



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

2 Corinthians 5: 16-19

Spring 2025

"A New Creation"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Seth. I want to thank Michael Thompson for standing in for me last week. I had a respiratory problem and he came to my rescue and did an excellent job with an excellent sermon. And we come now to an excellent text in our series in 2 Corinthians. 2 Corinthians 5, verse 16 through 19, which is all about what we just heard from Seth, '*Reconciliation*'.

2 Corinthians 5, beginning with verse 16 through verse 19,

¹⁶Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him in this way* no longer. ¹⁷Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. ¹⁸Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5: 16-19

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word, and bless our time of study in it together. Let's pray.

Father, what a privilege it is to do that; to pray, to come to the throne of grace in time of need and seek Your help, seek Your mercy, with the assurance that You will give it. You invite us to do that at any moment, every moment, to come to You and seek help in time of need; and so we do that for ourselves.

We thank You for the privilege we have of being together, of opening the Word and reading it and spending time considering the meaning of it. And so we pray that You would bless us as we do that, open our hearts to receive the ministry that is here in this text written by Paul, inspired by You, directed by the Holy Spirit; may He open our hearts to understand and act upon the things that are here in this great passage of Scripture.

We are dependent upon You for everything: We're dependent upon You for our insight and understanding of Your revelation, and that we will not grow...apart from this great Word of God that we have in our possession. This is what nourishes our souls; and so we pray You'd nourish us this morning as we consider this text of Scripture. Bless us spiritually. Build us up in the faith.

Father, we thank You for our privilege to be here together, and pray that You would bless us now as we sing our next hymn. Use it to prepare our hearts for a time of study of this great text of Scripture.

Thank You, LORD, for the salvation You have given us in Your Son, and the *reconciliation* that we have experienced through His work on the cross that You achieved and which You are doing through Him and through the Gospel. Now bless us and build us up in the faith, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

(Message) We are told, and we've heard this especially in the past few years, to 'follow the science'. It's not bad advice, but we have to be careful with it because 'the science' is always changing.

In the second century the Egyptian astronomer Ptolemy, determined the earth was fixed...and the center of everything—the sun, moon, stars, and planets revolved around it. The universe is '*geocentric*'...the earth is the center of it all.

That was 'the science' until the 16th century when Copernicus proposed a different model that is '*heliocentric*', with the sun as the center—and the earth, moon, and planets revolving around it. It was shocking. It was, and is, counterintuitive. It was the 'Copernican Revolution'. Reality didn't change, just our perception of it.

And something similar has happened to every believer in Jesus Christ. We see reality differently because we are different. In 2 Corinthians 5, (vs17), Paul calls us, "a new creation", we no longer see ourselves as the center of the universe.

But Christ is, and our lives now revolve around Him. The reason is given in the previous verses of our passage where Paul just taught that, 'because Christ died as our substitute at Calvary, we died.' (vs14). And because He was resurrected, we have been raised to a new life.

From that, Paul draws a conclusion now in verse 16. "Therefore," meaning, 'since every believer in Jesus Christ has died with Christ so that we might no longer live lives for ourselves'... "Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh..." (vs16). In other words, 'The Christian has a completely new perspective, a completely new understanding of the world.' We don't see and judge things "according to the flesh", (according to the unbelieving mind).

The word, "*flesh*", is Paul's usual term for the unregenerate man's condition, values, and behavior. People naturally live for self, and gratifying the flesh—gratifying its desires. It is contrary to a God-centered life.

But since we have 'died with Christ', we are fundamentally different people. We are no longer governed by "the flesh". We have new belief; we have new understanding; our authority is God's revelation...or to put it simply, 'It's the Bible!'

The unbeliever is governed by self-interest and the desire for self-determination; it's often referred to as '*autonomy*'. He, she, is a 'law unto himself.' I often think of a great text of Scripture that illustrates that in Psalm chapter 2, verse 3, where the kings of the earth come together in a kind of conclave, and they resolve, 'Let us break their

fetters apart...’, speaking of the Godhead, ‘...and cast them aside!’ ‘Let us revolt and break away from God and His authority!’ That's man. —That's the natural man.

So he characteristically looks at the world in terms of what he can get from it, and not what he can give to it. He judges people in terms of outward appearances, by money and status, and considers how they might benefit him. He thinks and he acts according to selfish, corrupt motives. (It seems unfair I'm sure to many people: ‘What about all the philanthropists that we have in the world, the good things they've done.’) And it's true; they have.

