

January 2021

From Pastor Jenna Pulkowski

Pastor's Pen

¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his home among us. We have seen his glory, glory like that of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

(John 1:14 CEB)

Beloveds, grace and peace to you in the name of Immanuel. *Amen.*

St. Andrew Family of Faith, a blessed new year to you all.

Early in 2020, I went to get my nails done with a few of my friends. The owner of the nail salon, a lovely woman named Linda, had written on her entryway blackboard: “2020 is going to be your best year yet”. Anytime we reminded her of this sentiment throughout the year, she would exclaim, “Oh don’t remind me of that!” in a rather chagrined tone.

While I know most of us want to put the old year behind us and embrace the new one—a group among which I am eagerly counting myself—I’ve been reflecting on my willingness to dismiss this dumpster fire of a year. I don’t think this desire is an attempt to avoid the losses and grief and pain we have all encountered in the past calendar year, but rather a deep, deep desire to return to some semblance of normalcy. And what better way to do that than with some New Year’s Resolutions?!?!?!?!?

All around us we have messages of “new year, new you!”, and the pressure for new years resolutions. We are told that who we are, on every level, can or should be improved. That somehow, who we are isn’t enough. We aren’t skinny enough, clear-skinned enough, eating all the right foods enough.

God, I would argue, does not appear to agree with the world’s messaging. Surprising, I know—God disagreeing with the ways of the world. The miracle we just paid honor to as we remembered and celebrated the birth of Jesus is that bodies matter to God. Bodies matter to our loving Creator. Our physical selves are not an afterthought or something to be dismissed. By taking on human flesh in the form of Jesus, God tangibly showed us just how much matter matters.

This can be hard for those of us who on the best of days are apathetic about our bodies, and on the worst of days actively hate our bodies. My own health struggles have often put me at odds with my own body, and the whole Body Positive movement can be really hard for me to embrace—although on an intellectual level I am 100% supportive of it.

Instead of setting New Year’s Resolutions this year that revolve around weight loss, health routines that may or may not actually support our health, or making lists of “good” foods versus “bad” foods—which is a whole other topic for another day, but suffice it to say food is not an issue of morality, and we are not bad people for eating so-called “bad” foods—what would it look like for us to start out the year with our focus on God? The same God who chose to take on human flesh so that we could be reconciled to him? The same God who made his home among us?

Beloveds, our bodies matter. They matter to our community, and they matter to God. May this new year be a time for all of us to remember that we are created in the image of God, and that God’s love for us meant taking on the fullness of humanity—wrinkles, fat, scars, and all.

Peace,
Pr Jenna