

## New Creation!

Jonathan K. Dodson | 2 Cor 5:17 | April 17, 2022

You ever feel tired, worn out, like you just keep doing the same old thing? I woke up the other day and thought, man I do this every day. Sleep, wake, shower, eat, read, pray, take kids to school, go to work, come back. Life felt repetitive, old. Or maybe you feel constantly behind, like you can't catch up, or like you don't measure up? I should be killing it in school, as a parent, professional, a human. Wouldn't it be nice to just rest? To wake up each day with a sense of something new? Know it or not, you're longing for *new creation*. A priceless promise. Let's consider four meanings of new creation.

### New Perspective

First, new creation means gaining a new perspective. St. Paul writes, *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come*" (2 Cor 5:17). The original language reads: *if anyone is in Christ: new creation*. He gets so carried away he omits words, blurts out: behold, pay attention, check it out: *the new has come!* What's so exciting? The old has passed away. What old? In the context he's addressing an *old way of viewing people*, "*From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh.*" We don't size them up from a single interaction, make skin-deep judgments. In the old way we might

evaluate a person based on their appearance, goodness, achievements, their wisdom. You might look at Will Smith and judge him based on a slap. But Paul says there's something that, when you get it, gives you a whole new perspective on humanity. What is it? He says, [the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all](#) (14). Jesus Christ *died* for *all*. The Son of God took the bullet for everyone, served a death sentence for all! Now in most mythologies, the humans sacrificed for the gods, but in Christianity, the God sacrifices *himself* for humanity. Now how would this change the way we view one another? *It* would grant tremendous dignity to everyone: color, nationality, gender, sexuality. Humans are people for whom the Son of God *died*. So, we don't judge one another on the madness of a single moment, a slap, a snide remark, an offence. We no longer look at people primarily through their sins but see them through the Savior. How might that change our perspective? It changes the way you view that customer service rep, annoying client, lost driver, spouse, person who wronged you? *Instead of running them down in our mind, we would lift them up.* After all, the Son of God died for that person. We'd resolve to treat them with the dignity which Jesus treated us, worthy of his death. Filmmaker Peter Craig recently made a trip to Mexico to film some stories, and he interview a woman whose sister was murdered. The striking thing about her interview was not only the

injustice she suffered but how she responded: *she forgave her sister's murderer. She judged her murderer not on the madness of a single moment, criminal, but on the dignity of a single sacrifice, forgiven.*

When you become a new creation, you gain new a whole new perspective on humanity, people for whom the Son of God died. We just don't look at people the same way.

## **New Identity**

New creation also means gaining a new identity. We view *ourselves* differently. The old way of sizing self up has passed away, and the new has come! New in what way? New creation was launched on Easter morning when Jesus broke death in his resurrection. He was the first Adam of a whole new humanity. And this means if we worship him, we gain a whole new identity. Not just a new way of viewing others but a new way of being ourselves. He died *and he was raised* (15). Dignity by his death; identity by his life. You see when we respond to Jesus in faith, his death and resurrection becomes our death and resurrection. The old person is exiled, and a new person takes her place. We're no longer trapped in a life of sin but freed to live a new life in Christ. When that happens we celebrate in baptism. *We are lowered into watery death with Christ, and raised up with him to walk in newness of life* (Rom 6:4). Today we'll be celebrating two new creations: Jonathan Lee & Rosamund

Dodson! Now, you might ask if it's true I gain a new identity, then why do I still blow it? I'm still mean to my brothers and sisters. I say things I regret. I think too much of myself. I'm not the kind of person I want to be or that God wants me to be. You know how God responds? He leans over and says, That's true, but you're not defined by your sins; you're defined by my Son. Remember: if anyone is in Christ, new creation! We're also not defined by our successes. Our achievements don't make us any more acceptable to God. Scottie Scheffler recently won the Masters Golf tournament, and when asked how he competes without letting it define him he said: "*The reason I play golf is to glorify God. My identity isn't in a golf score. Whether I win or lose by ten shots, Jesus still loves me.*" We're not defined by our successes. We don't need to run around trying to kill it, proving ourselves to the world. For those in Christ, our failures and successes stick to him. *We can rest. If anyone is in Christ, new creation!*

## **New Ethic**

To be a new creation is to gain a new perspective, a new identity, and a new ethic. If you're truly a new creation, you'll live a new life. It's not enough to say I believe and not act on that belief. When Paul talks about new creation in Ephesians he says put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through

deceitful desires...and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness (4:22–24).

There's a real change, a putting off and a putting on. We disrobe from the old way of living and walk with a new ethic. What does new ethic look like? He goes on to say: *tell the truth and not lie, be angry but not sin, do honest work not steal, share your wealth with others, practice edifying not corrupt speech*. Now just think what your relationships, family, city would be like if you told the truth, were less outraged, spoke to encourage others, gave generously! Our relationships would be richer, our families better, cities safer. This new ethic, acting in the likeness of God, is good for the world. Then why do we go back to the old self? That's like the Buccaneers playing the Patriots and Tom Brady suddenly changing jerseys and throwing touchdowns for the Patriots. That's his old team; he's part of a new organization! And so it is with us! When Paul says *the new has come*, the verb means *new creation has come in the past and continues into the future*. In other words new creation has arrived, but it's still working its way out. We're like patients who have taken a life-saving vaccine. Internally, we have the cure but externally it takes time for new life to work its way out, for the old to recede and new to fully appear. But, if you're a new creation, new life *will* appear. So put off the old humanity and put on your new humanity. Walk around in

the jersey of your new creation. Your ethic is for the good of the world.

## **New Future**

When a new record, season of a show, or film is announced we can get quite excited. We sign up to get updates, follow on social media, count down the days, anticipate the release. God's new creation is worth anticipating way more than that, not just for a season *but your entire life*. Why? Because it is infinitely bigger and better. The whole concept of new creation comes out of an old testament promise. **For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create** (Is 65:17). *God* will make *all* things new. New heavens, new earth. And in the next breath he says, the old things will be forgotten: failure, sins, trauma, tragedy, natural disaster, war all gone. Not even a fading memory. Instead, we will rejoice forever in his new future. And the crazy thing is *that new future is now!* When Jesus emerged from the tomb, the future was rolled back into the present. *Now is new creation: If anyone is in Christ, new creation: the old has passed away; behold, the new has come!* New creation has landed and is radiating outward until the whole cosmos becomes the picture of health. So sign up for his



updates, follow him closely: live with a new perspective, identity, ethic, and anticipate God's new future. *It's* a new life worth living for.