

Lesson 7: A New Creature

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[0:00] Amen. It's good to be in the house of the Lord and to dive into his word again tonight. I've handed out a handout and it has kind of a visual aid that goes over what we've been talking about in the ministry of reconciliation.

And we started in the beginning of these lessons in the series talking about the first and second, the two greatest commandments that we are to love God with all of our heart, soul and mind.

And then we're to love our neighbor as ourselves. And so and tonight we're going to talk about what it is to be in Christ and the ministry of reconciliation.

So if you look on the handout I gave and I'll post a link to it on the Web site and also in the podcast, however you're listening, you can you'll be able to find this document that I passed out.

But when we love God with all of our heart, soul and mind, it leads us to salvation. And then when we love our neighbor as ourselves, we've learned that it leads to a life of sacrifice.

[1:09] And there's three elements within that loving God with all your heart, soul and mind. Those are those three elements. When you love God with all of your heart, it leads to a life of praise and worship to God.

It's it's we can see it manifest in our church services. When you love God with all your heart, you just you tend to give him praise.

You tend to be thankful for the things that he that he's done. And then when you love God with all of your soul, it's how we were able to commune with God. God is a spirit and we have a spirit side of us.

We're we're both flesh and spirit, just like Jesus became was God, a spirit which became also flesh. And so that's how we commune with God is through our soul.

And so that's how we grow our relationship with God. When we love God with all of our soul, we are relationship growth with God. Amen. And then when we love God with all of our mind, that's where faith comes in.

[2:11] And it's when we love God with all of our mind, because there's things that we're going to go through in life that we're not going to fully understand. Our mind is not going to be able to comprehend what's going on, why we're going through this or whatever it may be.

There's all sorts of things that come and go in life and it's hard to understand. And so where our understanding ends, that's where faith has to kick in to allow us to continue.

And so when we love God with all of our heart, all of our soul, all of our mind, we we praise and worship God. Our relationship with God grows and our faith grows. And then it will lead us to salvation, because I 100 percent believe that if you love God with all your heart, soul and mind, you're going to want to know what pleases God.

You're going to want to want to read his word and you'll come across verses like Acts 238, where it says to repent and be baptized in Jesus name for the remission of your sins and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

And so that it will lead you to the salvation experience. But that's just one side of the thing. That's only one side of the coin here. There's a second commandment, which the Bible says that's like unto the first.

[3:17] And that is that we are to love our neighbors as ourselves. And if you remember that, if you if you look at that, the most apparent thing in that scripture is that we're to love our neighbors.

But it says to love your neighbor as yourself. So what does it mean to love yourself? And we learned that that has to do with holiness. We understand that we're the temple of God are in God's to dwell in us, especially we've already experienced salvation.

The spirit of Christ dwells inside of us. And so we're a temple of the Holy Ghost. And and we're we're the the the place, the meeting place, the tabernacle is now in us and he is in us. And so we are to take care of the temple and not defile the temple. And that talks a lot about holiness. And God spells out things that he expects from us in that regard in scriptures. Amen. And so that's how we love ourselves is we understand that we're the temple of God and we and we believe in and practice holiness and loving your neighbor as yourself. I mean, it's nice that we understand that we need salvation.

[4:19] It's nice that we understand that's important to love God. It's nice to know that we need to be obedient to Acts 238 so we can end the last day, meet Jesus.

But what about all of our neighbors around us? What about our family? What about our friends? What about our coworkers? And so I don't think we can really say that we love our neighbors as ourselves if we're not as concerned about their salvation as we are about our own.

And if it's not as important to us that they get to see Jesus as it is that we want to see Jesus, then that's not really loving your neighbor as yourself. So that leads to witnessing.

It leads to fulfilling our calling to be witnesses. Witnesses the Bible says that when you receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, that you receive power to be witnesses to all men.

And so the spirit, the Holy Ghost is to allow us to be a witness of God. Amen. And so when you love God with all your heart, soul and mind, it leads you to salvation.

[5:23] When you love God, if you love your neighbor as yourself, it leads you to sacrifice because holiness is a form of sacrifice. Being a witness and being missional in your mind, being on mission, that's a form of sacrifice.

You're sacrificing your life for the sake of God and how he would want you to live in holiness and righteousness. And then also for the sake of your neighbors because you're concerned for their souls.