You think of a man like Andrew Carnegie. (I was just reading about him this morning.) He built 2500 libraries across the nation and across the world....he built *Carnegie Hall*, and did it with his own money. They also had his name on all of that...and they all are a monument to him. (Now, this is not to despise the good things people do—but ultimately, it's not for God's glory unless they're rooted and grounded in Jesus Christ.) But for the natural man; it's not. —It's for self, ultimately.

We all were once like that. But we've been changed; we have a new heart, a new mind, a new perspective. We see people and the world differently because we see Christ differently. Paul says, "...even though we have known Christ according to the flesh...we now know *Him in this way* no longer." (vs16b). That statement, "have known Christ according to the flesh", doesn't mean that Paul met the Lord Jesus and knew Him at some earlier time, (maybe as a student under the tutelage of Gamaliel in Jerusalem... that has been considered).

But these words aren't really referring to that kind of thing. The words, “according to the flesh”, have the same sense here, as it has earlier in the verse, they're consistent...so what Paul meant is, ‘prior to his conversion, his understanding of Jesus was according to wrong standards.’ His conversion transformed his thinking about everything, and specifically and most importantly, about Christ.

Before, he hated Christ—hated Him...persecuted Him. He believed that He was a blasphemer; and that He deserved to die as He did, 'die a cursed man on a tree', according to Deuteronomy 21, verse 23. 'Cursed is every man who hangs on a tree', he (*Paul*), quotes that in the Book of Galatians. (3:13).

But after his conversion on the Damascus road, he realized that Jesus was cursed on the cross, but not for His own guilt, (He had no guilt. He had no sin), He was cursed on the cross for Paul—and for all of His people, (and so it is for all of us). Whatever ideas we had of Christ before our conversion, "according to the flesh" ...all those ideas are gone; and that affects our thinking about everything—the way we look at life and the motives by which we live life.

His, (*Christ's*), love for Paul compelled him, (compelled Paul), to live selflessly—to live for God and to live for others. That's the point that he makes in verse 14, "For the love of Christ controls us..." Not *our* love for Christ; rather, Christ's love *for us* compels us to think and live differently. We've had a 'Copernican revolution.' —Now we live differently because we are different.

That's the next conclusion Paul draws from our having died and risen with Christ; verse 17, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

Every believer is **in Christ**...this is one of Paul's favorite expressions. We are united with Christ in a vital relationship; we have a 'saving connection' to Him. It's what Jesus described, really, in John 15, verses 1 through 5. I say this is one of Paul's favorite expressions, "in Christ", "in Christ Jesus". It goes back to that very passage, in that instruction that Jesus gave His disciples the night He was betrayed...and there is that analogy that is made between a vine and the branches. Jesus is the vine and we, (His followers, those who have believed in Him), are the branches. And just as a branch receives life from the vine and bears fruit through the vine, (along with the life that's transferred to it), so too we have our life from Christ by virtue of being joined to Him, placed 'in Him'. His life is in us, and we are in vital union with Him—with Christ.

And we have that through faith alone; that's when we were joined to Him. We were actually placed "in Him"; and as a result, have all of the blessings He secured for us on the cross. We have security. "The old things passed away..." Paul writes. (vs17b). That refers to a definite moment...the moment of the new birth and faith. And now, 'all is new... forever'. (vs17c). We are always 'in Him'. He is described as our 'Head,' and we are described as 'His body'. The body goes where the head goes; and that means our future is joined to His future; and His glorious inheritance is our glorious inheritance. What He enters into, we will enter into.

Now some reject that. They say, 'We can't lose our salvation—but we can refuse our salvation...we can reject it, and we can leave the Lord.' No!— That's impossible! The love of Christ is too strong to allow that. Paul states that at the end of Romans chapter 8; Nothing at all, "...will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (vs39b). Not death, not life, not the devil—not you. You cannot separate yourself from Him. Nothing can separate us from Him. And the life of Christ within us would never allow such a desire to happen, to occur, (to want to leave Him), that's impossible. We have eternal life.

That itself, defies that whole issue...and explains that whole issue. Can you lose your salvation? Well no! You have eternal life at the moment of faith. It's eternal. And we have in that, "the mind of Christ" in us; (1Cor 2:16); we have His perspective, His desires. That's life transforming; and our lives have been transformed as "new creatures". (vs17).

