

Notes for the Ekklesia Meeting

Sundays @ 10:00 a.m. Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc www.dtminc.org Today's Date: October 11, 2009

Who Am I As A New Person In Christ?

by Dan Trygg

“See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. ⁴ Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. ⁵ You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. ⁶ No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. ⁷ Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; ⁸ the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. ⁹ No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. ¹⁰ By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.”

I John 3:1-10

“... you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, ¹⁰ and have put on the new (*neos*) self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him--”

Colossians 3:9-10

“...one died for all, therefore all died; ¹⁵ and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. ¹⁶ Therefore 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. ¹⁷ Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new (*kainos*) creature; the old things passed away; behold, new (*kainos*) things have come.”

II Corinthians 5:14-17

What Jesus did for us is *incredible!* It is *so* far-reaching and multi-faceted that we cannot begin to grasp the implications. Certainly, **the most clearly understood, and widely taught, aspect of what He accomplished is that He paid for our sins.** Because He took our place on that cross, and took our griefs, our sorrows, and our punishment (Isa. 53; I Cor. 15:3,4; II Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 2:24), it is now possible for those who believe in Him to receive forgiveness of sins through Him (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 22:16; 26:15-18). **The resurrection also demonstrates Jesus' victory over death,** ...not only His personal escape from its clutches, but His triumph over its power on our behalf, as well (Acts 2:24; I Cor. 15:12-58). Not only did He forever remove any charge, accusation, or indictment against us before God (Heb. 7-9; Rom. 8:1,31-39), but **He also wrested the power of condemnation and the fear of death away from the devil himself,** so that he would no longer be able to manipulate us with these tools (Col. 2:13-15; Heb. 2:14,15; Rev. 12:10,11).

Most of this has to do with the removal of the *penalty of sin.* More than that, however, the NT declares that Jesus' death and resurrection dealt with the *power of sin* within our lives. The apostle Paul develops this concept in his letters, pointing to our union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 5:12-6:14). **By putting us to death *with* Jesus, we are able to be set free from our slavery to sin,** the bondage to the Law, and the power of the flesh within our members (Rom. 6-8). **Our resurrection *with* Jesus introduces an entirely new dynamic in our experience, ...i.e., a life lived by the power of the Spirit within us.**

So much of the presentation of the Christian message has focused around the legal aspect of removing the *penalty* for our sin that many of us have not grasped the full significance of what Jesus has accomplished. Jesus has done much more than win the forgiveness of sinners. He has done much more than even empowering us to overcome sin in our present experience. We are much more than "sinners saved by grace". We are "saints" in a much deeper way than most of us can imagine. The apostle John attempts to open up to our understanding a glimpse of the much more expansive reality of what God does for us in Jesus. The apostle Paul also attempts to get at this same underlying reality in his epistles, as well. **The radical message of what the death and resurrection of Jesus has made possible is that *He has made a new "me", i.e., I am a new creature in Christ, a new person.*** I am *not* who I was before. What will be in eternity with God is *not* the same old sinful person, cleaned up and polished with grace. No. **What will be with God in eternity is a *brand new person, a new creation, something that is different in essence and history from my sinful past,*** ...even separate and different from the leadings and thoughts of my sinful *present* experiences, ...indeed, something that is truly incapable of sin, past, present, or future.

There are two different Greek words in the New Testament which are used to describe us as people who have been made new:

The first is the word *neos*, which means "young, fresh, tender, of recent origin". It is used to describe new, fresh wine (Matt. 9:17; Lk. 5:37-39); a new, fresh lump of dough (I Cor. 5:7), and of *us* as new people in Christ (Col. 3:10). Notice there that we are to be "putting off the former person, with his/her evil practices, and putting on the

new/fresh/of-recent-origin [person], ...the one being restored (i.e., renewed, renovated, changed for the better, transformed into a new state of existence) toward a recognition according to the image of the One creating him/her." Since we are a new person in a *neos* way, that would seem to mean that **we are someone recently born or created** (Jn. 3:1-8; II Cor. 5:17).

