



DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

Fourth Sunday in Lent (C) – 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Focus: *Becoming a New Creation*

word of life

“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” (2 Corinthians 5:17 NRSV)

Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Always being made new! When Paul writes his letters to the Corinthians, he is well aware of the conflicts and strife dividing the church. Behavior as old as Adam and Eve consume the congregation. Jealousy, self-centeredness, and cliques rip apart the community, indicating little has changed with people and their behavior.

Conflicts, such as in the Corinthian church and in our own lives, remind us all too well of the imperfect nature of humanity. The power of the sin grips our very core. Despite our best efforts, we cannot shake off the shackles of being part of the old creation. Simply put, although we are created in God’s own image, we do not love as God. We are disconnected from God, estranged from the very One who brought us into being. Enough of this old, old story! It is time for the old to pass away.

1. *Describe the separation between God and us.*
2. *What parts of the “old” are you ready to let pass away?*

Always being made new! Fortunately, there is good news! God intervenes into history and creation by sending Jesus Christ to reconcile with humanity. The death and resurrection of Christ changes everything. A new creation is formed in Christ and comes into being by the grace of God—not because of our own creative endeavors and enterprise.

God is doing something new in Christ—and this new way impacts our lives and the possibility to let the old pass away. “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” (2 Corinthians 5:17 NRSV)

Each day is new, not only because the sun rose in the sky this morning, but because God has acted in Christ to provide a new way of being—a new creation. The death and resurrection of Christ frees us to let go of guilt from the past and move forward in Christ. By the grace of God, it is possible for a person to be made new in Christ.

3. *How does this new creation in Christ differ from the old?*
4. *What does it mean to be “in Christ”?*
5. *How might living in Christ increase a person’s capacity to love?*

Always being made new! God provides Christ to be a reconciling bridge between God and us. From this bridge of Christ, we see ourselves and others differently. We are connected to Christ and see from the perspective of Christ. Christ came, died and defeated death for *all* of humanity. “From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view...” (See 2 Corinthians 5:16 NRSV)

6. *How does becoming a new creation in Christ change our view of others?*
7. *When we are made new in Christ, is it a one-time change or a continual process? Explain your answer.*

Word among us

The pastor waited for Miss Marie, an elderly white-haired woman to walk across the room with her walker. Exhausted from the walk, she plopped down in the chair, shook her head, and said, “This growing old is not what it is cracked up to be!” She grinned with her toothless smile and offered, “I guess God is still workin’ on me!” The pastor smiled and knew what she meant.

1. *How is God still working on you to create something new?*
2. *Will you ever be too old to become a new creation in Christ? Explain your answer.*

In Second Corinthians, the Apostle Paul addresses the human condition of imperfection, decay and death. He uses a variety of images to illustrate the temporary nature of our human bodies created by God. While we live, we are also in the process of dying. That’s how God created us to be. We are not physically structured to last for eternity. Our human bodies are like earthly tents—ones whipped by wind and storm, tattered over time. We are like clay jars—fragile, imperfect, worn, perhaps even cracked and chipped. (See 2 Corinthians 4:1-5:10)

3. *Compare and contrast your body to a clay jar or an earthly tent.*
4. *How does knowing your physical body has an expiration date influence the way you live today?*

Always being made new! We need to hear these words again and again. God sends a message of hope and promise in Christ.

5. *What (if anything) might hinder you from becoming a new creation?*
6. *What does it feel like to be formed into a new creation in Christ?*

faith practice in daily life

Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed

In Holy Baptism, we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever. We are a new creation in Christ; we are reconciled with God. There are implications of being in Christ and a new creation. We no longer live for ourselves. Instead, each of us has the privilege to be an ambassador for Christ, proclaiming the good news of God in Christ through word and deed. (See 2 Corinthians 5:20)

7. *Describe your comfort level at being an ambassador for Christ.*
8. *What situations tend to test your skill level and resolve at being an ambassador for Christ?*
9. *How might God guide you through those situations?*

Always being made new! This is the theme of the Evangelical Church in America as it celebrates its 25th Anniversary in 2013. The hope and promise of a new creation is solely because God who created the heavens and earth is the One who creates something new in our lives through Christ. Out of pure grace, God sends Christ to reconcile the differences between God and humanity. Thanks be to God!

10. *What does the phrase “always being made new” mean to you?*

Prayer

Creator of All, it is by your grace, we are always being made new. Give us wisdom and courage to live as your new creation in Christ. Amen

last word

Begin your day by placing the sign of the cross on your forehead and offering these words “always being made new”.

Daily Faith Practices

Written by John and Robin McCullough-Bade

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