A New Creation
2 Corinthians 5:17

Objective: Motivate each to actually realize their capacity as new creations.
Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21.
Memory: 2 Corinthians 5:17. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

Introduction:
1. Imagine a young man has just turned 22. He looks around and sees a lot of his friends are parents. It looks “cool” so he starts claiming that he is a “daddy” too. Can you imagine claiming to be a “daddy” and not really being one? How about claiming to be a basketball player without really being one? Such fakes would stand out and soon be obvious. Such hypocrisy or self-deception would soon become apparent to all.
2. Same might be said about being a Christian. Folks are NOT really “Christian” from birth – they are supposed to go through a new birth. They are supposed to be “born again” which involves a dying to self and a living for God in Christ. Christians are supposed to be new creatures or new creations!
3. It is NOT enough to “say” we are “Christian”. If we really are Christians, we need to live the reality of being a new creation.

We need to live the reality of being a new creation. (HOW?)

The sense of the passage, 2 Corinthians 5, is that a new “eon” (a new age) has been instituted by God in Christ, in which we are and will be entirely different. We are not fully there yet. We are being transformed. The new “age” is being ushered in and we need to participate in it if we are really a part of it.

A new creation that has been effected by God, but with which we need to cooperate. God has enabled us, “in Christ”, to BE a new creation, but the new creation needs to be realized and effected by us as well. If we are really a new creation, it must manifest itself in us in a number of ways. As Christians, we must be different than we were.

2 Corinthians 5:17 “… if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” This difference is portrayed most significantly in that

I. I now live by a new spirit.
A. No longer according to the flesh.
   1. Things I have done all my life, things the average person does, I no longer do. I put the “old”, this-worldly self, with its practices to death.
   2. Colossians 3:5-10, “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 5Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 6You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 7But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 8Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 9and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”
   3. I am different than I used to be. Whereas I used to live with a measure of selfishness, covetousness, I have put those away. I now consider others as more important than myself and look not only to my own interests but also to the interests of others with the same attitude as Christ had.
   4. Whereas I used to harbor prejudices and anger, I now strive to be characterized by love, joy, patience, gentleness and self-control!
   5. I have changed! I now love my enemies. I seek to bless those who persecute me. I now seek to overcome evil with good.
   6. I have changed! I used to try to be “worldly”. I now go about with a child-like heart.
   7. I have changed! I actually forgive others when they offend me.
   8. I am being “renewed” in the image of the Creator! But, I need God’s help in this …
B. I earnestly seek purity in life.
   1. So the Spirit of Christ will be the life in me now.
   2. Lord, give me the purity that I need. To be real. To be true to my calling.
3. To live by Your Spirit. For Christ to abide in me.

4. Ephesians 4:22-24, “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

5. With God’s help, I will be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

6. My life will be so different than it was that I will shine like a star in this crooked and depraved generation.

7. No room for pretending. It can’t be just talk. This is far too important for that. I need to be real.

As a Christian, I am a new creation, I am different than I was in part because

II. I now have a new purpose in life.

A. I now live for God.
   1. Period. That is what it is all about.
   2. I was Re-created for the praise of God’s glory.
      a. No longer exist just to work the land.
      b. No longer exist just to make money and get ahead.
      c. No longer exist for this world, this life only.
      d. No longer exist only for me.
   3. If folks claim to be farmers and have no interest in growing crops, it will soon be obvious that they are fake. If folks claim to be Christians who have no concept of what the new creation is about – if they go right on sinning just like they used to, it will soon be obvious that they are fake also. This must not be. The Apostle deals with similar self-deception in Romans 6:1-4, “What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” If I want to have the blessings of the new life, I need to really, genuinely live the purpose of the new life (and not just pretend to.)

4. 2 Corinthians 5:17. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” This must be true. With life’s new purpose. It will be true on my end. God has done his part. I will do mine, so I can look for His help.

