

A New Creation

2 Corinthians 5:17

Introduction

1. Many Christians hear sermons exhorting them to repent and live better lives every week.
2. Though these things are necessary to be right with God, one problem that most new Christians, and even some older Christians, are facing is that they are not being taught HOW to do these things.
3. They have been dealing with the WHAT, but neglecting the HOW.
4. For this reason, beginning with this lesson, we will be going through a series of lessons that deal with Christian life.
 - a. We are going to discuss WHY God expects us to live the kind of lives the scriptures describe.
 - b. We are going to discuss WHAT exactly He expects of us as His holy people.
 - c. And we will also discuss HOW we can accomplish those things in our lives and HOW we can overcome the challenges that often prevent us from doing what we know we should be doing.

Discussion

I. This series will be based on 1 Cor. 5:17.

- A. In this passage Paul discusses the new life we have in Christ and why we should devote our lives to Him.
 1. In verses 14-15 Paul concludes that since Christ died for us, we should in return cease living for ourselves and instead live our lives for Christ.
 2. He gave His life for us; therefore we should give our lives for Him.
 3. We must understand that without this attitude we will never be able to grow as Christians. Therefore, when we consider HOW to grow, the first step is to commit our lives to Christ, just as He committed His to us.
 4. If you want to become a stronger Christians then you must come to the same conclusion in your heart that Paul makes in 1 Cor. 5:15!
- B. But He does not leave it at this.
 1. Though it is true that we owe Christ our life, Paul also discusses WHY we should give our lives to Christ.
 2. That is, the purpose for which Jesus died demands that we turn from our old ways and live a new life.
 3. We must give our lives to Him because that is the purpose for which we are saved.
- C. For if we are in Christ, Paul says we are “*new creations*.”
 1. Once we have obeyed the gospel we will never be the same.

2. Once we go down into the waters of baptism, having true faith in the power of God to cleanse us from our sins, we are eternally changed and we will come up a new creature.
3. Granted, we do not feel any different, except that our consciences have been made clean.
 - a. Our physical pain is not taken away,
 - b. The hardships we face in life are still there,
 - c. Physically speaking we are exactly the same.
4. But spiritually we undergo a transformation more beautiful and more glorious than we can imagine.
5. We are as a shriveled, dried up seeds that, when placed in the ground rise up and becomes a beautiful and glorious plants that inspires all who see.
6. That is what Paul is describing in this passage; that is the kind of “*new creature*” we become.
7. But in order to truly appreciate the transformation we undergo as Christians, let us consider exactly what we were before we were changed.

II. “Old Things Have Passed Away”

- A. Paul says that “*old things have passed away.*”
 1. What old things?
 2. When a seed grows into a plant it sheds its shriveled dried up husk so that the new creation can spring forth.
 3. So what “passes away”; what do we shed when we become Christians?
- B. Eph. 2:1-5: “*You were dead in your trespasses and sins.*”
 1. “*You were dead*” means to be without life, to be separated from our life source.
 - a. Concerning our physical bodies our life source is our spirit. But when our spirit leaves the body, when the two become separated, we die: our bodies become dead.
 - b. The same is true of our spiritual bodies.
 - c. When we practice anything that is sinful, whether in our thoughts, our actions, or our words, we sever our souls from our life source which is God!
 - d. Thus it is written in Rom. 3:23, “*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*”
 2. We must acknowledge that sin is the knife that pierces through our spiritual bodies and severs us from our glorious union with God.
 3. Thus Paul said in Eph. 2:1, “*You were dead in trespasses and sins.*”
 4. He goes on to explain what he means in verse 2: The way that we lived our lives caused this separation: “*In which you once walked...*”
 5. We were dead because we once lived the same way that the world lives even now: “*according to the course of the world.*”
 - a. This is why it is so important that strive to longer live and reason the way the world does.
 - b. In verse 2b he says the way we once walked when in the world is one and the same with the way Satan himself walks!: “*The prince of the power of the air.*”
 6. Verse 3: Our very motivation in life was evil through and through: “*...fulfilling the desires of the flesh...*”
 7. In Eph. 2:12-13 he emphasizes our desolate condition.

- a. Take special note of this passage because even now, if we continue in our sins, this is our spiritual condition.
- b. If we have not given our lives to God we are “*Without God in the world.*”

C. 2 Cor. 6:9-11: “*Unrighteous...such were some of you.*”

1. Here Paul shows us the character of those who will not inherit the kingdom of heaven.
2. He warns us to not be deceived because there are people in the world, even some who call themselves Christians, who would have us believe that these things are acceptable.
3. They will try to deceive us into thinking that we can practice these things and still be right with God: But we must not be deceived.
4. “*Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.*”
5. These may seem like terrible things that we would never do, but notice that even covetous (desires someone else’s possessions) and revilers (those who speak evil of others) are just as evil as the rest: and most people are guilty of these.
6. Paul goes on to say in verse 11, “*And such were some of you.*”
7. He uses the past tense because as Christians these things depict that ugly crust that we must shed if have been made new creatures in Christ.