And so it leads to a life of sacrifice. And so where we end up if we do that is what we call what's called the ministry of reconciliation. Amen.

The ministry of reconciliation. And so let's turn in our Bibles to 2 Corinthians 5, verse 17.

2 Corinthians 5, verse 17. And so it's important to us to understand this idea that we can't just experience salvation and then come and sit on our hands on a church pew for the rest of our existence.

[6:40] That's not really fulfilling the second commandment. We understand that now we have to be witnesses as well, be concerned about our neighbors, live a life of sacrifice. So there's two sides of it.

We really need to understand that because we're going to find that out in the Scripture. And this is kind of where this culminates and what it leads to, these two greatest commandments.

So let's look at this. 2 Corinthians 5, verse 17 and 18. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away.

Behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

Reconciliation. Okay. So we have to remember that the primary thing that you need to be concerned about in your life is, are you ready for the coming of Jesus Christ? I want to be ready.

[7:41] And in order to do that, we need to understand the two greatest commandments. And we need to understand the ministry of reconciliation. It all fits together. That first side of it where we talked about where if you love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, at least to salvation, that's Christ in you.

That's Christ in you. Right? Because you receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, that you receive the spirit of Christ in you. But what we just read here is, therefore, if any man be in Christ.

How is it that we're to be in Christ? We're not able to fill Jesus as he fills us. That's not possible.

And it kind of brings to memory Jesus speaking in Nicodemus. How can a man be born again? How can he enter his mother's womb for the second time?

You know, obviously not. It's kind of an allegory or an example. It's not a literal thing. We're not going to physically be in Christ in the same way that he is in us in that regard.

[8:53] So what does it mean to be in Christ? Because really, that's what it is to be a new creature. It says, therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Okay?

So this is important. This is important to God. And so we need to understand what does it mean to be in Christ? Christ. Okay? So that's what we want to talk about tonight. But we need to be ready for the coming of Jesus.

It's something that can't be shared or passed on. Being prepared for Jesus' return for his church and being a part of that, it's not a secondhand thing that you can get from someone else.

It's not something you can pass on to someone else. It's not a group matter. It's not a couple's matter. It's not a family's matter. It's an individual matter. It is you who has to be responsible for making sure that you are ready to meet Jesus when he returns.

You yourself are going to have to need to have made yourself ready. And you're not going to get to point your fingers at me or anybody else and say, they didn't help me make sure I was ready.

[9 : 58] When that day comes and you meet Jesus and either he's going to accept you or reject you in a sense, if he rejects you, you're not going to get to point fingers.

You yourself are the one that has to ultimately be responsible to ensure you are ready for the return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And so how do we do that? How do we make sure we're ready? How do we make sure we are ready to meet Jesus?

Well, it may not just be as simple as having received the gift of the Holy Ghost and experiencing that plan of salvation. It may not just be as simple as that.

The spirit of Christ in you. It may not just be as simple as that. There's a very critical biblical principle teaching and understanding that not only are we to have Christ in us, but we are to be in Christ.

And say, so what is it to be in Christ? You know, I understand Christ in us. I get that. But what does it mean to be in Christ? In Galatians chapter 2, verse 20, Paul says, I am crucified with Christ.

[11 : 05] Nevertheless, I live. Yet not I. But Christ liveth in me. In 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.

And so Paul is saying, I sacrifice my life and now I don't live for myself. I live for Jesus. And that's really as simple as it is. That's how simple it really is.

A new creature isn't a small term. But it's as simple as that. It's not a simple idea. It's not as simple to be fully understanding this because really a lot of people don't get this and understand what it is to be a new creature.

Okay. What it means to be in Christ and to become a new creature. But it is really simple. It's as simple as just sacrificing your life for the sake of the mission and not living your life for yourself.

It's carrying the cross. Like Jesus said, if you want to be my disciple, you have to pick up a cross and follow him. So it's that second side of it's that second greatest commandment. Okay. It's beyond salvation.

[12 : 13] It's beyond loving God with all your heart, soul, and mind. It's beyond experiencing Acts 2, 38. It's beyond that. It's the next step. It's the next part of that. It's the second half of that, the second commandment that Jesus said is like unto the first, that you're to love your neighbor as yourself.

