

made new 2 Corinthians 5:17

MPS: Jesus makes people new to live as Christ-followers.

OBJ: Every person should believe in Jesus to be made new for three reasons.

INTRO

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 2 Cor 5:17

<< a STORY of “new” >>

Paul provides a concise statement of what salvation means for every person who places their faith in Jesus. This is much more than an analogy to draw our understanding from. “*New creation*” is God’s provision of a new reality in Jesus Christ for us to live in.

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TRANS Let’s breakdown the verse to gain greater understanding.

Therefore

As Paul begins this section in 2 Corinthians 5, we need to know what he draws from. He begins by explaining the work of Christians in the world. We are ministers of a new covenant. (2 Cor 3) The gospel is the light of God in Jesus Christ that shines in the world’s darkness through our temporary, afflicted bodies in order to demonstrate God’s true power. (2 Cor 4) Christians are not ruled by the realities of this world because it is not our eternal home. (2 Cor 5:1-10)

Beginning in 2 Corinthians 5:11, Paul defines four Christian convictions based on this new reality. (2 Cor 5:11-21) Christians persuade others to trust in Jesus, compelled by His love. Christians view (believe about) other people differently, in light of Jesus, because we see Jesus differently. *Christians hold that Jesus makes people new, not just better.* Our role in this world is as God’s ambassadors for reconciliation. *The gospel of Jesus Christ changes everything for the person whose been made new by Him.*

TRANS I want to focus on that third conviction that defines what we believe happens to us by faith in Jesus.

...if anyone is in Christ...

This phrase refers to the comprehensive person and work of Jesus Christ. In order to understand what this phrase means, we must know what “*in Christ*” means. Several key terms help us understand what Christ has done for us.

Hebrews 9:24-28 provides explanation of Jesus’ work for us before God.

For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. Hebrews 9:24-28

Jesus became a substitutionary atonement before God to put away our sin and save us. God offered Jesus as a sacrifice of payment, a propitiation, for our sin. In His sacrifice, Jesus consumed God’s wrath toward sin, showed God’s

righteousness, providing the foundation for His mercy toward us, and demonstrates God's love for us, that Jesus, in His sacrifice, might be received by faith. (Rom 3:25; Heb 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 1 John 4:10; see also 1 Peter 3:18) **God brought salvation through Jesus as a substitutionary sacrifice that can only be received by faith.**

Jesus provides a complete salvation by faith. Five additional terms describe in fuller detail what Jesus has done for us as our substitutionary atonement.

Jesus **rescues** from sin's eternal condemnation. (Col 1:13)

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son **Col 1:13**

Jesus **ransoms** us from sin's debt that we could not pay. (Rev 5:9)

And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation" **Rev 5:9**

Jesus **redeems** our lives, restoring our "glory value" to honor and glorify God. (Col 1:14; Titus 2:14)

in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. **Col 1:14**

who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and

to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. **Titus 2:14**

Jesus **reconciles** us with the Father to be adopted as His children, co-heirs with Christ (Rom 8:15-17; 2 Cor 5:18)

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation **2 Cor 5:18**

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!... and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him." **Rom 8:15, 17**

Jesus **redefines** the purpose of our life to live "in, but not of" the world. (2 Cor 5:20)

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.

We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. **2 Cor 5:20**

Once we know what Jesus has done, we must understand how we receive His work. God provided salvation in Jesus Christ as a free gift, not to be earned or achieved, but received. (see also Eph 2:8,9) Salvation can only be received by faith in Jesus's saving work. **When we place our faith in Jesus, we enter into His death for us that we might receive His life in us.**

the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. **Rom 3:22-25**

TRANS Once we know what it means to be "in Christ", placing our faith in Jesus to enter into His death and receive His life of righteousness and peace, we must ask, "what does it mean to be made a "new creation?"

...he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come.

Made a new creation by faith in Jesus fulfills God's new covenant promise. An Old Testament passage explains what it means to be a new creation. (Ez 36:25-27; see also Jer 32:36f; Ez 11:19-20)

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your

flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. Ez 36:25-27

Two essentials define this “made new” status; a new heart and a new Spirit.