D. In Rom. 5:8-10 we learn that we were enemies of God.

1. As our sins separated us from God they actually caused to be His enemies.
 - a. Why?
 - b. Because sin, or sinfulness, is the very thing that God has been fighting against since the beginning.
 - c. It is the reason Jesus died on the cross, as it says in 1 John 3:8, “*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil*” which is sin and its condemnation.
2. Even if we are Christians, if we choose to continue in our sinful ways; if we choose not to live our lives for Christ, James says, “*Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God?*” (James 4:4).
3. But again, this is what we must cast off, this is what we are made free from, these are the old things that have passed away if we are in Christ.

E. Eph. 4:8: Finally, before Christ, we were captives of Satan.

1. In Eph. 4:8 it says that Jesus led “*captivity captive.*”
2. We learned that He died in order to destroy the works of the devil.
3. One of those works is the captivity that our sins place us in--the condemnation of our souls.
4. But Jesus, having died to free us from our sins, is able to deliver us from that captivity.
5. Therefore it is written in Rom. 6:22, “*But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.*”

6. Therefore, when we obey the gospel, Jesus leads us from our captivity under Satan and we become God's holy possession.
 7. As one nation conquers another and takes its spoils to their homeland, so Jesus has conquered Satan and taken the spoils, our souls, as His own possession.
 8. Freeing us from the old things and giving us a new and glorious life.
- F. It was for this reason that Paul wrote, "*Old things have passed away.*"
1. For all that we have described here are "old things:" the kind of lives we lived, the way we thought, our motivation and who we served, and the condemnation we were under have all passed away.
 2. But behold, since the old things have passed away...

III. "All Things Have Become New."

- A. Though we were on this earth as dead, separated from our God, we are now alive because of the blood of Jesus Christ: **Eph. 2:4-6**
1. "*But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), (WATCH IT NOW!) and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*"
 2. For what greater gift can we ask than this?
 3. God has shown us mercy when we did not deserve mercy; He has freely given us His love when we did not deserve His love.
 4. He has given us life when we deserved death because of our evil ways.
 5. He has "*raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places*"!!!!
 6. Imagine that in Christ, as a new creation, your life is sealed in heaven so long as you are faithful to Him.
 - a. You have been raised up by the power of God and have been given a place in heaven!
 - b. Does that not motivate you; does it not drive you to cast off your sins?
 - c. Does it not cause you to want to put off anything in this life that hinders your service to God?
 - d. But this is not all, for...
- B. Though we were unrighteous because of the kind of lives we once lived, as we read in **1 Cor. 6:9-11**, we have been washed of that old life and have been made clean, pure, and holy.
1. Therefore Paul wrote, "*And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*"
 2. Old things have passed away because, like filth on the body, Jesus cleanses us of the stain caused by our sins.
 3. With His blood He sanctifies us. That is to say, He makes us holy and separate from the world and sets us apart specifically for God to use in His kingdom.
 4. Therefore we must ask ourselves this, have we been living as a people separated from our old ways and committed to serving God?
 5. Does that describe you? Have you put on the new life that Jesus offered in His death or are you living the same way you lived before you were converted?

6. The point we must learn from this is that just as Jesus washes us, sanctifies us, and justifies us, we must take the initiative and live the way He wants us to live. If we do not, His sacrifice is worthless to our lives!
 7. Are you striving to put on the new things that Jesus offers?
- C. Finally, though we were enemies we have been brought near to our God in a relationship that is closer than we can imagine.
1. If we are in Christ, no longer are we called enemies, but...
 - a. “*Friends*”: John 15:13-14 – We become His friends when we are obedient to His commandments!
 - b. “*Children of God*”: 1 John 3:1
 - c. “*Servants*”: 1 Pet. 4:10.
 - d. “*Kings and Priests*”: as those who offer up worship to God and are conquerors through Christ Jesus—Rev. 1:6.
 2. These are the new things we have in Christ.
 3. But it is possible to give it all up.
 4. As we read early in James 4:4, if we choose to live as the world, to value the things of the world over the things of God and to allow the world to define the kind of lives we live, then none of these things can belong to us.
 5. But if we are willing to submit to the conclusion Paul made in 1 Cor. 5:15 (since Christ died for me I will give my life for Him), then we can be new creatures in Christ; we can receive all of these gifts.
 6. What is your decision?

Conclusion

1. 1 Cor. 5:20: “*Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.*”
2. This entreaty is directed to all of us.
 - a. Paul is pleading with us that we turn and live the kind of life Jesus Christ has prepared for us.
 - b. We have just seen the new life that we can have in Christ and Paul is pleading with us to receive it by turning to God.
3. Are you willing to be reconciled to God? Do you wish to live this new life which is possible only through the blood of Jesus Christ?
 - a. To be free from your old life of sin,
 - b. To live a new life full of meaning, of purpose, and of freedom from the wickedness and condemnation of sin?
4. Then obey the gospel today! There is no greater treasure on this earth than the freedom that we have just described and it is available to you if you are willing.
5. Will you come?

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