



Rick Barton Ministries

January 2024!

New Beginnings-New Life

New Beginnings: In 2nd Corinthians 5:17-20 we read, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”* I really appreciate having a New Year! For Melva and I, it is an opportunity to reset, to reprioritize our spiritual, family, and ministry lives.

It's also a good time to remind ourselves that we are indeed “new creations”, called to live new lives. The passage continues, *“...all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”* It's a time to remember that our Lord Jesus has given us a mission! To share the good news of God's gracious offer of reconciliation and salvation.

Many years ago, I was asked to write a book for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. I titled it, “Beggar to Beggar”, using a quote from DT Niles who said, “Evangelism is one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread”. I believe if we remember that we are “beggars”, sinners saved by grace alone, then we will humbly share the bread of life with every fellow “beggar” we can!

“Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” Our passage continues with the urgency we need to renew each new year. “We beg you...” is not a passive term. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, *“...kept exhorting them, saying ‘Be saved from this perverse generation!’”* There is a heaven and there is a hell. Jesus doesn't want anyone to perish! I have prayed with folks who have unexpectedly died shortly after. I thought I would have one more visit with them, one more conversation. I didn't. Will you join Melva and me in renewing our commitment to live and to share this wonderful new life, this new year?

December Happenings: The month began with a wonderful road trip to the Ft. Collins, CO area. We met with family, friends, and supporters. A special treat was having a lunch/ministry update meal with “ministry alumni” from over 40 years ago, Brian and Connie Trout, along with dear friends Steve Reischl of Ambush Ranch, and evangelist Ralph Bell. Then it was on to Livermore Community Church, who we have ministered with for many years. During the service, 2 adults responded to the gospel! We are soooo grateful to have each of you in our lives!

Upon returning home we conducted a “Celebration of Life” as well as our first Mountain Top Chapel Service of the season. Our Saturday Night Worship group sang carols for the nursing home, assisted living, and shut-ins. Then we delivered Christmas presents to six low-income families. On New Year's Eve I was able to pray with 50 of our instructors before the Torchlight Parade.

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Upcoming: Lord willing, we will continue holding our Mountaintop Chapel services and Bible studies at Crested Butte ski area. We had over 40 at our New Year's Eve Mountaintop Chapel this year! Then lead worship at the High Ground Men's Bible/Ski Conference, and teach wildland fire safety classes for the Gunnison and Crested Butte Fire Departments. In the spring we've been asked to preach in Pitkin and Tincup, CO as well as Guthrie, OK. In July we hold our annual Rodeo service and In the fall we travel back to Bentonina, MS to hold services.

Family: Melva and I were blessed to spend Thanksgiving with our daughter Rebekah, husband Nick, and granddaughter Kailani. We had a great time with Chef Nick preparing an amazing dinner! Over Christmas, our son Steve, wife Annie, and grandchildren Samuel and Abigail joined us, which was wonderful!

Health: NO MORE BLOOD CLOTS! Melva's last test showed no blood clots in either lung! In Exodus 15:26, God describes Himself as Jehovah Rapha, "I am the Lord who heals you." Melva and I give praise to the Lord and thank you for your faithful prayers. I too am grateful for His healing touch. I am normally healthy but was hit by back-to-back issues in December (gout and a kidney stone). Your prayers really do sustain us!

Finances: As we shared last month, this has been the greatest year ever in giving away over two thousand 1st Responder, cowboy, and motorcycle New Testaments and devotionals. We were able to increase our support for missionaries, small church pastors, and widows, as well as helping families in need. As our Lord tells us, *"Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."* Thanks to our Lord's grace working through your faithful prayers and support, every bill is paid, and we enter the New Year with an abundance! Thank You!

At the end of our passage in 2nd Corinthians, we are overwhelmed that, "He (God the Father), made Him (God the Son-Jesus), who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him". The gift of grace that became manifest at Christmas continues today!

And now may the God of grace, hope, joy, and peace grant you a blessed, Christ-filled New Year!

Rick and Melva

Rick + Melva



Planning how to get Christmas presents to each low income family

Happy New Year!



Singing at the Assisted Living Center



Singing carols with the children at Livermore Community Church



Rick praying with Ski Instructors before torchlight parade!