

**“A NEW WAY OF SEEING”**  
***2 Corinthians 5:16-17***

**Sermon for Peace Church**  
**March 18, 2007**

**PURPOSE** - administer gospel vision to the congregation and invite them into Jesus to see by faith.

**MAIN IDEA** - The gospel calls us to see others, Jesus, and ourselves in the light of either being dead in sin or alive in Christ!

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

Let's open our Bibles to 2 Corinthians 5:16 (p. 1799)

1. “When I survey the wondrous Cross, on which the Prince of glory died ...
  - (i) When the apostle Paul met the crucified and risen Jesus, - When he surveyed the Cross - his whole way of SEEING LIFE was radically changed.
  
2. Jesus does this!
  - On numerous occasions in the gospels, He is portrayed as the One who brings SIGHT to the blind.
  - His physical healings being a metaphor for the VISION He gives us
  
- (i) Bartimaeus had it right:
  - When asked by Jesus, “What do you want me to do for you?”,
  - He responded: “*Rabbi, I want to see.*” (2X)
  
3. And that's our prayer this morning, as we read Paul's description of the way Jesus changed His sight.
  - Continuing in this letter, let's begin at verse 14. Verses 16 & 17 being our words of focus:

\* *READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-17*

Simple Outline - the crucified & risen Jesus CHANGES how we see others, Christ Himself, and ourselves as Christians.

## II. HOW WE SEE OTHERS

1. Verse 16 - because Jesus died & rose again we see others NOT according to a WORLDLY point of view.

(i) What does this mean?

Well, I asked Randy bring a few photos here for me. Tell me the words you associate with these pictures:

TRUMP / WOODS / ONASIS ...

= money, power, beauty, strength, race, intelligence

- We invariably look at them from worldly points of view

(ii) I wonder how Jesus would see those people?

- He didn't seem to see Zaccheaus quite like others! ... Nor the woman of the street, Mary Magdelene.

2. From a worldly point of view, "IMAGE IS EVERYTHING" (as its sometimes put.)

I.e. - I read that in the last election, both Democrats & Republicans used their most powerful negotiators to format the presidential debates. But not just their content. Lighting & camera angles were hotly debated - because "image is everything".

(i) We live in a world DOMINATED by looks, wealth & externals.

And we're NAIVE if we don't think that those images effect us. Young girls become anorexic because Mary Kate Olson sports fashion! We buy the cars we see advertised. It happens. ... because the Trumps & Anna Nicole's are so frequently in our face!

3. From a worldly point of view, we categorize each other by race & ethnicity.

- Races get profiled in certain ways in the media - Natives / Blacks / Arabs and it shapes our thinking!

(i) From a worldly point of view, "If you ain't Dutch, you ain't \_\_\_\_\_"

- That sick line can shape our thinking!

4. But Paul says, *I don't regard anyone from a worldly point of view.*

- How you look, what you have, WHERE you come from doesn't matter!

(i) Paul writes, "I don't look at anyone in those categories ... because Jesus' death

put all of that stuff TO DEATH!”

A. All that is IN the world & OF the world DIED in terms of any meaning outside of Jesus.

- “He who has the most toys DOESN’T WIN!”

- No ethnicity has social privilege or indebtedness or rank in His kingdom.

B. Because He rose again, what matters is whether people are ALIVE in Christ or still DEAD in sin.

THAT’S HOW THE GOSPEL TRAINS US TO SEE OTHERS

= How much “Christ-life / Christ-identity” is in them?

### III. HOW WE SEE JESUS

2<sup>nd</sup>, Paul writes, because He died & rose again, it changed how he views Jesus Himself.

1. Verse 16b - Paul confesses that he used to look at CHRIST from a WORLDLY point of view.

- He had heard about him and knew He was an INFLUENTIAL RABBI.

But, convinced Jesus was false, he persecuted & imprisoned Christians - until he was saved.

(i) In his own lifetime, people looked at Jesus from merely a worldly point of view:

A. In his hometown, people refused to put faith in God through Him because, “Hey, isn’t this the son of Mary & Joseph, the carpenter”.

B. The religious leaders gave Him no credence because, “Nothing good comes out of Nazareth!”

2. One day Jesus asked his disciples, “*Who do people say that I am?*”

They responded - “*Some say John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, one of the prophets*”

(i) Those responses reflect how MANY SEE Jesus today - as a GREAT RELIGIOUS LEADER.

- That was high company that Jesus was put in - Elijah, Jeremiah, John, great prophets ...

A. So today, many people would list Jesus as a great religious leader -

along with Mohamed, Buddha, Confucius, Moses  
= the founder of a major world religion!

3. But because He died and rose again, we do not see Jesus as merely one great religious leader among many.

In the words of Peter, when Jesus asked him, “*Who do YOU say that I am?*”, we respond, “*You are the CHRIST, the Son of the Living God*”.  
= the UNIQUE MESSIAH

(i) In Pauline terminology, because he died & rose again, we see Jesus as the SECOND ADAM!

- the PROGENITOR (beginner / founder) of a new order of humanity.

A. In Romans 5 Paul divides mankind into 2 categories: Those IN ADAM and those IN CHRIST (the 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam).

- Our natural state is to be in Adam. We are of his seed. In him, however, we are DEAD to God because we have inherited his sin nature. We are not who God ORIGINALLY designed us to be. We know it in our conscience. God’s laws make it still clearer. And the wages of sin is death.

B. In Christ, however, a new ORDER of mankind has begun:

= those resurrected to new life with God!

= those whose sin has been paid for by His sacrifice and so, brought from death to life!

= those part of an eternal kingdom ... which is & is to come!