All of that is communicated to us through the Holy Spirit. All of that and more is summarized in the simple expression, "in Christ". And Paul says that, 'Everyone who is in Christ is a *new creature*', or better perhaps, (at least an alternative to that translation), is "*a new creation*".

That's what God's redemption has done for us. It hasn't merely improved our character, made us better people, moral people; it's made us into new people. We're still in the world, but we're not the same people that we once were. We are now 'round

pegs' and the world is 'a square hole'—we do not fit. It's what Paul describes in Galatians chapter 6, verse 14(b), where he says that, Through Christ, "...the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

After his conversion Paul saw the world differently. He saw it through 'enlightened eyes'; and it lost all of its charm for him. It was no more attractive to Paul than a dead corpse is. He'd been born again—he was no longer Saul of Tarsus, he was no longer the person that he once was...and we are no longer the people we once were. Paul wrote here, "...the old things passed away...". (vs17b). The old prejudices and misconceptions, that we once had, are gone; the enslavements that we were captive to, are ended; the sins that were charged to our account have been erased. "The certificate of death", has been "canceled", as Paul puts it in Colossians 2:14

"...behold,..." Paul says, "...new things have come." (vs17c). That is a **shout** of surprise, I think, when he says, behold; 'Behold! This is an amazing thing! New things have come!'

It's the cry of surprise. It's a cry of triumph, of jubilation...Paul can hardly believe it! Everything is new! We are clean! We are free men and women with a new orientation: We know the truth, and we have new power over the struggles that are ours, new power over sin!

And we could add, 'New things are yet to come!'

We read in Revelation 21, verse 1, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth..." And God says, 'Behold I make all things new.' (Rev 21:5). Now that's the glorious future, when God will, as the Book of Revelation says there in chapter 21, (vs4), (but also earlier in chapter 7), "...will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death...or mourning, or crying, or pain..." That's the future!

Not the present. —But in the present we do have, 'the life of the age to come' ... we have eternal life now, with new vision, new understanding, and new power. Now it doesn't mean that life is now easy; it's not at all. In fact, it's more difficult, in many ways.

We are living as, 'a new creation in this old creation'. This temporary, transient age is the reason for our struggles—we don't fit here; we're different.

Much of this letter, 2 Corinthians, is about the hardships Paul experienced and the trials that we will face. Back in chapter 4, verse 16, he speaks of the, "outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed..." We go through the struggles of age; we go through that...that's part of it.

But then there are just the difficulties that we face through the challenges of this world and the temptations that we have—temptations to sin...this doesn't end with the new birth. We have to deal with the old habits of our life and the prejudices that we may have had in the old life.

Paul elaborates on that in Romans chapter 7, from his own experience and the struggles that continue to go on throughout our life in this world. But when Paul describes the believer as being "a new creation" and say that "new things have come", (vs17), he's not speaking 'ideally', or 'potentially'; it is a fact! It is an accomplished fact; it is now.

So I think there is a simple application here. Paul didn't actually make the application explicitly, but I think this is his point because we find it elsewhere. We find it specifically in Romans chapter 6, verse 11; and there, after five and a half chapters of doctrine, of stating the facts that are true about mankind generally, and God's people specifically, after all of that, Paul then says, (giving his first command in the Book of Romans, chapter 6, the middle of it, verse 11), "Even so..." (in light of all of this, the changes that have occurred to you—your justification and the work of sanctification that's going on), "Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

In other words; 'You are a new creation; the reign of sin has ended in your life and its power over you has been broken.'...And that is true, so he says, 'Reckon that to be true, and live that way!'

And that's the application here: We are "in Christ"; we have supernatural power in our life. We are 'citizens of heaven', as Paul told the Philippians, (3:20); we are, 'heirs

of the kingdom to come.' Every believer in Jesus Christ is, 'more than a conqueror', as Paul would go on to say in Romans chapter 8, verse 37. That's what we are, so we're to consider that to be true, and live like it, in what he now describes us as being: "A new creation."

This doesn't mean life is easy. Again I point that out, (and I probably don't need to say that), you know that life is not easy, and the struggle is not easy. "Reckon yourselves to be dead to sin", (Rom 6:11)...we have to continually do that and cultivate that within our mind that it will be this way to the end. We will struggle in this world, because we don't 'fit' in this world any longer.

