

## The New Has Come ... Really!

<sup>1</sup>What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup>By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? <sup>3</sup>Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup>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. – Romans 6:1-4

<sup>1</sup>Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup>Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. <sup>3</sup>For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup>When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

<sup>5</sup>Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature ... – Colossians 3:1-5

... <sup>17</sup>Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! – 2 Corinthians 5:7

Len Sullivan, Tupelo MS, writes:

“In the late 1920s my grandparents married and moved into Grandpa’s old family home. It was a clapboard house with a hall down the middle. In the ‘30s they decided to tear down the old house and build another to be their home for the rest of their lives.

“Much to my grandmother's dismay, many of the materials of the old house were re-used in their new house. They used old facings and doors, and many other pieces of the finishing lumber. Everywhere my grandmother looked, she saw that old house - old doors that wouldn't shut properly, crown molding split and riddled with nail holes, unfinished window trimming. It was a source of grief to her. All her life she longed for a new house.”

After God brings us into His kingdom, we are not the same as we were before. We are new creations. Old ways of living must be dismantled and discarded. God has not only provided eternal salvation, but also, the resources to begin to live in a brand new way now. When we fail to realize this truth, or, when we fail to act upon it, we inevitably fall back into old patterns and perhaps, we even begin to doubt that there is any real newness to be enjoyed this side of heaven.

When Paul speaks of a believer's standing in Christ, he does not speak of the future but of the here and now. We have been raised to new life. Twice in Ephesians, he describes us as already blessed and seated in “in heavenly realms” (1:3; 2:6). We should trust God more regarding what our standing in Christ has already secured for us. Our strength to withstand temptation depends on it. Our capacity to mature depends on it. Our ability to build up others depends on it. Our power together as the church to function as God's light in the world depends on it.

You were dead. Now, you are alive. You were a slave to the flesh. Now, you are free to pursue the image of God. You were blinded by darkness. Now, you have the light of God to illumine your path. All of this is because of the Gospel of Christ. In all these passages (Romans, Colossians, 2 Corinthians, Ephesians), Paul is not preaching to unbelievers, but re-proclaiming the gospel to Christians, reminding them of what is already theirs in Jesus.

May we always endeavor to live up to our calling. May we always trust that God has provided us with the standing and the resources to do that.