4. So Jesus is not merely a great religious leader, He is the HINGE OF HISTORY!

- He is humanity’s ONLY HOPE with God

- He is the Messiah

- He is the Savior IN WHOM is salvation from eternal death.

(i) Spurgeon writes, “*I have never heard of any persons being IN any other man but Christ; we may follow certain leaders, political or religious, but we are never said to be included IN THEM. We may take for ourselves eminent examples and high models of humanity, but no man is said in that respect to be IN another. But a follower of Jesus becomes something more than an imitator of his Lord, he is said to be IN HIS MASTER!*”

- Let’s explore that phrase, “being IN CHRIST”, because 3<sup>rd</sup>, it CHANGES HOW

WE SEE OURSELVES:

#### IV. HOW WE VIEW OURSELVES

Verse 17 - *If anyone is IN CHRIST, he is a NEW CREATION. The old has gone, the new has come!*

1. WHAT A TEXT! Here's how Christians see themselves - NOT FOR WHO WE USED TO BE, but a NEW CREATION in Jesus!

(i) Ephesians 2 describes your OLD SELF this way: *You were born dead to God in sin.* And because you had no GOD-LIFE in you, the things you obeyed were the *cravings of the sinful -SELF- nature*

- that means living to think well of yourself, living to satisfy self - whether through indulgence or self-protection; or living to please others - to keep them off your back or so they'd think well of you.

A. So you may have been a church member & you may have been raised in a Christian home, but until you're saved, you're essentially living for the SELF - following thoughts & desires that protect or make you feel good about yourself.

= it's the condition we're born in and it's destiny is hell - where SELF is all there is.

2. But when we RENOUNCE that self in SORROW and turn to Jesus as one's LORD (not the self), then we become a NEW CREATION!

(i) We receive a NEW HEART -

Jeremiah 31:31-34 describes new life in these terms:

A. *"I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts"*

= a NEW OBEDIENCE - the Laws of God are written on our hearts by the Spirit. We love to obey Him - it's our joy, our passion.

B. *I will be their God and they shall be my people"* = It's a NEW RELATIONSHIP - adopted into His family - we cry "Abba" father

C. *"No longer will a man teach his neighbor, saying 'Know the Lord', because they will all know me"* = a NEW KNOWLEDGE - Jer. 31 - "They will know me". We will understand God's person and His will.

D. *"For I will forgive their wickedness & remember their sins no more"*

= a NEW FORGIVENESS - for God will remember their sins no more.

(ii) R. Kent Hughes comments, *“This is the biography of EVERY Christian! It is my biography. Though I was just a boy, when I was saved God’s Word became so alive to me that I could never get enough of it. Truly, old things had passed away and new things had come. My burden of sin was gone. My guilt was gone. My sense of alienation from God and lostness and loneliness were gone.*

*Wondrous new things filled my life. New truths continued to rock my soul. My Christian friends held a magnetism and were invitingly mysterious. I couldn’t wait to get to our tiny church and worship with the rest of the 65 members.*

*Missions enthralled me. Sometimes I prayed over an open map of the world.*

*Most of all, I loved Jesus. William Featherstone’s old hymn (written when he was 16), still expresses my soul as it did then:*

*“My Jesus, I love Thee. I know Thou art mine; for thee all the follies of sin I resign. My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou; If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ‘tis now!”*

### 3. HALLELUJAH! A new creation means a NEW HEART:

*What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought - since Jesus came into my heart;*

*I have light in my soul, for which long I have sought - since Jesus came into my heart!”*

*... Floods of joy o’er my soul like the sea billows roll - since Jesus came into my heart.*

I love that old gospel hymn - I hope you can sing it.

(i) If you can’t, don’t leave here until you have sought God for it. I’ll be glad to pray with you!

**IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST, HE’S A NEW CREATION!**

4. This doesn’t mean that the cravings of the old SELF disappear. That nature is still with us for however many years we have in this age. We face temptation. We sometimes fail to live in the POWER of the new heart we’ve been given.

(i) At those times, it’s important to remember the other aspect of being a NEW CREATION. That is that you are given a NEW IDENTITY in Christ, believer.

- No longer are you an object of God’s wrath, a child of darkness.  
EPHESIANS 5:8 - *“Once you were darkness, NOW you are light in the Lord.”*

A. That's who you are! Light in God! A saint before Him in Christ. (You don't always feel that way, but you are!)

- What's true of Jesus, is true of you! ... You are God's beloved!

5. Being a NEW CREATION in Jesus means both:

- A NEW POWER (of Jesus' heart in you) and a NEW POSITION (accepted / forgiven / adopted / "Light in the Lord")

## V. CONCLUSION

1. Our New International Version translation of verse 17 unfortunately left out ONE WORD from Paul's original writing: BEHOLD.

Most literally, verse 17 reads, *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ. The old - that which was from their beginning - has passed away / by ... BEHOLD, the new has come."*

BEHOLD! LOOK! SEE! The new has come.

2. The Word invites you to SEE ... Because Jesus died & rose again:

- Behold others as either alive in Christ or dead in sins
- Behold Jesus as the second Adam - the progenitor of a new order of humanity
- Behold yourself, Christian, as a new Creation in Him  
= a new heart / a new identity

(i) We don't always feel like a new creation, but don't go by your feelings - LIVE BY FAITH!

- Faith in who Jesus is ... DEAD & RISEN AGAIN.

3. Bartimaeus cried to Jesus, *"RABBI, I WANT TO SEE!"*

The Lord responded, *"Go, your faith has healed you. Bartimaeus received his sight and followed Jesus - a new creation IN HIM!"*

BEHOLD, the old has passed away ... the new has come! AMEN!