

## New Beginnings – Genesis 1:1-5

**Introduction:** I read a quote recently that said, “*We live in a moment of history where change is so speeded up that we begin to see the present only when it is already disappearing.*” That is about the size of it. Things are changing so quickly that we can hardly keep up. It can be very confusing.

On this morning that we honor our graduates, let me remind you of some of the things that were happening in the year you were brought into the world. If I’ve got it figured right, that would have been around 1990. In 1990.

- The Americans with Disabilities Acts was signed into law.
- George H.W. Bush was president of the U.S.
- Iraq invaded Kuwait.
- Dr. Kevorkian assisted his first suicide patient.
- Nelson Mandela is released from a South African prison.
- East and West Germany were reunified.
- Jim Henson, creator of the Muppets, died
- The Hubble Space Telescope was put into orbit.
- Windows 3.0 was released by Microsoft.

Source: [inthe90s.com](http://inthe90s.com)

You came into a world that was changing, and becoming ever more confusing and puzzling. No doubt you too have experienced some confusing and puzzling times in your life. Well, hang on because it’s not going to get any easier.

I read an article recently by Vickie G. Paver in which she shared her struggles with what she called, “*The puzzle of her life.*” She shared some practical advice that helped her give the missing and difficult pieces to God. She said, first

1. “*Remember that when the puzzle box is first opened you can’t see the whole picture, but God does.*”

Second,

2. *“Remember that the puzzle has sides and fits together in God’s own design and time, not ours. So it is best to take a deep breath and give it to Him.”* Third,

3. *“Nothing fits together outside God’s perimeter for our individual lives, so it is futile to run here and there looking for the answers to the puzzle, when we need to be waiting before Him and concentrating on what He wants for our lives.”*

Here’s the truth guys: This puzzle that we call life is really not a puzzle to anyone but us. To God, it’s no puzzle at all. He’s already got it figured out because He knows us and wants to reveal to us the truth of our lives. The mistake we make is when we think it’s all about us and we try to start with ourselves and not God. But it’s God who is the center from which all life develops.

And that is the first thing I want you to know today:

### **1. In the Beginning was God.**

**Gen. 1:1-5 (NIV)** says, <sup>1</sup> *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* <sup>2</sup> *Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.* <sup>3</sup> *And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.* <sup>4</sup> *God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.* <sup>5</sup> *God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning--the first day.”*

From nothing, God began and created everything there is. As we said earlier, you may have been born into a world that’s changing and confusing, but it’s still a world where God is in control. This world may have lost its moral compass, but you don’t have to because God promises you that if you’ll, *“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”* **Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)**

So, as you start out on a new beginning, I urge you, no matter what happens in life, to run to God and walk with Him, because no matter how confusing the world is or becomes, God is still in control. He began everything, and nothing ever catches Him off guard - not even the events of this your senior year.

God knew about the earthquake and the typhoon that hit Asia a few days ago. He knew about the tornadoes that hit our own state last Sunday. God knew about the wildfires which burned across So. Cal. He knows about

the corruption in the sports world. He knows about the immorality of Hollywood. He knows about the falling stock market, the rising price of oil, and the mortgage crisis. He knows, He cares, and He understands.

The point is, life has tragedies, its crises, and its unexpected turns, but I want you to always remember that no matter how difficult it gets, God is in control. He is the God who was in the beginning and He is behind every beginning. But He is also:

## **2. The God of Good Beginnings**

You're going to have some choices to make, and you're going to face some challenges. They'll begin as soon as you walk across that stage to receive your diploma. They'll continue as you live your final summer of your youth, and as you go to college and pick a major. They'll continue as you choose whom you'll spend the rest of your life with, as you decide on a career, on a place to live, and who your friends will be. If you want to make good choices, then understand that there is a God of good beginnings out there. He's a God who still wants to have a relationship with each one of you in all of them.

This is a good time to address the parents and guardians of our graduates, on behalf of this church, we say thanks to each of you. You have modeled in your home to varying degrees the love of a parent. There have been times when that love has been tested. There have been times when you probably thought, "*They switched my child at birth!*" That's OK because your children thought the same thing from time to time.

Hopefully, you've prayed for them; read God's Word to them; and taken them to church. Many of you have dropped them off here as they left for Super WOW and mission trips and other activities. But you weren't just dropping them off. You were making an investment in their lives, and as their church family, we want to say thank you for being faithful. Thank you for being their parent and not just their big buddy.

You have raised an incredible group of young people. They are world changers. They're going to make a difference in our world as they follow the calling of God in their lives. We're thankful for that. The God of good beginnings will do that.

Some of you will be leaving home for college or to start a career. But hopefully, there will be times when you'll come back home for visits or after you graduate from college. But whenever you come back, please know

that your church stands with open arms to welcome you back as well, to say welcome home. I hope you never forget that. Our God was there in the beginning, and He's a God of Good beginnings. But He's also:

### **3. The God of Endings**

Turn to 2 Corinthians 13. This passage reminds us that God is not only the God of beginnings, but He's the God of endings too.

Believers in the Corinthian church were folks who were having a hard time figuring out how to live a Christian life in a city that was known for immorality and idol worship. Paul had written them earlier in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians to address some of those problems, and now in this letter, he pours out his heart to these believers whom he had grown to love and cherish as his family in faith. In 13:11-14, he closes out his letter:

*<sup>11</sup> "Finally, brothers, good-bye. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. <sup>12</sup> Greet one another with a holy kiss. <sup>13</sup> All the saints send their greetings. <sup>14</sup> May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."* **2 Corinthians 13:11-14 (NIV)**

Paul knew that not only was God there in the beginning, but He is the God who will be there when the final chapter of life is written and the book is closed.

Seniors, this week will bring a close to this chapter of your life. And as you look into the faces of the people in this church, you'll see those who have been your Sunday School teachers, your choir leaders, your Youth and Awana leaders. These are the ones who have loved you and hugged you and been there for your family during good times and bad times. They are the people of your past and present.

But out there in your future, you'll find new careers, new loved ones and families and friends. That's exciting and great. But as you leave and start something new, remember that God understands all endings - even at an ending like this, and He wants to be your God in your new beginning as well.

So as you end one chapter of your life and start another, let me encourage you to be **faithful**. Listen every day for a fresh word from God. Find your place of ministry where you can grow and develop and continue to touch lives.

But also, remember that you're **loved**. You're valuable to God, and to your church. We salute you today because we love you so much. You've always got a place to call home, and we hope you'll do that throughout the years.

### **Conclusion: A Time of Beginning Again**

In just a moment we're going to give an invitation. It's not just for the graduating seniors, but for everyone. It's for everyone because even though, we've all had physical beginnings, we all need a spiritual beginning as well. So if you need to trust Christ as your Savior, you can do that today.

If you've been saved, but it's been a long time since your relationship with God has been what it should be, that means that at some point along the way, you've taken what God created as good and messed it up. But I want you to know that there is a God of beginning again today. And because of that, you can have a brand-new start today. He will welcome you back. **1 John 1:9 (KJV)** says, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

If you've been looking for a church home, I don't know of a better place than this Church to come and worship and serve the Lord. I don't know of a better place for your children to be loved and nurtured from the cradle through graduation and beyond. I don't know of a place that loves adults more than this church. We're one big family. If you're looking for a place to call home, we invite you to come.

The God of beginnings and the God of endings is the same God who welcomes you this morning to respond to His call, whatever it is.