

Live Bolder – Living CHANGED

8.20.23

2 Corinthians 5:17

Sunday AM

While I'm not much of a car guy, I have to admit I'm a sucker for Car TV Shows like *Car Masters*, *Tex-Mex Motors*, and *Rust Valley Restorers* – where they take an old, broken-down, bucket of rust (usually found in a junkyard) and turn it into a brand-new masterpiece. Talk about some serious binge-watching.

**Truth is** – there's something amazing about taking something that's old/broken and turning it into a beautiful work of art – and this doesn't even scratch the surface of what God does for us thru Christ – where in salvation God takes our broken, helpless, sinful lives and makes them into a new creation for His glory.

3-weeks ago, we launched into the 3<sup>rd</sup> yr of our *Aim Higher, Dream Bigger* church initiative. After striving to *Shine Brighter* and *Think Smaller* in yrs 1-2, the time has come for us to focus on Living Bolder.

To **Live Bolder** is about consciously living daily on mission for God w/ *courageous intentionality* where we *live, work, and play* so that God can use our lives to influence/introduce others to Him.

It's living (as Paul shared in Romans) *unashamed of the Gospel b/c it is the power of God for salvation to anyone/everyone who believes...* Romans 1:16

In 2 Cor. 5:14-21, we find the basis of this calling as Paul calls all believers to *live bolder* as ambassadors of Christ entrusted w/ the ministry of reconciliation.

*Christ's love compels us, b/c we're convinced one died for all, and therefore all died. He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again. So, from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view, although we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Thus, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come – the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself thru Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ by not counting people's sins against them. So now, He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are Christ's ambassadors, as God is making His appeal thru us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. He made Him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.*

**As I've mulled over this text**, I'm convinced that if we're ever going to *live boldly* for God it'll require (3) realities. (1) We have to be convinced that Jesus was who He said He was and did what He said He'd do. (2) We have to walk w/ God on a daily basis *abiding* in Him under the influence of the H.S. And (3) we have to know why we believe what we believe so we have the confidence to live out/speak up our faith to others.

After discussing what it means to live *convinced* and *captivated* in weeks 1-2, today, I want for us to consider what it means to live *changed* by His grace.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation – old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new!* (NKJV) vs. 16-17

I LOVE THIS VERSE! I love it b/c it reminds me of the power of the Gospel *to save a wretch like me* and to transform my life into something great for God. In fact, *this is the biography of every believer* – I am a new creation... the old is gone, the new has come!

## I Two Amazing TRUTHS

In this verse, we find (2) amazing truths: the first and possibly the most significant aspect of this verse is the phrase – **in Christ**. It's a phrase Paul shared some 130 times in His writings. Have you ever considered what it means to be **in Christ**?

A We are **IN** Christ

To be in Christ is the most intimate and secure union possible b/c it's more than Him encircling us, it is God abiding **w/in** us, **about** us, and **around** us.

**Russian Stack Doll**. To be in Christ is to have the H.S. w/in me as I am in the Father, Son, and H.S. **From inside out to outside in** – God is committed to us.

**Biblically** – I think of when Noah and his family stepped into the ark. They were **IN GOD** – separated from the godless, fallen world outside... separated from the storms of judgment being waged around them – yet fully supplied/secured w/ all that they needed inside. They went thru the greatest of judgments, and yet not even one drop of rain fell on them. **It all fell upon the ark, just as all of God's wrath fell upon Jesus**. Noah and his family were preserved in the grace of God's ark, just like we too are being preserved once and for all by God's grace when we are in Christ.

B/c we're **in Christ**... we're now a **new creation**.

B We are a **NEW** Creation

**new creation** (*kainos*)– means we're immediately and instantaneously, upon receiving Christ as our Savior, a brand-new creation of the redemptive work of God.

The term used parallels the **original creation**. Just like from out of the primal darkness of nothing God spoke creation into existence – so too, out of the darkness of sin/unbelief, thru Christ the living Word of God, God speaks light/life into our lives and we're made new.

**Result** – as His new creation, the very life Jesus lived is now available/accessible to us. Meaning – He not only gave His life **FOR** us; He gave His life **TO** us!

This is why I love the phrase – *Behold, the old has gone and the new has come*.

**behold** is synonymous w/ a sudden explosion – BOOM! The sec. someone accepts Christ – BOOM! They're instantaneously a brand-new person and their relationship w/ God begins immediately.

