

Happy New Year, my friends!

As I was taking a “brisk” 6-degree walk around the park this morning, I was thinking about what celebrating New Year’s might mean for us. It is an opportunity to start fresh, for sure. People start diets and exercise regimens (me included, folks; I packed it on during the holidays, \*sigh\*); they make resolutions to do this or that; they set goals and make plans.

There is also a way to celebrate the new year according to the gospel. I’m not necessarily talking about reading the Bible in a year – although that’s certainly a worthy challenge. I’m talking about a way of thinking faithfully about a fresh start. That’s really what the gospel is about – starting over.

We all come with baggage: guilt over what we’ve done wrong, bad decisions, broken relationships, and grudges that effectively slam doors in the faces of others. As we drag that luggage behind us, it snags on things and trips us up. Obstacles that we could just step over if we were unburdened slow us down and keep us from moving forward. When we come to a narrow passage – pressure at work or a person difficult to forgive – our walk comes to a standstill.

In the Gospel of Matthew (11:28), Jesus says, “Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.” Even when we are weighed down and exhausted the way to Jesus is open to us. The passage is never too narrow. When we go to Jesus, he gives us rest in that we can finally let go of the burdens we carry. Without Jesus we might be unable to let go.

Going to Jesus allows us to open our hands and drop our sin and brokenness. It is then that we are free to do what God asks us to do. Right now, Jesus is calling you to come so he can give you rest. It is then that your new life can begin.

My love to you all. ~Michelle