Luke characterizes the new Christians with the distinct characteristic of God’s new covenant in Jesus.

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, Acts 4:32

Paul demonstrates the reality of this new covenant in Jesus among the Christians in Corinth.

And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. 2 Cor 3:3

When we place our faith in Jesus, we receive a new heart to know God and His Holy Spirit lives within us. We cannot know or obey God in our own strength or ability. But we don’t have to. **Salvation is the transformation of our whole being, our identity and who we are.** We are not the same before God. **God changes us from the center, the defining reality of our being.** Holy Spirit that now lives in our new heart illumines us to God’s ways, empowers us to obey, and guide us every step of the way. **Christians are made new to live in Jesus’ power by Holy Spirit’s presence within us.**

One final understanding of “made new” is essential. When the new comes, the old passes away. **What is meant by “old”?** That which has been replaced, the old heart and old controlling spirit, has gone out of existence; the old is no more because the new is now here. ‘Who’ and ‘what’ we were before Jesus saved us has now passed away. “The new has come” means something completely different has come into existence. There is a new Lord over the kingdom. **“Made new” is true when by faith we enter into Jesus’ death for us and life in us.**

Q? Have you been made new by faith in Jesus?

Q? Has the old passed, and the new come?

Q? Is there a new Lord ruling on the throne of your life?

OBJ: With this understanding of what it means to be made new as a Christian, I offer **three reasons why every person should believe in Jesus to be ‘made new’.**

Reason #1: Believe in Jesus because only Jesus makes you new. 2 Cor 5:17

Religion, philosophy and other human effort may make you better, and that’s not necessarily bad, but only Jesus makes you new. Religion will teach you a lot about God. Philosophy can help you think more deeply, or not, about things similar to God. But when religion, philosophy and every other effort has finished all that it can offer, one glaring truth remains. **You must be made new to know God.**

The word for “new” [GR: *kainos*] in 2 Corinthians 5:17 is used forty-two times in the New Testament. Thirty-nine of those uses hold a definition of “original and of a kind not seen before”. Three uses define the word as “fresh” (Matt 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:38) as they record the same teaching by Jesus that concludes in this way; *“but new wine is put into fresh wineskin, and so both are preserved.”* (Matt 9:17)

ILLUS New wine demands new wineskins. New wine requires new wineskins because the fermentation process causes the wine and skin to expand. New wineskins are flexible, and can expand with the new wine as it ages. Old wineskins grow hard, dry and brittle, not allowing for the expansion within, and bursting in the process, ruining the wine. Only new wineskin can handle new wine, that can then age and become aged wine.

Pouring new wine into old wineskins is like trying to obey and satisfy the whole demand of the law in one’s own strength. You are damned, destroyed and dead before you even begin. It never works. It’s like trying to live in obedience to Jesus out

of 'sheer force of will', 'high intellect and rationale' or 'deep stirring of feeling or emotion'. Your volitional fortitude, intellectual exercise and emotional stamina will never withstand the weight of the Biblical commands without the living presence of Holy Spirit bringing you back to the gospel to comfort, strengthen, encourage and fill with joy.

We only get God, all his promises, power and glory, when made new by Jesus. Without Jesus, we don't get a little or some; we get none. Religion, philosophy and emotion may make a noticeably better, "moral" you, a smarter, more thoroughly "defended" you, or a more "in-touch" emotional you. And, morality, intellect and emotional health is good. Many people need more and better of all three today. But all are insufficient to satisfy the eternal longing of the soul, and no amount of any one will ever make you new. When you try to cram Jesus or the Bible into your moral-skin, your intellectual-framework, your volitional-striving or your emotional-warmth, you will never hold the pressure it creates. [God's Holy Spirit only inhabits people who have been made new by faith in Jesus.](#)

Believe in Jesus because only Jesus makes you new.

