



NEW CREATION

Many believers know they're saved by Jesus Christ but struggle with guilt or the perception that their lives haven't changed, feeling far from being "made new." This doesn't have to be the case. By remembering who we are in Christ, we can fully embrace the transformative life God desires for us.

WEEK ONE

THE GOSPEL CHANGES EVERYTHING

Message Passage: 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:1-10

Small Group Passage: Romans 8:14-17

TEACHING AND VIDEO NOTES

As a believer in Jesus, all who have professed Christ should know you are saved by faith in Him, with a confidence of eternal security. Yet, for many, there still lies a tension between what is read about their faith in the scriptures compared to what they see play out in their habits and day-to-day living.

For some, this “disconnect” may stem from guilt or the perception that our lifestyle patterns haven’t quite yet aligned with what we read in scripture. So we judge our reality based on what we see from the flesh, rather than what is reality in Spirit. A passage that comes to mind is 2 Corinthians 5:17.

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, He is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*”

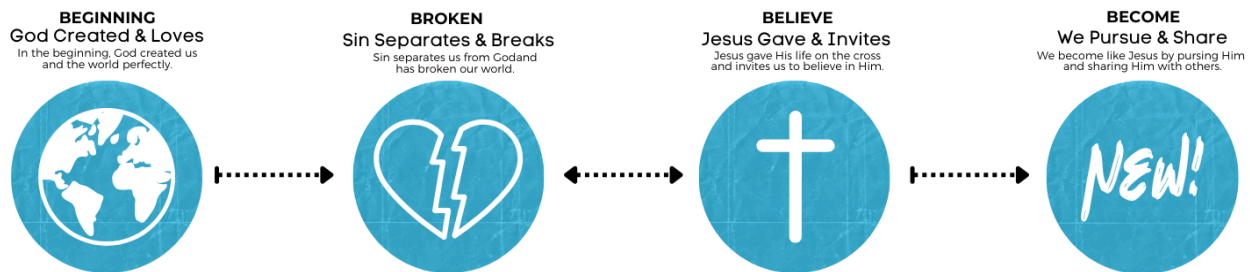
Once we put our faith in Jesus, we become new. As a “new creation”, we can grow in our spirit in ways we couldn’t before.

How do we live this new spiritual transformation? I believe it starts with a clear understanding of the Gospel.

Question(s): Do you view the Gospel as the beginning of your faith? Do you view the Gospel as a 101 class you take once and don't think about too much afterward? If so, we want to help change that.

Depending on your story, you may be able to think of a specific time and place when you heard the Gospel message and believed for the first time - which is great! However, we must remember that the effects of the Gospel are 100% ongoing in this life and the life to come.

GOSPEL MESSAGE



BEGINNING - God Created and Loves: In the beginning, God created us and the world perfectly.

The Bible teaches that there is one God who created us according to His perfect design to live in a perfect relationship with Him and with each other because He loves us.

BROKEN - Sin Breaks and Separates: Sin separates us from God and has broken our world.

All people have chosen to turn away from what God says is best and do what they think is best. This is sin and deserves punishment. Sin messed up God's perfect creation, and it breaks our relationship with Him. There is nothing we alone can do to fix the problem of sin. No apologies, no sacrifices, etc. Romans 3:23

BELIEVE - Jesus Gave and Invites: Jesus gave his life on the cross and invites us to believe in Him.

God loves the world so much that He sent Jesus into the world to rescue people from their sin. God invites us to believe that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and came back to life three days later so that we can have a relationship with Him. When this happens, our sins are forgiven, heaven becomes our forever home, and we have a relationship with God. John 3:16

CAUTION: One of the most missed opportunities when communicating the Gospel is this next part - “What we Become”.

BECOME - We Pursue and Share: We become like Jesus by pursuing him and sharing Him with others.

As believers, we have a new identity - Children of God. **We are new creations** who follow Jesus, becoming more like Him and sharing His story with others, all while holding onto the hope and promise that one day everything will be made new and every wrong will be made right. So, what did the Gospel change? EVERYTHING! But, let's get specific...

BEFORE CHRIST - SPIRITUALLY DEAD | WITH CHRIST - SPIRITUALLY LIVING

Ephesians 2:1 As for you, you were **dead** in your **transgressions and sins**,

Without a relationship with God, we are dead. There is no other picture to communicate the reality of our condition apart from God.

Ephesians 2:2-3 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. **3** All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

In short, when we are dead in our sins, we become accustomed to a life contrary to God's will. All we know and understand is how to understand our “flesh”. With Christ, we are able to experience an understanding of spiritual things as God has designed for His Children.

WE ARE NOW FREE TO LIVE IN GOD'S DESIGN

Ephesians 2:8-10 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Salvation is a gift from God. You can't earn it or buy it; it's given freely out of God's love. To receive this gift, all you have to do is BELIEVE. Your good deeds do NOT play a role in this process.

