

Series: 2 Corinthians
Title: A New Creation
Text: 2 Corinthians 5: 17
Date: August 6, 2017
Place: SGBC, New Jersey (baptism of John Keller)

2 Corinthians 5: 17: Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Today, we are baptizing our brother, John Keller. What an appropriate verse for this occasion!

Proposition: When a sinner is born of God and brought to faith in Christ, he is God's new creation: old things are passed away, behold, all things become new. That is what John is confessing publicly in believer's baptism.

WHAT IS IT TO BE IN CHRIST?

Sinner's do nothing to be "in Christ." It is of God! In eternity—*Eph 1:3: [God the Father] blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

But our text speaks of our experience of God's grace in the new birth and this too is of God: *1 Corinthians 1: 29: That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30: But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

To be in Christ is to have Christ abiding in you so that you are experimentally, mysteriously, vitally, inseparably in Christ.

John 14:20: At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

John 17: 23: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world [of mine elect] may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Today, by believer's baptism, John is confessing publicly that "*of God he is in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto him all!*" He is confessing that God has made him a new creature: that old things are passed away and behold all things are become new.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? A NEW CREATURE

2 Cor 5: 17: Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:

It is to be God's new creation, created by God, without any contribution from the sinner.

Isa 57:19: I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him.

God entrusted creation to Christ his Son—

Colossians 1: 15: Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature [or of all creation] 16: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible,

whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers: all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.”

So just as Christ made all things in the first creation, likewise it is Christ that creates the new creation within a sinner. In the new heaven and new earth, all will be the creation work of Christ Jesus the Lord, the Son of God!

Isa 65:17: For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. 18: But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

Isaiah 43: 19: Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, *and* rivers in the desert. [that is what God does in us—we are the wilderness, the desert] 20: The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: [sinners in whom Christ creates this new creation are beasts and dragons and owls by nature, but Christ says,] because I give waters in the wilderness, *and* rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen. 21: This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.

Being a new creature means the new man within the sinner is an entirely new creation that was not there before, nor is it made of anything that was already there.

Ezekiel 18: 31: Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

But spiritually dead sinners simply cannot do it. We need Christ to do this work within us.

Is 66: 1: Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? 2: For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

Being conceived in sin, we do not have a poor and contrite, spirit only a stony, proud heart by nature. I defined grace to someone recently. They said, “No! I believe in an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth!” I said, “You do realize that is how you will stand before the all-knowing God on the day of judgment?” They said, “Yes, and that is how I want it!” I told them that they are an illustration of human depravity, a stony heart! I know because I once was the same. There is nothing *positive or negative* that we can do in our flesh to makes ourselves a new creation. That is why Paul said,

Galatians 6: 15: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

Christ must send the Holy Spirit and create a new man within these bodies of death and in that new man teach us the gospel of Christ.

John 3: 5: Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6: That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7: Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

Christ illustrated it this way:

Mt 9:16: No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. 17: Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

So he promised...

Eze 11: 19: And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh

We are “*God’s workmanship created in Christ Jesus*” Christ prays the Father, who sends the Holy Spirit, and Christ is formed in you, and we are made *partaker of the divine nature*

1 Pet 1:23: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever... 25...and this is the word whereby the gospel is preached unto you.

So we are at God’s mercy. Unless God is pleased to work this work in a sinner through the gospel, a sinner will never and can never even believe God’s word is God’s word, much less believe the gospel contained in it. A fallen man’s beliefs are a miss-mash, patch-worked, hodge-podge of sinful reasoning, with no foundation in God’s word in truth!

OLD THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY, AND BEHOLD ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW.

Turn to 2 Cor 3 and let’s review from Paul’s own pen what he means by “*old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.*”

When Christ creates us anew, he makes us know the old covenant is passed away, we are NOT saved by our works, but we are under the new covenant of grace—2 *Corinthians* 3: 6: *Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. 7: But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: 8: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? 9: For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. 10: For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. 11: For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.*

For the first time, our old idea of obtaining righteousness by keeping the ten commandments or reforming our life is passed away—*now we rejoice that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.*

Rom 10: 10: For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Romans 3: 31: Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. [through faith in Christ]

All the old ceremonies, priests, holy places, holy days, sabbath days are passed away. Behold, all things in our worship has become new in Christ. He is the one all those old covenant types pictured!