B. I now live as a servant and ambassador of God.
   1. This is what we were re-created for!
   2. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, “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 men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.”
   3. As new creations, we are about this same business Christ was about. We are about reconciling people to God.
   4. We are the fullness of Him who fills all in all. We are the body of Christ! Are you really doing what Christ would do? Are you really going where He would go? Are you really reaching out and responding as Christ would?
   5. Do you know what were you created for? Why God sent His Son that you might be born again? Why Christ died that you might have newness of life? Do you know why God’s love is manifest for you and in you? Are you still living in darkness like people of the world, or are you living as a new creation, with a new life, oriented on God-given goals?

2 Corinthians 5:17. “… if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” As a new creation I can see clearly now. I live differently and I live for spiritual things because

III. I see things differently than I used to.

A. No longer from a fleshly standpoint.
   1. Flesh and spirit struggle against each other, but I have made a clear decision. I will follow the spirit. Always.
2. When the flesh says, “pursue that, get some of that, experience that lust-filled thing” but the spirit of God would object, I will follow the spirit.

3. When the flesh urges me to steal or lie or deceive, or to ignore a need in a hurting human, I will ignore the flesh which is already doomed, and live by the spirit of Christ.

4. Life is about spiritual things and Christians strive to see them from a spiritual vantage point.

5. The Apostle relates this in 2 Corinthians 4:18. “So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

6. New creations see things from an eternal and spiritual perspective. In fact, I relate to people differently than I used to because as a new creation...

B. I see human relationships differently than I used to.

1. I live for their sakes, as Christ did.

2. John 13:34-35: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” This we can genuinely do if we people them as Christ sees them.

3. There has been a change wrought in us. We can see souls for their value to God. They are not sex objects. They are not people to be used of feared or to take advantage of.

4. They are spiritual beings living in a physical realm – and generally without a clue. They need God.

5. They are lost and need Christ – who is supposed to be manifest in ME if I am indeed a new creation!

I can live this way with hope and joy and eager expectation because as a new creation.

C. I see that I have nothing to fear.

1. Death has no power. I see that life goes on as it does with Christ who has been raised again.

2. Christians need to be reminded of this occasionally. Paul reminds them in Colossians 3:1-4.

   “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”

3. I am free from guilt. I have been forgiven. (If I am being real about being in Christ)

4. No worries about legalisms. If I am now living by the Spirit, and I am free from the law. Romans 7:6.

   “But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.”

5. I live in comfort and confidence. I am at peace. With joy in my heart, even in the midst of this world’s tragedies because as a new creation, I don’t really live here. It is Christ, Who is life itself, that now lives in me.

So What?

Folks, we need to understand that if we are not living as a new creation, we are not filling the role God created us for. If we are not living as a new creation, we need to ask ourselves whether we are truly “in Christ”, and whether we are truly “saved”.

The appeal this morning is to open yourself to God. Allow and make the appropriate changes. Live as the new creation God has enabled you to be.

Closing Prayer:
A New Creation
2 Corinthians 5:17

Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21
Memory: 2 Corinthians 5:17

“T_i a_i i_ C_; h_ i_ a n_ c_; t_ o_ h_ g_, t_ n_ h_ c_l!”

We need to live the reality of being a new creation.
As Christians, we must be different than we were.

2 Corinthians 5:17
I. I now live by a new spirit.
A. No longer according to the flesh.  Colossians 3:5-10
B. I earnestly seek purity in life.  Ephesians 4:22-24

II. I now have a new purpose in life.
A. I now live for God.  Romans 6:1-4  2 Corinthians 5:17
B. I now live as a servant and ambassador of God.  2 Corinthians 5:18-20

III. I see things differently than I used to.
A. No longer from a fleshly standpoint.  2 Corinthians 4:18
B. I see human relationships differently than I used to.  John 13:34-35
C. I see that I have nothing to fear.  Colossians 3:1-4  Romans 7:6

So What?
Live as the new creation God has enabled you to be.