

A New You For A New Year

2 Corinthians 5:17 (KJV)

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

I. It's Not Too Late And You're Not Too Lost

1. In our text today the Apostle Paul is writing to the Corinthians and telling them that God is able to make all things – **even them** – completely new
2. Corinth was truly a wicked place – *to Corinthianize* – byword for sinning (Las Vegas is known as “sin city”)
3. The church at Corinth was Paul’s “problem church”
4. Largely Gentile – many brought baggage with them into the church
5. Spiritual pride – tongues – alcohol abuse in church at the Agape meals – incest – enemies of Paul – etc
6. Paul declared that even these Corinthians – Gentile and pagans though they were - they could be changed completely – made new by the power of God
7. Paul knew this firsthand (1 Timothy 1:15 - NKJV)
¹⁵ This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.
8. The verse we are focusing on this morning 2 Cor 5:17 (KJV):
¹⁷ Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.
9. Paul is of course talking about the event of salvation – the miracle of spiritual transformation – he was sharing from personal experience – he had been changed completely by his encounter with Jesus Christ
10. What happened to Paul could happen to the Corinthians
11. It can happen to you
12. In 2 Cor 5:14-15 (NKJV) Paul says -
¹⁴ For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; ¹⁵ and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.
13. The good news is for *all* – “*He died for all*”
14. Isaiah 59:1-2 (NRSV)
¹ See, the LORD's hand is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. ² Rather, your iniquities have been barriers between you and

your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

15. The problem with salvation is not God’s ability to save – it’s man’s refusal
16. Isaiah 55:6
⁶ Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.
17. 2 Cor 6:2 reminds us that “now is the day of salvation”
18. Salvation means a “new you” (2 Cor 5:17) – “*if any man is in Christ, they are a new creation; old are passed away; behold, all things are become new*”
19. “The Land of Beginning Again” – first stanza
I wish that there were some wonderful place
Called the Land of Beginning Again,
Where all the mistakes and all our heartaches
And all of our poor selfish grief
Could be dropped like a shabby old coat at the door,
And never be put on again.
20. There is such a place!
21. The prodigal son – “*I will arise and go to my father*” (Lk 15:18)
22. It’s not too late and you’re not too lost . . .
23. There CAN BE a new you for the new year

II. A New Person And a New Purpose

1. 2 Cor 5:18-20 (NKJV)
¹⁸ Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation. ²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.
2. Paul is talking about a new life in Christ
3. A new life means a different life – a transformed life – new focus – intention – purpose – a new reason for existence
4. What ARE we here for?
5. Purpose is a part of identity

6. To be full – complete - we have to know and fulfill our purpose
7. Verses 18-20 tell us several things that relate to our new identity and purpose
 - a. We have been reconciled to God (vs 18)
 - God Himself has done this through Jesus Christ (vs 18)
 - Vs 19 says, “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself”
 - This is Incarnation – Immanuel – God with us – see John 1:1 – God really was IN Christ! –
 - And God in Christ reconciled us to Himself!
 - b. Not only has God reconciled us to Himself, but also - according to vs 18 – He has called all of us into ministry
 - All those who have been reconciled to God are to be involved in ministry! – (see Eph 4:11-12 NKJV)

¹¹ And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ
 - The saints – redeemed – the reconciled – are to be equipped to do the work of the ministry
 - Specifically, Paul says in 2 Cor 5:18 that God has given us the ministry of reconciliation (vs 18b)
 - c. What does “*the ministry of reconciliation*” involve?
 - d. Vs 20 helps us understand this ministry: “*Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ*”
 - e. What does an *ambassador* do?
 - As ambassadors we represent God and His kingdom
 - As ambassadors we are sent by God with authority (Matt 28:18-20)
 - As ambassadors we speak for God - on His behalf (2 Cor 5:19b) – “*as though God were pleading through us*”
 - We all have the ministry of reconciling this rebellious world to a loving God

CONCLUSION:

- ILLUSTRATION:

One spring, before the Civil War, a boy in search of work came to Worthy Taylor’s farm in Ohio. The farmer knew nothing about the boy except that his name was Jim. He gave the boy a job. Jim spent the winter cutting wood, bringing in the cows and making himself very useful around the farm. He ate in the kitchen and slept in the hayloft.

Before the summer was over, Jim had fallen in love with Taylor’s daughter. The father refused to let him marry her because he had no money, no name, and very poor prospects for the future. Though Jim was very disappointed, he honored the refusal of Mr. Taylor, packed his belongings and disappeared.

Thirty-five years later, farmer Taylor was tearing down his barn to build a new, larger barn. While inspecting the old barn before it was torn down, Taylor discovered that on the rafters above the hayloft Jim had carved his full name--James A. Garfield. He was President of the United States.

- People may look at us and think there’s not much hope for us -- no fame, no fortune, no name, and very poor prospects for the future
- But Jesus comes along and says, “I think you would make a good ambassador”