

A New Creation

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A NEW CREATION / Creation; New Creation / 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Through Jesus, God makes us a new creation – but not just us! God makes everything new and entrusts us to take action that it might be so.

Focus Statement

- Through Jesus, God makes us a new creation –
 - but not just us!
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Things to Consider

- Easter people are those who see what others don't see.
 - They grab hold of the new life, the hope, where others may not see anything out of the ordinary.
- They are the ones who announced the beginning of God's new creation,
 - compelled to serve and love others because they had first known the love of God in Jesus.
- How well are we, as a church,
 - announcing God's new creation in word, action, and how we live our lives?
- Maybe we have had a hard time letting go of the old or embracing the new.
 - Maybe we are held back by fears of what change or new life will look like and mean?
- Maybe we are content to embrace new life inwardly,
 - but there is a disconnect when it comes to living it out,

- taking on our responsibility to “become the righteousness of God” in the world for others.
- Or, maybe we just need to hear again the good news
 - that we are both recipients and ambassadors of Jesus’ new creation,
 - a creation whose breadth we often underestimate.

What Scripture Says

- God has brought about a new creation through Jesus—
 - a continuous and ongoing process,
 - not confined to the past.
 - This transformation is happening, has happened, and will continue to happen when we are "in Christ" ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)).
 - When we abide in Christ today,
 - we receive both blessings and responsibility.
 - A couple of weeks ago we talked about how God blessed humankind with abundant provision
 - *and* gave us a special responsibility of stewardship (providing for and sustaining the earth) at creation.
 - Now, as we are made *new creations*, so again do we receive blessing and responsibility through Christ.
- So let’s look at the **Blessing** we receive:
 - Through Jesus, our relationship with God has been reconciled
 - Paul writes in [2 Corinthians 5:18](#) “18 And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him.”
 - In other words, Jesus has taken charge of our relationship with God,
 - and it originates from God's love.

- God’s love for the world finds its fulfillment in Jesus
 - as we see in [John 3:16](#), in which Jesus teaches us
 - “For this is how God loved the world:
 - He gave his one and only Son,
 - so that everyone who believes in him
 - will not perish
 - but have eternal life.”
 - He is the embodiment and revelation of God's love.
 - Through Jesus,
 - God fulfills God’s freely-taken responsibility to be our creator, redeemer, and sustainer,
 - despite our falling away.
- [2 Corinthians 5:17](#) “17 This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!”
- As we are “made new people,”
 - refashioned in Christ,
 - the old life is gone; a new life has begun!” (verse 17).
- What does this mean?
 - Think of who you were without Christ....
 - Think of the sins you struggle with...
 - Perhaps you struggle with anger, insecurities, vanity, addiction, you name it....
 - Who were we before Christ came into your life...
 - Those things don’t all just disappear overnight,
 - But Christ has sparked a new Creation in you...

- Where you begin to look more like Christ and less like your old self with your old hangups.
 - Even the desire to change comes from our relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Our relationship with Christ begins to change us at every level...
 - Not just in the realm of our sins and hangups.
 - It changes how we look at other people,
 - who and what we prioritize,
 - The disciplines we practice.
 - The way in which we behave and carry ourselves.
 - How we use the resources we have.
 - On EVERY LEVEL.
- Which brings us to our **Responsibility**:
 - The passage talks about our responsibility in this “new creation” several times.
 - Christ “has given us the ministry of reconciliation,” as we see in v.18
 - In verse 19, Christ “entrust[s] the message of reconciliation to us,”
 - we are called “ambassadors for Christ” in v. 20,
 - and in Jesus, “we might become the righteousness of God,” as we see in v. 21.
 - Just as, through Jesus, God took on the responsibility of reconciling and renewing our relationship to God,
 - so too does this responsibility extend to us.
 - As followers of Christ, we are at the heart of a broken world that yearns for God, its creator.
 - The world – including humanity, animals, birds, fish, habitats, all of creation –

- needs God, and God has made Christians aware of the responsibility we carry to represent God to the world.
- Our power lies in the transformative work that Christ has accomplished.
 - When we embrace this good news as our own responsibility, we begin to see the world we inhabit in a new light.
- Just as God's responsibility finds fulfillment in Jesus,
 - our responsibility is to work towards reconciling and restoring the world to God.
 - As ambassadors of Christ, we carry the message of reconciliation and actively participate in God's salvation work in the world.
 - This salvation is for humanity – but not just humanity – it is for all God's creation.
 - Through Christ, we have been entrusted with the task of being agents of love, hope, peace, and healing
 - in a broken world,
 - and in doing so, we bring God's kingdom come.

What This Means for You

- Just as, through Jesus, the old passes away and the new is created in us as individuals and communities,
 - what are some old (or sinful) ways of relating to our environment and the creatures in it that must “pass away” for the new?
- Let me Invite you all, new and more experienced disciples alike, to consider how God is shaping you into a new creation.
 - What new thing is God doing in your lives?
 - What new thing is God encouraging them to take on?
 - As we are made new in Christ, God is shaping us to meet specific needs in our communities and in the world.

- How can we become ministers of “new creation” in and to our environment?
- Let me stress that a new creation begins in each of us,
 - through Jesus,
 - but that it doesn’t stop in or with us.
 - Through us, that a hurting world learns of its need for God.
 - And it is through us that God brings about a new creation.

What This Means for Us

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, “The church is the church only when it exists for others,” (*Letters and Papers from Prison*).
- Let me ask this, is our church existing for others?
 - For Instance, why do we do the ministries we do?
 - Is it to get more members, to become a more active-looking church, to fill the pews?
 - Or are we existing to fill and serve people’s needs and to bring them to our Lord Jesus Christ?
 - What is our end goal?
 - Is it self-centered or people-centered?
 - I think when you reflect on our church we can see both areas where we can still grow even more people-centered...
 - And yet, we are people-centered here.
 - Treasures of hope helps support our ministries, but we also give stuff away to people who are in need and have minimal resources.
 - Our on-going support of the Weekend Bag Program is 100% people focused.

- As are our Potluck Suppers. Our hosting of the Boy Scouts.
 - Our serving at Manna House...the list goes on.
- Our responsibility in and to the world is not merely individual,
 - it's a shared responsibility for all of us.
 - And this responsibility doesn't only include humans; it extends to all of God's creation.
- What is our responsibility, as a congregation, to God's ongoing creation?
 - For me, personally, I am going to continue to do my part in lowering my carbon footprint and eating sustainably.
 - As a vegan, this last part is really important to me because I realize that food waste,
 - and supporting too many processed foods,
 - does real damage not only to my health, but to the amount healthy, whole, sustainable food that is available to the rest of the world.
 - I will also be continuing to lead in a way that promotes eco-consciousness.
 - For education is key to change.
- Friends, if together we all do our part, the impact will be significant.
 - We are called to all recognize our special responsibility as caretakers to all God created
 - And to do our part in heralding in THE New Creation. Amen? Amen.