die, and the next morning he wakes up: *All at once, an angel touched him and said, 'Get up and eat.' He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.*

He falls asleep again and then the angel of then...

*The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, 'Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.'* 1 Kings 19:5-7.

God wants to bring this kind of supernatural refreshing/food to us too!

### 2. RENEW

In the Old Testament (2 Kings) is the story of King Josiah. His grandfather, Manasseh, was the longest-reigning king (55 yrs) and easily one of the most wicked kings. His son Amon succeeded him and reigned for 2 yrs,

and then he was assassinated.

Josiah came to the throne at age 8 because his father was assassinated. In his mid-20's, Josiah started to repair the temple, and they found a scroll with the Law of God (the first 5 books of the Bible). He reads it and realises that the nation is in trouble. They have had the temple and had the Law all along, but they had no commitment to it. Josiah renews the covenant with God: *The king stood by the pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the Lord - to follow the Lord and keep his commands, statutes and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, thus confirming the words of the covenant written in this book. Then all the people pledged themselves to the covenant.* 2 Kings 23:3

We have a church and the Bible, but it means nothing unless we are committed to God with all of our heart and soul.

There is a call from God to urge each of us to renew our commitment to:

- God
- His people
- His Word
- His Plans for our lives

Josiah then starts a massive cleanout of all the evil and idolatrous objects in and around Jerusalem. He follows up his commitment with action. Some of us need to clean up and throw some "things" out - we need to change our viewing patterns, get rid of pornography, foul language, drunkenness and the like, do away with excuses.

NB: Men and fathers, there is something really powerful when you take a stand to renew your commitment to God to follow Him with all your heart and soul.

Will you renew your commitment to the plans and purposes of God?

### 3. RELEASE

A release comes in each of our lives after the refreshing and renewing.

We are reminded of the prophetic picture of an aircraft carrier that was given to CityHill Church in Hillcrest. A 20-ton plane can be released off the short runway on the aircraft carrier, going from 0-250kph in 2 seconds!

In the last 2 years, despite physical lockdown, God has been doing some releasing on the CityHill Church "aircraft carrier":

- We planted a church in Ballito church
- We launched online services that have connected people around the world to the Church
- Our church-wide campaigns have been extended to other churches
- We launched the WhatsApp "thought for the day"
- Our building project supernaturally provided for

But there are even greater things to be released ahead:

- Release from pain & trauma that some are carrying
- Release from negative thought patterns
- Release from damaging behaviour cycles
- Release into new things that God has for us
- Release of new ideas and creativity
- Release into new areas of influence and opportunity

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Isaiah 43:19.