

“A New Creation in Christ”
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. Last week, we were looking at the great price Jesus paid to save you:
 - a. The One who was infinitely holy and sinless, the Son of God, who became the spotless and blameless lamb of God, also became sin that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.
 - b. He didn't become guilty of having committed our sins, but He took our debt to God's justice, so that God demanded payment from Him on our behalf, and Jesus paid our penalty through His sufferings on the cross.
 - c. This is what Jesus did for you, if you are trusting Him this evening.
2. We've already seen how this should make a difference in our lives:
 - a. By His purchasing the Spirit's work in our lives, we should become more like Jesus.
 - b. But our hearts should also be moved by His example, because of the sacrifice He made for us, to give ourselves more to Him.
 - (i) The Spirit directs our attention to what God has done for us in Christ.
 - (ii) He doesn't just create love in our hearts, but puts God's love in front of our eyes and moves our hearts by that love so that we will do what He calls us to do out of love.
 - (iii) He causes us to look at the bleeding, dying love of Christ on the cross; to see His suffering and to know that His suffering was for us.
 - (iv) How can we not be moved by such love?

B. Preview.

1. This evening, we see another picture of infinite love to move us to pursue a godly life that is honoring to the Lord, and that is in what Jesus has provided for us through His Work: a new hope based on a new life He gives us in place of the life we've destroyed – a new beginning that prepares us for an eternity in a new world that is filled with God's love.
 - a. When Christ became sin for us, He not only made us righteous, He also made us part of a new creation.
 - b. We are new creatures – as to our nature – we have a new beginning – as far as our past sins – and we have a new destination – no longer towards hell, but towards the new creation: the new heavens and the new earth.
2. Let's consider two things:
 - a. First, through faith in Christ we have become new creatures.
 - b. And second, the evidence that we have become new.

II. Sermon.

- A. First, let's consider that through faith in Christ, we have become new creatures.
1. This means first that we have become a part of the New Creation.
 - a. When Adam sinned, he brought a curse on the entire Creation.
 - (i) God saw all He had made, and it was very good (Gen. 1:31). But when Adam and Eve listened to the devil and disobeyed God, it was no longer good: Paul writes, "For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now" (Rom. 8:20-22).
 - (ii) This curse also included all mankind: "Through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners" (5:19).
 - b. Jesus came to reverse this curse:
 - (i) He came to redeem the Creation:
 - (a) "For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven" (Col. 1:19-20).
 - (b) This is why when the present heavens and earth are destroyed in His judgment, He will purify and reconstitute them into a new heavens and earth, where we will dwell forever, without sin: Peter writes, "Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells" (2 Pet. 3:11-13).
 - (ii) Not only has He reversed the curse on the creation, but also on us, that we might be part of that new creation.
 - (a) "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:13-14).
 - (b) Paul tells us we are new creatures in Christ.
 - (iii) This is something that is already true of us in Christ – in principle – but something we will see fully when He returns.
 - (a) Paul tells us in Ephesians 2 that we are already perfected and seated with Him in the heavenlies: He has "made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (vv. 5-7).

- (b) But John writes we won't actually see these things happen until He returns, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is" (1 John 3:2).

2. We are not only a part of the new creation in principle, the Lord has already begun to transform us by His power to prepare us to be part of that new world. That's why John goes on to say: "And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (v. 3).

- a. The Lord has made us into something new, something we've never been before, like Jesus Christ.
 - (i) The only human beings who were ever close to what we are in Christ were Adam and Eve when they were first created: they were perfect, but they were not in Christ, clothed with His perfection and standing before God.
 - (ii) We've never been perfect, and before our conversion, we had never been in Christ.
- b. But now He has given us a new nature in Christ.
 - (i) Christ is now living in us by His Spirit: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Eph. 2:20).
 - (ii) The old self has been put to death: "Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal. 5:24).
 - (iii) And the new self is alive and growing: "Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him" (Col. 3:9-10).
 - (iv) We have become new creatures in Christ in preparation to enter the new world Christ has created.
- c. And along with this, He has given us a fresh start:
 - (i) Christ has taken away our sins that would have damned our souls forever in hell:
 - (a) "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12-13).
 - (b) "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy" (Jude 1:24).
 - (ii) And He has given us His righteousness to open the door to heaven:

- (a) In Christ, we have an alien righteousness imputed to us: “that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith” (Phil. 3:9).
- (b) God accepts us now as though we are His Son.

B. Second, let’s consider for a moment two evidences that we have become new.

1. The first is the removal of a guilty conscience (subjectively).
 - a. The sense that your sins have been removed in Christ.
 - (i) Anything short of full atonement leaves a measure of guilt: “For the Law, since it has *only* a shadow of the good things to come *and* not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? But in those *sacrifices* there is a reminder of sins year by year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (Heb. 10:1-4).
 - (ii) But through Christ’s atonement, you can know that God is satisfied and that your sins are removed: “Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God; waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified” (vv. 11-14).
 - b. The witness of the Spirit that you have been redeemed and that you are a child of God: “For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*” (Rom. 8:15-17).
 - c. The peace and joy that come from knowing these things are true: “For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17).
2. And the second is the visible power of the new creation working itself out in our lives (objectively).
 - a. The putting off of the old man and mortifying our sins:
 - (i) “For if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Rom. 8:13).
 - (ii) Which means no longer thinking, desiring, speaking or acting the way we did before; but cutting off the offending hands and plucking out the offending eyes.

- b. And putting on Christ and the vivifying of righteousness.
 - (i) “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16).
 - (ii) “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts” (Rom. 13:14).
 - (iii) It means doing these things from within, and not because someone is forcing us do to them; doing them because we want to: we want to be like Christ, follow Him; and not out of a fear of hell.
 - (iv) Jesus said, “First clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also” (Matt. 23:26).
 - (v) This is how we can know we’re part of the new creation.
- 3. Finally, how can we become a part of the new creation if we’re not? How can we want to clean out our hearts so as to become clean on the outside?
 - a. We only can through faith in Christ. He alone has the power to renew our hearts.
 - b. If you believe on Him, He will cleanse you, give you His righteousness, give you His Spirit and make you a new creature bound for the renewed creation.
 - c. And so again the Lord urges you through His Word, if you haven’t already believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, do so now and you will be saved. Amen.