

Remnant Life Church
April 29, 2018
A New Beginning
2 Cor 5:16-21

- Most often this type of sermon is preached in early January.
- Why do we limit this thinking to one of the dreariest months of the year?
- Talking about new beginnings should be done in the spring

How does this relate to baptism as we anticipate our first one together next week?

Review:

- Baptism is a public declaration of your faith in Jesus Christ and your desire to live your life for Him
- It is a joining with Him, symbolically in His death, burial, and resurrection
- It is a powerful weapon against satan and his desire to maintain a place in your life
 - How is he able to do that most often?
 - Our failures, our weaknesses, our past, our sin
- Baptism is about a new beginning

2 Cor 5:16-21 - So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin^[b] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Recognize the power of verse 17 in three parts

- “...if anyone is in Christ”
 - Does not matter your nationality, status, wealth, position, race, or intelligence
 - ANYONE in Christ
 - Not in themselves, or religion, or intellect, or works – IN CHRIST
- The new creation or new creature – a term used by rabbis when sins had been forgiven
- “...the old has gone” – what was Paul specifically referring to?
 - To the Jews – their prejudice against Christianity and their attachment to rituals, rites, and ceremonies and the pride that came with that history
 - To the Gentiles – their attachment to idols and their belief in their own words to save them
 - To any and every one – envy, pride, jealousy, the love of sin
- “...the new is here”
 - Not turned over a new leaf
 - Not rehabilitated
 - Not reformed

- But made new – REGENERATED or TRANSFORMED
- **What specifically has been made new?**
 - Everything about us!
 - We have a new view of Christ
 - From prophet to savior
 - From historical figure to friend
 - From a great man to God
 - We have a new view of the people around us
 - We have a new view of other Christians
 - The ugliness of church division
 - Born out of pride
 - This is about change NOT perfection
 - We are changed and will continue to change
 - Satan will want to try and discourage you when old habits and issues show themselves again
 - We are always in the process of ongoing changing (**Phil 2:12**)
 - this does not give us license or permission to fail
 - only that we must confess it, get back up, and MOVE FORWARD
 - As a sinner saved by grace, I am witness to the life-changing power of God's love
 - **Gal 3:28** - *There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*
 - Paul was writing this when he was addressing divisions within the church in Galacia
 - This has never been truer than it is today
 - It impacts every area of my life
 - Because of the transformation that has taken place I have a new view of my value system, my relationships, my entire philosophy of life

Finally, what is the result?

- The lies of the enemy that blind us are removed and I now see the world through the eyes of the love that we ourselves have been given
- Our values, desires, and satisfactions change
 - St. Augustine was a theologian who lived in 4th century northern Africa
 - His writings and work are said to be at the foundation of Western Christianity and philosophy
 - Before becoming a celibate monk, he lived a wild life as a young man fathering a child with a woman who he had a 15- year affair with
 - Written about him... "In his younger years he had indulged in great sins. After his conversion he met a woman who had been the sharer of many of his wicked follies. Upon seeing him she had approached him winningly and said, "Augustine," but he turned and ran away from her as fast as he could. She called after him, "Augustine, it is I". He stopped, turned and said to her "But it is not I. The old Augustine is dead, and I am a new creature in Christ Jesus!"

IMPOTANT - This transformation is not of our doing!

- Charles Swindoll - “We can’t don this new wardrobe ourselves any more than a caterpillar can clip on a set of wings and call itself a butterfly. An inward transformation must take place.”
- What was done for us to enable this transformation to take place?
 - It is a ministry of reconciliation
 - **Vss 18-19** - All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.