And that's how you can be in Christ. It's fulfilling the mission. Okay. So let's look at this. If you're in Christ, you're a new creature.

Old things are gone, passed away, and everything is new, and everything is of God. So your old life, your old likings, your old lifestyles, all those things have to go.

They have to be gone. And everything has to be new, and everything has to be of God. It says, and everything is of God. So God becomes the number one.

God becomes the everything. You know, and that's, being a new creature, that's not a small term or a small thing. There has to be a real tangible transformation.

[13 : 13] A real tangible transformation. If you are in Christ, you are a changed person. You're not the same as you were before that time that you weren't in Christ. Receiving Christ in you, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, it's crucial to salvation.

But it doesn't change you into a new creature. It's going to take a little bit more than that. That's what we're talking about. It gives you the power to become a new creature. It gives you the opportunity to have a new nature, but it isn't automatic.

To be in Christ, you have not only received Christ in you, but you choose and succeed in walking away from past sins, past habits, and your old way of life.

You have to succeed in that. You have to choose that and succeed in that. And the Holy Ghost isn't going to drag you down the street towards, you know, the second side of this and being in Christ. It's going to give you convictions. It's going to make you feel guilty, you know, for things that you didn't used to feel guilty for. Maybe when you first came and experienced God and got filled with the Spirit before that, maybe you were addicted to something.

[14:26] And maybe every once in a while you thought about it, you know, it's probably not good because it's not healthy or something like that, you know, to do that with your body or whatever it may be. But when you got the Holy Ghost, when you started putting your mind on God and His Word and finding out what He likes and what He doesn't like and stuff like that, there becomes this conviction.

And you start to, you know, think, I need to stop doing this or whatever it is. And before that, before you had Christ in you, you didn't have the power to say, no, a lot of people do quit smoking or quit drinking or whatever like that.

But what I'm trying to say is as far as sin goes and the vices that can get a grip on you, you really don't have as much power as you might think that you do to say no to those things and to live a sinless life.

And so, but when you have the Holy Ghost, it's not going to automatically change you into and morph you into this new creature. It's going to give you the power to say no.

It's going to give you the power to choose and walk away from that life. But you still have to choose that and you have to succeed in doing that. Walking away from the past sins and habits and the old way of life.

[15:39] And you choose and succeed in getting a fresh start and a new perspective on your life. And then you start to align yourself with biblical and spiritual values, the things that you read in the Word of God.

Once you come to an understanding about what God's Word says, you need to then apply it to your life. That's how you take step after step in that direction. Amen. It's aligning yourself with the biblical and spiritual values that's taught from podiums like this or in your own devotions and time with God. And so, first of all, you're not in Christ if you aren't living a repented life every day. You don't just repent once and, you know, so you can get baptized in Jesus' name and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost and you don't ever have to repent again.

And you really, Paul said, I die daily. What he's saying is I have to repent every single day. That's the Apostle Paul. And he wrote like, what, a third of the New Testament? He was mightily used by God.

And I'm not Apostle Paul. So, if he had to repent at least once a day, I'm probably having to repent like once an hour or something. Right? But, you know, I mean, we have to be real with ourselves and we have to be real with God.

[16:54] And we have to live a repented life day after day after day. We have to check ourselves and do a spiritual welfare check on ourselves and say, you know what?

We messed up today and we need to make sure that we're right with God. The moment you walk in a different direction than the direction God wants you walking in, you're not in Christ. You can't be in Christ and not walking in the direction that Christ wants you to go in.

When you repent, that's what you're doing is you're turning around from the direction you were going and you're going in a new direction. That new direction is with Christ. The moment you stop living a repented life, you're no longer in Christ.

The Bible says in Amos 3 and 3, can two walk together except they be agreed? If you know good and well, God doesn't approve of what you're doing or agree with what you're doing and how you're acting and where you're going in your life and you do it anyway, you're not in Christ.

You're not a new creature and you're certainly not reconciled to God. If you have repented, been baptized in Jesus' name and received the gift of the Holy Ghost, you are to crucify the old you.

[18:09] You have to kill off the old you. You can't let any part of that old man live. Amen. You can't let any part of the old man live. You have to, old things are passed away, all things are new and all things are of God.

You can't have any remnants of that old man, that nature of the old man left in you. And that's the ongoing thing that you have to keep working on and keep doing.