Paul writes in **2 Corinthians 5:21**: “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (NIV)

While this gift is received through faith alone, your new life in Christ will naturally lead to good works. These good works aren't what save you; instead, they are the result of your salvation and show that you ARE NOW ALIVE IN CHRIST, free to live within God's purpose.

Humility Check: I appreciate how this keeps us humble - we didn't earn our salvation by doing good things. Once we accept this new life from God, we naturally start to want to do good things. Our good works are a natural overflow of the new life God has given us through Jesus. They're not what saves us, but they're a sign that we *have been* saved.

Take Away: The Gospel is not an introduction class. Not an item to cross off. It's more like being born - IT JUST IS. Being born gives you a life that previously didn't exist at all. Being born again and receiving the gift of eternal life brings - doesn't just change some things about you - it changes everything!

The work of Jesus (the Gospel) brings a complete, immediate spiritual rebirth. In Christ, we are a new creation.

Small Group: For now, in our small groups, let's continue to learn how our new identity shapes what we believe about ourselves and our relationship with God.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

READ: Romans 8:14-17

1. The teaching mentioned that many Christians struggle with guilt or a sense of being unchanged. This often comes from judging our reality by our experience of the flesh rather than by scripture and the guidance of the Spirit. Based on verses 14-17, what can we know that God has done for us as believers?

Leader Note: God has taken us from being slaves to sin and living in fear to being redeemed and adopted Children of God, led by the Holy Spirit. Not only this, but Christ's sacrifice was so sufficient that we are Co-Heirs with Christ. These things are true regardless of what our emotions, doubts, or experiences tell us.

2. The Apostle Paul wanted to make it abundantly clear that as believers, we are Children of God. We are not fearful slaves. Instead, the Holy Spirit testifies that we are children of God. How does being a child of God and being led by the Spirit drive fear out of our lives?

Leader Note: A slave works for his master out of obligation and fear; a child lives in the family out of love and security. Adoption is a permanent, legal status granted by God's love. You can carry on the conversation by asking what specific "fear" this adoption might free us from? (e.g., fear of not being good enough, fear of punishment, fear of losing salvation).

3. Paul says we cry out "Abba, Father" (v. 15). The word "Abba" is an Aramaic term similar to the familiar English word "Dad" or "Daddy." What does the shift from addressing God as an intimidating judge to addressing Him as "Abba" tell you about your new relationship and identity in Christ?

Leader Note: "Abba" signifies intimacy, trust, and access. Ask: When have you felt closest to God? Is God still the creator of the universe and judge of all? Yes. The beauty of it is that the creator of the universe desires such a close relationship with him that, as adopted Children, we cry out, "Abba, Father."

4. How does thinking of God as "Abba" change how you pray or approach Him after you've sinned?

Leader Note: We can have honest, frank, and vulnerable prayers/conversations with "Abba, Father." "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children," reminding us of this truth. When we listen to the Holy Spirit and are led by the Spirit, we are reminded of who we are and what access we have to God. When we are led by the Spirit and listen to the lie of the enemy, the exact opposite happens. If you would like, you can guide the group to distinguish between the Spirit's confirmation (peace, conviction leading to repentance, assurance of love) and the enemy/flesh's accusations (shame, hopelessness, relentless condemnation). The Spirit's testimony affirms identity, even in failure.

5. Our large group teaching today emphasized the disconnect between belief and day-to-day living. If you struggle with the feeling that your life hasn't changed or that you're far from being "made new," how can the secure reality that you are already God's child (v. 16) help close that gap?

Leader Note: This brings the core issue of the series back to the passage. The *fact* of being God's child is the foundation. We don't act like a child *to become* one; we act like one *because we already are* one. Use the analogy: A prince who struggles to act like royalty is still royalty. His *identity* dictates his *potential* behavior.

6. In verse 17, Paul says that because we are children, we are also "heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ." What does the designation of "heir" mean in a practical sense for a believer living *today*?

Leader Note: An heir receives an inheritance. The inheritance isn't just heaven; it's also the current benefits of being in the family (access, power of the Spirit, purpose). As heirs, we have full access to the abundance of spiritual resources available to us as part of the family of God.

7. The second part of verse 17 contains a powerful caveat: we share in Christ's glory "if indeed we share in his sufferings." What do you believe this "sharing in his sufferings" means for the average Christian, and how does it relate to the transformation process of the "new creation"?

Leader Note: Ensure the group understands that suffering is more than just major trauma. Suffering often means enduring ridicule, persecution, or the disciplined denial of self/fleshly desires for the sake of Christ. Relate it to the new creation: growth involves painful pruning and laying aside the "old."

8. Paul connects being led by the Spirit (v. 14) with the confidence to call God "Abba" (v. 15) and the reality of being an heir (v. 17). How can you intentionally seek the leading of the Spirit this week to affirm your identity as a child of God and live less by the patterns of the flesh?

Leader Note: Ask for specific, small actions they can take: (e.g., praying "Abba, Father" when tempted, reading the Word to discern the Spirit's direction, choosing forgiveness over retaliation).

PRAYER TIME

DISMISS