But we are to believe that...believe that we're 'different', with different abilities and a new nature—and we are to live it. And we can because Christ's life is in us, transforming us, enabling us. We are 'more than conquerors'!

And all of that is due solely to God's sovereign grace...His grace in our lives. — Paul's language indicates that. He was drawing upon the Book of Genesis, and God's work in the original creation: One of the greatest texts and proofs of God's absolute sovereignty is the first verse of the Bible...from the very start, God stakes His claim on you and me...and on everything. Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Go back to the very beginning, the first nanosecond when there was nothing, and there was God, eternal, self-existent, self-sufficient—and He created everything out of nothing...And then in this earth, (and from all we know), this earth alone, out of all of the planets and galaxies, this earth, He planted life.

The universe didn't create itself, it didn't call itself into being out of nothing. The very notion of a self-originated universe is absurd, (although it may be, 'the science of today'). It was inert; it was impassive; it was passive. The work of God's sovereign hand, all that is, all that we see...the work of His hand.

And it's the same with us. We didn't make ourselves...we didn't make ourselves physically, we didn't make ourselves spiritually...we are the work of God's grace. "For we

are His workmanship,..." (Paul wrote in Ephesians chapter 2, verse 10), "...created in Christ Jesus...":

He made us.

He chose us from all eternity, (if we're believers in Jesus Christ).

He saved us at the cross.

He called us out of death and darkness;

infusing us with life by the Holy Spirit so that we would respond to the Gospel.

Salvation from start to finish is all of God.

So Paul says that in verse 18, "Now all *these* things are from God...". The new birth, the forgiveness of sin, the adoption as sons, and the glory to come...it's all of God. And He has accomplished it all through His Son, Jesus Christ, through whom Paul says, He, God the Father, reconciled us "to Himself." (vs19). Christ reconciled us to the Father.

Reconciliation, (along with *propitiation* and *justification*, and we could add to that *sanctification*)...all of those are the great theological words of the Bible and of salvation—and words that we need to know and understand. *Reconciliation* has to do with restoring a broken relationship. It's very critical here in this passage, and in this chapter: *Reconciliation*. It implies that God and man are estranged from one another; alienated...that something has happened to cause a separation between them, (and that 'something' is sin).

It was an act of full scale rebellion when man took the forbidden fruit in the garden, deliberately broke the one Law that was given to him. One Law, with one prohibition: 'Don't eat from the tree in the middle of the garden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.' (Gen 2:16-17). 'You can have all of these other trees... thousands of trees, bearing fruit—have all of that!... But not this one tree!'

And yet that's the one tree that Adam desired. And he desired it because it was forbidden to him...and he wanted to be like God. He wanted to be his own god. That's *autonomy*. It started there with that one act.

And from that day on, mankind has been at war with God, refusing to submit to His authority. He has, (*man has*), placed himself at the center of the universe, and he lives as 'a law unto himself.'

So, as a result of Adam's sin, (and *the sin nature* that we've *all* inherited from him), mankind is alienated from God—separated from Him and 'hostile toward God'. Those are Paul's words in Romans 8, verse 7; "...hostile toward God...". [And I know people would object to that: 'I'm not hostile toward God!' But of course you are! If you're not submitting to His Son, you are hostile...you are at war with Him.]

And Paul's not alone in saying that. It's what the prophet Isaiah told Israel—Israel, God's chosen people, who were more privileged than any people in all the world... to them Isaiah wrote, "Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God." (Isa 59:2). That's the problem...we're separated from Him, naturally.

What's the resolution? It's certainly not found in man; 'There is none who seeks for God...', the psalmist said, '...not even one seeks for God.' (Psa 53:3-4). So God must seek man if there's to be a resolution and reconciliation. And He did that...He provided 'a mediator', He provided, 'a go-between', He provided 'the umpire' in His Son that brings the two together, who is both God and man, the Lord Jesus Christ.

One of the main differences between Christianity and the religions of the world ...(Now, I'm not student of the religions of the world, and I think they have all kinds of different issues and differences between them...but the basic thing that unites all of them is that, 'man has the ability to join himself to God, to make peace with God, and to be in proper relationship, *if* he just follows, 'These' procedures, 'These' rules.)...so the difference between all of that, (that is in every religion), and Christianity, is that, 'the Christian faith' is how sin is resolved...and how this *reconciliation* is achieved.