You're not going to arrive on day one, but you have to understand what this is and be working at it to get to that point. Amen. Romans 6 and 5 says, For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, say baptism in Jesus' name.

We shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Baptism in Jesus' name. Baptism in the spirit. Water baptism. Spirit baptism. We're planted together in the likeness of his death.

And if we are in that position, then we will also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

[19 : 24] For he that is dead is freed from sin. See, if you have experienced Acts 2.38, you were freed from sin. So if you continue to sin, that's your decision to do so.

God freed you from that. He freed you from the bonds of sin. And if you continue to sin after you've been repented and been baptized in Jesus' name and received his spirit in you, that was your decision to continue and do that.

Ephesians 4 and 17 says, This I say therefore and testify in the Lord that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart. Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness to work all uncleanness with greediness.

But ye have not so learned Christ. If so be that ye have learned, have heard him, and have been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus, that ye put off concerning the former conversations, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

[20 : 47] And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. So Paul's writing to the Ephesians, telling them that they have to put on, put off the old man and put on the new man.

It's the same thing of being a new creature in Christ. And the new creature you're supposed to be is created in righteousness and holiness.

It says it right there in verse 24, and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Righteousness and true holiness.

And like I said, it's not automatic when you receive Christ in you. It's not automatic. There's an effort that you would have to make and become every day of your life to become that every day of your life.

And so you have to choose to live a life of righteousness and true holiness. And you have to put away the old man and become the new man. Continuing in Ephesians 4, verse 25.

[21 : 54] Wherefore, putting away lying, speaking every man truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. Be angry and sin not.

Let not the sun go down upon your wrath. Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that's in need.

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying. That means building it up or constructing. We learned that last week. That it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Verse 30. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice.

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.

[23 : 02] What do you think would grieve the Holy Spirit of God? So you got Christ in you. What do you think would grieve him? Amen. I'm guessing with the context of these verses that it's not putting away the old man and putting on the new man.

If you don't do that, that might grieve the Spirit of God. Okay. So these are all things that you must do to put on the new man that are not going to be automatic in your life after you receive the Holy Ghost or Christ in you.

If you had anger problems before you received the Holy Ghost, guess what? You're still going to have anger problems after you receive the Holy Ghost. The only difference is now you have the power of God in you to be able to overcome that problem of anger and conquer it once and for all.

But you have to choose to do that. You have to want to do that and you have to choose to do that. And then you have to succeed in doing that. And you can if you have the Spirit of God living in you. Amen. And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Righteousness and true holiness. Holiness is important to God, so it should be important to you.

[24 : 11] It should be important to us. If it's important to God, it should be important to us. If you are worldly, you're not holy. It's that simple. If you have a worldly mind, if you behave in worldly ways, if the world attracts you, if you get excited about the things of the world, you find enjoyment in the world, that's not holiness.

You can't be worldly and holy at the same time. If you enjoy worldly things, you're not holy. And you know what I'm talking about when it comes to holiness. We're not going to go into all that.

Let the Spirit of God direct you in that. But when you feel that, you need to adhere to that. You have a choice and you do have the power to say no to the things of the world if you have Christ in you.

Amen. And to the extent that you say no to the things of the world and put on the new man is to the extent that you're in Christ. So to be in Christ, you are following after the Spirit.

You're walking in the Spirit. Before God put his Spirit in you, he had ordained specific works for you to do in his kingdom. I'm not talking about sound ministries.

[25 : 22] I'm not talking about playing a cajon. I'm not talking about playing the piano. Those things are all nice and good. And we need people of talent and whatnot.

But he had ordained specific works for you to do in his kingdom. And I'm not talking about music ministries or any of those kind of things. I'm talking about what we find in the Word of God.

I'm talking about the ministry of reconciliation. Okay? It's that second part. Loving your neighbor as yourself. Being a witness. Amen. That's where we're going with this. And so before God put his Spirit in you, before you received Christ in you, he had ordained specific works for you to do in his kingdom.

There are specific things God has planned for you to do in his kingdom. Okay? Ephesians 2 and 10. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

He has before ordained, before ordained that we should walk in those good works because we are created in his workmanship. Okay? So how do we know what it is that God has beforehand ordained for us to do for him in his kingdom?