One implication of this is that *this new "me" is not the "me" of my past. My past sins were not committed by this new "me". My past history is separated from the new "me".* This is an incredibly liberating truth. God has made me so new, so fresh, that I truly am not the person who committed the sins of my past life. God not only fully paid for my past offenses, He also put me to death with Jesus and totally made me new and fresh. This new person did not even *exist* at the time when those past sins were committed.

The other reality that must sink into my brain is that *I myself am not the same as I was. There is something about me now that is different than I was before.* It is new, fresh, and of recent origin. That means that **there is a new "me" that I have yet to truly understand.** I know the old "me", but there is a new "me" that I do not know very well.

This leads to another important truth: *We are in a growth process.* The growth is in our understanding of who we now are. We are not growing into a new nature. No. The new nature, the new identity, is already created. ***The growth process has to do with our understanding of who we now are.*** Note the end point or goal: We are new creatures, people being renewed in our understanding so that we might come to be like our Creator. We come back to God's original purpose for humankind. He made us to be in His image, according to His likeness. Sin had distorted and defaced that image. **Now, in Jesus, we have been recreated, born from God's holy seed, so that our new nature is once again pure, holy and righteous like He is.** Our problem is that we have to come to recognize this new nature within us, and learn to live out our lives from that source, by the power of the Spirit. We are accustomed to living by self-understanding, responding to the impulses and leadings of the flesh. **In Christ we now have a new nature, and need to learn to live in step with the Holy Spirit operating with us.**

The second Greek word for "new" is the word *kainos*. This word refers to what is "new, of a new quality, unused, unknown, unheard of, or different". It is used in the NT to refer to new quality wineskins (Matt. 9:17); the new, unused tomb (Matt. 27:60; Jn. 19:41); new, different teaching (Mk. 1:27; Acts 17:22); the new, different covenant (II Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:8,13; 9:15); the new, unheard of humanity established in Christ (Eph. 2:15); the new, different, of unknown quality heavens and earth (II Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1,5); the new, different, of unknown quality creatures which we are in Christ (II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15); the new quality persons we are in Christ (Eph. 4:24); and, the new, unknown name which we will receive from Jesus (Rev. 2:17). **Again, one of the implications is that this new, unknown "me" is different than the "me" that committed all the sins of my past. To emphasize this break with my past, ...upon my full redemption, when I stand before Jesus in my resurrection body and *even* my old flesh is gone..., He will give me an entirely different name.** I will not be tied to my past sins, or old reputation, even by name. **I will be totally free from any connection to any sinful past at all.** Why? Because that which is the new creature, born from God, created in His image, did not do *any* of those sinful acts. **It would actually be *unjust* to link the new "me" to any wrong behavior produced by the old "me".**

What do we know about the new "me"? According to Eph. 4:24, it has *already been created* according to God, in righteousness and holiness of the truth. It does not need to grow into a maturity in order to become righteous and holy. *It is* holy and righteous *now*, by virtue of its very nature. According to I John 3:9, it "...does not do sin, because His seed/sperm abides in him/her; and he/she is not able to sin, because out from God he/she has been begotten." What John is saying is that ***it is impossible for my new nature to sin. There is a radical break from sin, not only in the past, but also in the present.*** My new person does not sin. **What this means is that when I choose to sin, I am acting inconsistently with my new, true character. I am being defrauded from my true character and heart, by giving my members to serve sin according to the thinking of my former manner of living.** Jesus had said, "...every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit", and, again, "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad..." (Matt. 7:17,18; 12:33). The point is that **in order to change the *fruit* of someone's life, you have to change their inner character and nature. That is the victorious message of hope regarding Jesus' resurrection! We have been raised with Him to a new life and nature.** "Therefore we have been buried with Him... into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we might no longer be slaves to sin..." (Rom. 6:4-6). Truly, "the old things passed away, behold, *new things have come*" (II Cor. 5:17).