There, is the real issue: Men think that, 'They can do it by their *works*, by their *sacrifices*, by their *ceremonies*...their acts of *penance*, as if the blood of a goat could

remove sin; or an act of contrition could satisfy God's justice. That is an exalted view of man's ability, and a low view of God's standard and sin's wickedness.

You've heard me quote Anselm; it's a great quote in which he was dealing with this very issue in a debate...and there Anselm answered his interlocutor with the statement, "You have not yet considered how great the weight of sin is."

That is so much the problem in any theological debate: 'You don't understand how grave this matter is, how grave sin is. The stain is so deep that none of us can remove it. Not our best efforts can wash away the stain of sin.'

Sin is against the infinite God, and it takes a payment of infinite value to remove it. And if man is going to suffer the penalty for it, (i.e., do so on his own), then he must suffer an eternal penalty; and that's no solution...that's punishment; that's judgment.

We cannot make ourselves right with God. That was Job's concern; "...how can a man be in the right before God?" he asks. (Job 9:2). How can a man be just before God?

God must do that. But how!?

Paul says, 'He did it through Christ.' God *reconciled* us to Himself through Christ's sacrifice on the cross, where, as the substitute for sinners, He bore the punishment for our sins in our place.

And God was satisfied with that. Christ said, "It is finished." (Jn 19:30); and the Father acknowledged that. It met all of the demands of His justice, providing a sacrifice of infinite value that could remove an infinite number of sins, and wash out that indelible stain of sin. And He proved that He accepted that sacrifice, (and that truly it was finished and there's nothing more we can do to gain what that death accomplished), by raising Him from the dead—glorified!

In the cross, the psalmist said, "...Righteousness and peace have kissed each other." (Psa 85:10). God is satisfied. He has established peace with men...but He established it at His own expense.

That's Good News! We could have it in no other way; that's the Gospel. And Paul says that God has given to us, "the ministry of reconciliation." (vs18b). He explains that ministry in verse 19; "...namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation."

So, "the ministry of reconciliation", (vs18b), is, "...the word of reconciliation." (vs19b). Christians are only the messengers of it, 'the *declarers* of reconciliation'...not the agents of it. In fact, in the next verse (that we'll consider next week, if I'm still here) [*Laughter*], we are called, "ambassadors for Christ." (vs20).

Ambassadors don't set policy. They don't determine what's going to happen; that's for the king, or the president, or whoever they represent...ambassadors are simply '*messengers*.' And that's what we are. We're not 'the agents of reconciliation'; God is the One who reconciles men to Himself. He bore the cost, and it cost Him dearly, infinitely—the life of His only begotten Son.

But He paid it, not because He needs man. He needs nothing. He is self-sufficient, self-satisfied. He is content in and of Himself. He was in Christ, united with Him in His essence and purpose, to do this very thing—to reconcile the world to Himself...because it's His nature to do that. To *love* and to *forgive*, that's characteristic of the Lord God. "God is love", John tells us. (1Jn 4:8). And so God does it; and to do it takes the initiative to do it—He seeks and saves the lost with a love that is broad enough for the world.

But what does Paul mean by that... "reconciling the world to Himself"? (vs19). We considered this problem a couple of weeks ago. Well certainly, it doesn't mean 'the world' in the sense of *universalism*, with, 'all men without exception having been reconciled and all men will therefore be saved...even the believer with the unbeliever.' We know that can't be; the rest of Scripture denies that.

But Paul speaks of this as a fact, (vs19), he speaks of this as something that is 'accomplished', (not something that is 'potential' or 'conditional'). Reconciliation is real; it is an actual fact; it's happened. Those who are *reconciled* are forgiven. Their sins are

not being imputed or counted against them. Reconciliation insures that. That's the good news; so how do we understand this?

Well Princeton theologian, Benjamin B. Warfield, suggested that 'the world' has a 'cosmic sense' here; it's not just mankind but also the creation, (since the creation also was affected by sin). It was affected by Adam's fall, and that is taught by Paul in passages like Romans 8, verses 19 through 21. That's our hope...and that fits the context here since Paul writes of being, 'a new creation in Christ.' (vs17). So it's certainly true; and that is the ultimate consequence of Paul's atonement—'a new heavens, and a new earth, and a redeemed race.' And the universe is pictured by Paul in Romans 8, as 'anxiously longing' for this...that may be Paul's meaning.

