

**Colossians 3:1-10**

**May 3, 2020**

**[Romans 8:19-23]**

**Isaiah 11:2-6**

**New Creation**

**By the reckoning of the Christian calendar we are at the fourth Sunday of the Easter season. I said a couple of weeks ago that each Sunday is Easter since it is the day of resurrection, the first day of the week. Because of Easter we have a new identity in Christ: in Him we are a new creation.**

### **New Man, New Woman**

**It took God six days to create paradise but only a few moments for humanity to place it under the curse of decay and death. You gotta wonder how those living in paradise could ever want more. Yet Adam and Eve took the forbidden fruit simply on Satan's promise they would become like God (Genesis 3:6-7). Lest we think them foolish, just look at how many people fall for false promises today, and even in ourselves we find "echoes of the voice of Satan." Our own evil thoughts, words, and deeds prove we are just as guilty as Adam and Eve. Sorrow and pain aren't merely the products of institutional or societal injustice. They sprout up wherever people (like us) embrace evil rather than obey the command to be holy as God is holy (Romans 12:9; 1 Peter 1:15).<sup>1</sup>**

**This is where Easter comes in. Have you ever noticed that every one of the four Gospels explicitly states that it was on the morning of the first day of the week, the day God had separated light from darkness and begun creation, that the empty tomb of Jesus was found? This day of resurrection is the day of the new creation in Christ, and it is the pivot point for all other time keeping among Christians. On the *first* day God defeated sin and its consequence of death, and gave us a chance for a new life.**

**It's like God started over. As we receive Christ into ourselves, into our souls, we share in His life ... a life that has died to sin and risen to eternal life. *The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation, Col. 1:15. In Christ we are created anew, poised to live as blameless men and women, in communion with our Creator as originally intended. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!* 2 Cor. 5:17.**

**Have you ever wished you could do over something you messed up ... a task, a relationship, maybe a series of choices that messed up your whole life? In Christ you get that chance ... He's paid the price for all your screw ups and just plain ignoring God's plan and in Him you can start over. For young people who haven't had as many opportunities (yet) to screw up their life, my advice is begin your new life in Christ today and avoid the pain and alienation that comes from falling into all the sin pits that are out there.**

## **Living as Those Made Alive in Christ**

Here's the exhortation, then: start living now as the new man or woman that you are in Christ. *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, ...Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ... rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator, Colossians 3:1-10.*

What Paul is saying here, let me be clear: in this life do not be conformed to the world's values or some outward standard of religiosity, but be filled with the Holy Spirit. It takes resurrection power to live this new life ... don't try this on your own! The same power that raised Jesus from the dead will lift us out of the sin-laden path of destruction and put us on the road to recovery and finally life eternal. The Holy Spirit is not some sort of cosmic power given over to our control; but He himself will dwell in us so that His power works in us. *For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.* Eph. 1:4. He chose us and He offers to work within us to make us holy and blameless. Ever the gentleman, the Holy Spirit awaits an invitation from Him ... God desires a right relationship with us that we, of our own free will, also desire.

## **All Of Creation Too**

Have you noticed how much easier it is to grow weeds than flowers and food? I've long believed it's another manifestation of the fallenness of even nature. When we see a field of flowers, snow-capped peaks, a beautiful sunset on the beach, nature speaks to us of the beauty God has created. But nature also gives us hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, landslides, earthquakes, and exploding volcanoes that wreak destruction and havoc. There is another aspect of redemption that we don't often talk about, yet it is in the Bible: the redemption of all of creation.

When Adam and Eve fell for Satan's lie, their position as caretakers of God's creation (Gen 1:26-28) was messed up. The curse that came upon "guilty humanity" also fell on "guiltless creation." Like humanity all of nature has been subject to decay and death. Paul says it in Romans: *For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it ... We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time...* Romans 8:19-20, 22. Nature is waiting for the renewal of human nature, so that all may live as God's glorious creation. There will be an end to the ruthless dog eat dog world that we now

know, foreseen by O. T. prophets. *The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them,* Isaiah 11:6.

## **End Game**

Have you ever been in circumstances where you asked, “What’s the end game here? Where does all this end?” Maybe it’s like being at a hospital waiting for news of a surgery, or some diagnostic test. The wait is worth it if the news is good. Maybe you’ve asked the question about your own life, where does it all end? What does it add up to?

The reason the message of Easter is called “good news” is because the Lord has already told us what the outcome is going to be. We could summarize that outcome in a single word, “Glorious.” Glorious is what you can expect. And better yet, knowing the good outcome we can use this present time to allow the Holy Spirit to prepare us for that glorious future.

Christians believe that time is not a recurring cycle, but a straight line aimed toward a God-ordained outcome. We are not hopelessly stuck in repeated patterns of sin and brokenness, but destined for a new, glorious, and eternal life with God - redeemed by Jesus Christ from the deadening path of a sin-broken world. Our old, sin-riddled life may cling to us, but the Holy Spirit is at work within us. What God has planned will be completed. We, and all of creation, will be restored to original goodness drawn there now by our hope in Christ Jesus, and propelled there by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Whenever we take Holy Communion, we direct our hearts to that preferred future, and the bread and wine remind us of how Christ communed with His disciples on earth and how the Holy Spirit communes with us now. We look forward to Christ’s return in final victory over all the evil and brokenness in creation. Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again. The prophet Isaiah foretold God’s actions: *... he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people’s disgrace from all the earth. The LORD has spoken,* Isaiah 25:8

**Have you noticed that one of our Christmas carols speaks this truth:**

“Joy to the world the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ;  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy ...

No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow, far as the curse is found ...”

**Through us and all the way through creation! We celebrate His birth because He came as the new man to draw us to Himself that we be made anew, and that one day the earth too shall be renewed. We know how the story ends - St. John’s vision speaks it:**

*Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy*

***City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” Rev. 21:1-4***

---

<sup>1</sup> Derek Geldart, “New Year's Groanings,” Sermon Central, Jan 5, 2020; <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/new-year-39-s-groanings-derek-geldart-sermon-on-endurance-244450?ref=SermonSerps>