[26 : 38] You see, we know generally that it's to be a witness, seeking to save those that are lost. That's the mission. But how do we, or what more specific ordained works are we to do?

How do we know what that is? And how do we know our specific ordained work is getting done? So what is that specifically ordained work that God created us, within us, to do good works?

What is it? And then how do we get it done? And how do we know we're getting it done? And the only way is to be following after the spirit that is in you.

God's going to, his spirit in you is what's going to lead you and guide you into those good works that he before ordained specifically for you. Okay? He's, that's where his leading and guiding is going to be taking you as an individual member of the body of Christ.

It's going to, he's going to lead you with his spirit. And to the extent that you're following after the spirit that's in you is to the extent that you will begin to understand what those works are and understand if you're getting that work done.

[27 : 49] So listening to that still small voice in you, you know, listening to that Holy Spirit that's within you, that still small voice you get in you when you get the Holy Ghost.

Are you hearing what he's saying? Are you going where he's trying to lead you to go in your life? Or are you ignoring him and doing what you want to do? That's, that's a tough question.

But it's one that we need to answer tonight and every day of our lives. If you're, if you're going on, on your way and doing what you want to do, you're not in Christ and you're not a new creature.

You're not falling after the spirit. To be a new creature, you have to be in Christ. To be in Christ, you have to be doing his good works that he before ordained that you should walk in.

He has a perfect plan laid out for your life, for his kingdom. And every day that passes by that we don't get fully on board and just jump in head first into this thing that God's called us into is just a delay.

[28:50] It's just a delay. Amen. And God can make up the time. God can, can give us days and that we've missed and God can make it work as soon as we want to jump in.

But we need to get encouraged tonight to jump in head first into the kingdom of God and follow after the spirit. Okay. To be a new creature in Christ. John 15 and five.

I am the vine. You're the branches. He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit for without me, you can do nothing. So you are not a creature, a new creature until after you are in Christ.

Jesus had the ministry of reconciliation. And now we have been given that same ministry. If you have the spirit of Christ, you have a calling to be a minister of reconciliation.

You have the spirit of the Lord living inside of you. Then you have been anointed with the same purpose he had. And that is to preach the gospel to the poor.

[29:53] Those that don't have it. The Bible considers you poor if you don't have the gospel. It's not talking about financial wealth. It's not talking about status in life. The when the Bible is talking about being poor in that context, preaching the gospel to the poor.

Poor is the ones that don't have the gospel. I became rich when I learned of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Amen. That's what enriched me.

It has nothing to do with money or status or anything like that. Amen. Luke 4 and 18. The spirit of the Lord is upon me. This is Jesus speaking. The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.

He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. Don't read these verses here and think that it's literally to heal broken hearts and to preach specifically to captives that are in prison and to just heal the blind, to give them physical sight, and to set at liberty those that actually have physical bruises.

[31:13] It's not really, it is that, it can be that for sure, but you need to look at this with your spiritual eyes and read this and understand the spirituality behind this.

This is spiritual speaking here. Okay? The spiritually, heal the spiritual brokenhearted. Heal and preach deliverance, spiritual deliverance to spiritual captives and to recover spiritual sight to the spiritually blind.

That's what he's, that's what the gospel does is it's light. It reveals truth. Amen. And to set at liberty them that are bruised. And then he caps it off in verse 19, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. When you talk about the acceptable year of the Lord, we're talking about when, that day when Jesus returns. So that, we're also to be preaching that. If you've been baptized in the water in Jesus' name, and have been baptized in the Spirit, the Holy Ghost, then you have a calling to heal the brokenhearted, a calling to preach deliverance to the captives, to open the eyes of the blind and set others at liberty that have been bruised.

Amen. If you have the Spirit of Jesus dwelling in you, you have inherited Jesus and his mission, the ministry of reconciliation, that by word and deed, by word and deed, we might aim to bring others into harmony with him.

[32:34] Amen. And if you do that, then you are in Christ. And then, and only then, are you a new creature. Amen. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, I thank you for your word today.

God, I pray, Lord, that it penetrates us. God, that you give us understanding of it. God, I thank you, Lord, for salvation. God, I thank you, Lord, for a burden for the lost. God, I pray, Lord, that you lead us and direct us in these last days, in these last hours that we live in.