Reason #2: Believe in Jesus because being made new is the only thing that counts. Gal 6:15

"For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." Gal 6:15

This second reason to believe in Jesus strikes close to the first. There is no substitute for being made new. The whole of Galatians establishes that religious conformity (circumcision) can never replace gospel-transformation. [When we, by faith, are crucified with Jesus on His cross, a first love for anything else in this world other than Jesus dies.](#)

Our incessant love for the world and all that it offers holds a strong allure to our hearts. The gospel crushes our allegiance to the world and our love for all that it offers (James 4:4; 1 John 2:15). Everything the world values that grants acceptance, promises love, provides power, allures with fame or fortune is a false hope. [Jesus is our only hope, and in Him alone rests all our love and trust.](#)

ILLUS I was **talking to a college friend** one time about Jesus. (A bit of background that is helpful for this story is that this particular friend had a very nice truck, of which he was very proud.) When I asked, **"what do you think gets a person into heaven?"**, he replied in all seriousness, "well, I'll offer to take Jesus for a ride in my truck."

That answer strikes at the true bent of our idol-prone heart to trust in all that this world offers for our comfort, convenience and anything that alleviates our conscience from condemnation, guilt or shame. We may not always admit it, but we turn to the smallest things in life to salve the deepest hurts. **ILLUS** Shopping-therapy is real. Hence, one reason people live on 110+% of their income. Addiction is real. And the first sign of addiction says, "I can stop any time I want." When we play games with the truth, we are the ones that end up deceived, enslaved and buried in condemnation, shame and guilt.

Outward conformity may suffice for a time, but only inward transformation lasts for eternity. Any time we settle for anything less than the transformation that Jesus gives through the gospel, we trade eternal salvation for a false idol that can only condemn and disappoint us. The only "value" that matters or counts with God is being 'made new'. There is nothing you can do, and nothing you must do, to produce it. You must only repent of your sin, place your faith in Jesus and receive the new he makes in you. [Jesus makes new every person that trusts in Him. And every one that Jesus makes new always counts.](#)

Believe in Jesus because being made new is the only thing that counts.

Reason #3: Believe in Jesus because only Jesus' new is a real new self to put on. Col 3:10; Eph 4:24

"and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." Eph 4:24
"and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator." Col 3:10

The “new” reality Jesus puts within us should be put on daily by us. In salvation, God puts Christ’s righteousness on us in our position before Him. The Christian life in this world is a matter of working out in every affection, inclination, attitude and outward expression the reality of Christ’s righteousness in our daily walk. **The new life that Jesus gives begins the moment we trust Him and brings real change with eternal significance.**

Many look at the Christian life and scoff, thinking, “that sounds like the most boring existence one could imagine”. They look at the Christian life this way is because that’s the way they see Christ. They see Christ that way because their heart and mind are darkened to the light of Jesus, and ruled by another master. But when Christ saves, He rules over a new heart and a mind being renewed.

When Christ rules a life, His truth is most glorious and hopeful to us, by faith. This doesn’t mean we know or understand everything. This doesn’t mean all doubt or questions go away. It does mean that we hold to Him by faith through His Word. Christians who live and walk daily under Jesus’ Lordship don’t believe their new life is because of them. But by faith our eyes, heart and mind are set on Jesus. We calibrate our lives to His Word to walk by Holy Spirit. **Obedience precedes understanding when one lives by faith in Jesus, so that through our ignorance, weakness and phobias His power can be displayed through us. Christians live to give all honor and glory to Jesus.**

This is why, after exhorting the Christians in Colossae regarding their sin, to ‘put to death’, ‘put away’ and ‘put off’, Paul says “*put on the new self*”. This new self has a new heart, and a new inhabiter, Holy Spirit. Paul tells the Galatians, “*If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.*” **Gal 5:25 When Christ is your source of life, Holy Spirit becomes your supply of daily strength.** For every person who trusts in Jesus, there is always a “new you” because of Jesus. **Christian, what are you waiting on to follow Jesus, to walk by the Spirit in faith? Put on the Lord Jesus Christ every day, Christian, the new self filled to overflowing with all the power of God.**

Believe in Jesus because only Jesus’ new is a real new self to put on.

MPS: Jesus makes people new to live as Christ-followers.

CLOSE

Have you been “made new” by Jesus? OR, are you trying to create your own version of the ‘new you’?