*We're not saved by evolution but by creation!*  
Spurgeon

Thus, salvation isn't turning over a **new** leaf, but receiving a **new** life (the life of Christ) – *I no longer live... but Christ lives in/thru me*. It means we're now *under new management* w/ a new lease on life.

I think about seeing a sign in an old restaurant or company that reads – **Under New Management**? No matter how good/bad the old management was, there's a part of us that wants to give the new owners a chance b/c now that it's under new management – we have an expectation it has changed for the better.

As Christians, b/c we're **in Christ**, we're **Under New Management** b/c what used to happen inside our lives has been **changed**. We now have a new **purpose** for living, a new **attitude** toward others, a new **identity** in Christ, a new **nature** transforming our desires, and a new **presence** of the H.S. to guide us. In Christ – we've instantaneously experienced/continue to experience an extreme makeover from the inside out.

This is b/c when a person accepts Christ as Savior/Lord – immediately, the things of the past and the desires of the flesh are no longer their top priority b/c God instills in them His new nature in the H.S.

This doesn't mean that we don't sin anymore or that our flesh can't be tempted or crave the past. **What it means is that now the H.S. lives w/in us, we no longer have to embrace the temptation we encounter or give in to the desires of the flesh** – we can live in Christ!

**Let me explain the theology.** Salvation is a both point-in-time event and a process. Upon accepting Christ as Savior, we're saved (point in time) and we're being saved (in process). The **STATE** of our salvation has everything to do w/ what God has done for us – He seals us w/ the H.S. to declare us right (justified), sets us apart (sanctified), and makes us new (glorified).

As a result of this point-in-time event, we also have a **STANDING** w/ God based upon our daily response to Him where we're *filled* w/ the H.S. B/c God has deposited the H.S. into our lives, the lives we live in the flesh are in the process of becoming more like Jesus every day. This requires our daily surrender to follow the leading of the H.S. This is where the words of John the Baptist apply – *He (Jesus) must increase, I must decrease*. Thus, while I've been justified, I have to choose to live under God's influence. While I've been set apart, I have to choose to live set apart as I await Christ's return to experience final glorification.

We discussed this 2-weeks ago. In being saved, we are set apart by God from sin **to** God w/ the mandate and H.S. to help us live set apart from sin **for** God.

**Remember** – *He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves so that in Him we have redemption thru His blood, the forgiveness of sins.* Colossians 1:13-14

**IOW** – when we were incarcerated by sin, incapable of escaping its clutches, thru Christ, God rescued and set us apart from sin unto Himself transforming us from sinners to saints and making us heirs of His grace. This is solely the work of God.

B/c of God's imputed grace, God gives us the spiritual responsibility to live in Christ, yet not in our ability or ingenuity BUT thru the ministry of the H.S. who now resides in us – so that **Christ in us now lives thru us**.

*I have been crucified w/ Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me – and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.* Galatians 2:20

Thus, we're set apart from sin **TO** God (state) so that we can now live set apart from sin **FOR** God (standing). And this is only possible b/c we're now a new creation in Christ, w/ a new lease on life, w/ new Godly desires and ambitions, w/ a new mission/purpose to live for His kingdom/righteousness.

I'm reminded of the story of the communist agitator speaking to a crowd during the Bolshevik Revolution who pointed to a drunken beggar staggering down the street arrayed in tattered rags. He said, "Communism will put a new suit on that man!" And a Christian in the crowd shouted, "Maybe... But Christ will put a new man in that suit."

When we're **in Christ**, God makes us a **new creation!**

## II One Spectacular **RESULT**

B/c I'm truly a new creation in Christ – God gives me a new purpose for living and the confidence to live it.

*those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again...*

Not only do I become a new creation, but God gives me a new mission/purpose – *to make disciples of all nations starting where I live, work, and play.*

It means that essential to the Christian life is living for God's will instead of for my will. It's embracing that it's not about me – and all about Him! It's having a H.S. infused change of *devotion, demeanor, duty, desire, and destiny.*

*The life I live in the flesh I live by faith in the son...*

**In true conversion**, it's not only heard about; it is also seen in how we live boldly for God's glory.

So, where do I start? How can I get engaged/going?

**I'm glad you asked** – b/c I can think of no better way to get engaged than to participate in some/all of the things we have going on this week in our Engage Mission Week. So, pull out the card you received when you entered the WC this AM, and I want to ask Pastor Mark to come back up on stage to walk us thru all that will be happening this week.

Close w/ a prayer of commissioning.