Also, by the new creation, our old bondage of blindness is passed away, we have new liberty to behold Christ in spirit and in truth—2 *Cor* 3: 15: *But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their*

heart. 16: Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. 17: Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18: But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, ...4: 6: For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Just as God our Savior created the first creation, God creates this new creation in his people. Our old bondage of spiritual blindness and darkness is passed away. The Spirit gives new light, new liberty—a new open view with new eyes through faith—we behold the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus.

John 8: 36: If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Before we are created anew, we are *only* the image of fallen Adam. That old man of flesh remains but being *only* an old man of flesh is passed away. Now, the believer also has a new man within, created in the image of Christ—2 Cor 3: 18: *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

God predestinated every chosen child to experience this conformity to Christ:

Ro 8:29: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Christ makes us...

Ephesians 4: 22...put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23: And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24: And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Col 3: 10: And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

Christ is not the new man that is created and renewed within. Indeed, we are told to put on Christ. Indeed, Christ and the new man are one. But the new man is the new image of Christ created within us by Christ. That is important to note: because some say believers are only old sinful flesh with Christ in you. But what part repents and believes?—certainly not the old, sinful flesh. Christ and the new man are inseparably one—but it is in that new man that we personally believe and worship God by God's grace. *"If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness...the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."* (Rom 8: 10, 16) For the first time, everything about your old sinful man becomes repulsive to us. While everything concerning God, his Christ, his salvation, our motives, our faith, our walk becomes entirely new! One day he will quicken our mortal bodies and raise us in his image, in body as well as spirit.

Also, now we use new honesty in declaring God's word, our old deceitfulness is passed away—2 Cor 4: 1: *Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; 2: But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

Furthermore, our old way of glorying in self is passed away; our new way is to glory only in the Lord— 2 Cor 4: 5: *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake...7: But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

Now, in all God's providence in our lives, our old way of looking at things is passed away and all things are become new—2 Cor 4: 18: *While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.* 5: 1: *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens...7: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)* 8: *We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*

Next, our old selfish motive of living for self is passed away, we have a new motive to live unto Christ—2 Cor 5: 14: *For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.* When Christ died, all His members died in Him—his people. We are dead to the law because it has exhausted all its claims upon us when it did so upon Christ. We are dead to sin which lost its damning power over us when Christ our Surety died. Christ our scapegoat took all our sins away so that our sin is passed away before the judgment seat of God. Now, we are risen with Christ at God's right hand, complete in him and by this new creation we live unto him in newness of life, serving in newness of spirit, not in the oldness of the flesh or of the letter.

Gal 2: 20: I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. 21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Lastly, since, we are now constrained by Christ's love to live unto him, our old way of knowing men after the flesh and glorying in appearance is passed away, now we glory in heart knowing one another after the spirit—2 Cor 5: 12 [*he spoke of our old way of*] *...glorying in appearance, and not in heart...16: Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.*

Galatians 6: 12: As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13: For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. 14: But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. 15: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. 16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

We put no confidence in the flesh, in the outward, carnal distinctions that we once thought made us differ

Colossians 3: 10: And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: 11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all. [we are one in Christ!]

So seeing what Paul has been declaring, Paul says in our text 2 Cor 5: 17: *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* 18: *And all things are of God,...*

Brother John, we continue to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ in the inward man the same way we were born again—by Christ through his gospel.

1 Pet 2: 1: Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.

To keep peace among brethren so we can have the gospel preached to us, God says

Col 3: 12: Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13: Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do* ye. 14: And above all these things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 15: And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 16: Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17: And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

When Christ finishes making the last elect a new creation, we shall all see and hear what the apostle John heard when he beheld *new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*:

Rev 21: 3: And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. 4: And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. 5: And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new...6: And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7: He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8: But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Amen!