But he sharpens the focus of his statement by adding that God was, "not counting their trespasses against them", (vs19), meaning, 'He has forgiven them'—which can only refer to people, not the inanimate creation. So I'm inclined to think Augustin was right in his interpretation: That Paul is referring to the elect, 'the elect world', but doing it in such a way as to show the breadth of God's grace and forgiveness. It's for all kinds of people: Jew and Gentile alike, male and female alike, slave and free. It is a 'worldwide' salvation; and that is the field in which we labor.

What astonished Paul in all of this is that he, of all people, a former self-righteous Pharisee, a man of the Law, and a persecutor of the Gospel and the church, would be blessed with this ministry...giving this Gospel! He of all people, a fiery (it seems), Pharisee is made the apostle to the Gentiles. —He marveled over that.

But that's grace, and it has been given to all of us. We all have the privilege to tell people, 'They can be reconciled to God and that He has established peace for all those who trust in Christ.'

Jesus told His disciples that they would do greater works than His works; and there's no greater 'work' than the miracle of salvation. We have the privilege of telling others the Gospel, the Good News of God's gift of forgiveness and eternal life. And by giving the Gospel of *reconciliation*, the Holy Spirit brings people to faith in Christ...and makes them "...a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have

come." (vs17). They experience a spiritual, 'Copernican revolution.' Ego is no longer the center of their universe—Christ is. They live for Him, not for self...our lives orbit around His.

Perfectly? No; that's where sanctification comes in. But this is what's been established...our motives change. Maybe before, we were careful about our behavior for fear of punishment; or out of a desire for reward, (there's some wisdom in that).

But now, increasingly, as 'new creatures in Christ' sin/rebellion is something abhorrent. And it becomes increasingly so as we grow in grace and knowledge, and we act to please the Lord, from gratitude—the gratitude that He would save such a sinner as us. And the more we understand Him and the Word of God, the more we understand how grave sin is and how guilty we were...and the greater our gratitude grows.

The goal of life has changed for the born again—from worldly gain and pleasure, to 'glorifying God and enjoying Him forever.' When we become a new creation, we have a new mind and a new destination. No longer perdition, but paradise; that's our future. Our sinful past has been erased—and that's Good News!

There's a story that Dr. Johnson told, that a Christian physician in Edinburgh, W. T. P. Wolston, used to tell about a Scottish doctor, an obstetrician who was on his death bed. So he called for a pastor and told him that he was troubled about his future. He said he wanted 'an encouraging word'. The pastor said, "Doctor, you don't need that. You've been a good man, and a model to the community. You don't need to worry about the future."

But the doctor insisted. "Doesn't the New Testament say something about being born again?" "Yes", the pastor said, "Jesus spoke of that; but you don't need it."

The doctor said, "Pastor, over my life I've brought many infants into the world. And every time one was born I thought, 'Here is a child who has a future and no past.' That's what I need. I'm not as good a man as you think. I have a past I'm not proud of. I need something that will give me a future and cover my past."

We all need that. —And we have that in Christ. Through Him we become “a new creation”; we come to be “in Christ” through faith alone, trusting in Him as God's eternal Son, and our all-sufficient Savior who paid fully for all our sins. If you've not done that—look to Christ.

And you who have, consider yourselves to be what you really are; *reconciled* to God—forgiven of all your sin, a new creation with new thoughts and new abilities. Seek therefore, by God's grace, to live that new life; walk by faith; He blesses that.

(Closing prayer) Father what a great truth it is to sing that great statement, *Amazing Grace*. Grace is amazing; it would save, ‘a wretch like me’.

And that's the testimony of everyone in this world. It's a hated testimony by so many, (it's so offensive to be considered a *wretch*)...and yet, every one of us is, totally undeserving. Rebels against You; and yet, that's who You set Your love upon.

You sent Your Son to save. We give You thanks for that and it's so true that we'll spend the next 10,000 years and 10,000 more...and all eternity praising You for that, and never coming to the end of it—only a greater and greater understanding of it.

We thank You for Your grace. We thank You for Your Son. We thank You for the *reconciliation* we have in Him, and it's in His name we pray.

Now the LORD bless you and keep you;
The LORD make His face shine on you,
And be gracious to you;
The LORD lift up His countenance on you,
And give you peace.

In Christ's name, Amen.

(End of Audio)