

NEW CREATIONS IN CHRIST (2)

Dr. Fred Fourie ~Sunday, January 28, 2007

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Therefore, if anyone is in
CHRIST
a n y o n e
h e i s a n e w
CREATION
the old has gone, the new has
COME!
C h r i s t
2 C o r i n t h i a n s 5 : 1 7

Matthew 5:13-19; 23- 24

"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one [after lighting a lamp](#) puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. [Verse 23](#) So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.

People across the world know ~or have at least heard the name of Jesus. From the beginning of the Christian era, countless millions of human beings [have hotly debated](#) what Jesus looked like. There are no dependable surviving descriptions of the outward appearance of Jesus. Fact is, if Jesus lived on earth today we would walk by him without even noticing. Yet, although we have no idea what he looked like, many of us know that we will immediately recognize Jesus when we see him! We have seen [him take shape in the eyes, the faces, the hearts, the words, the deeds, and the unselfish love of godly people](#) that crossed our way along the highways and byways of our earthly experience.

Although you and I have never seen the Lord in person, we have seen him so clearly in the lives of people who were so significantly touched and changed by their faith that we can describe them as Creations in Christ. Jesus is alive today in the actions, example and words of women and men ~ noble, kind, forgiving, and loving. O, I know what Jesus looked like and I am sure what he did **not** look like.

The warning of General Douglas, so far, has been in vain. He said, "We have had our last chance. If we do not now devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door. The problem is theological and involves a spiritual improvement of

human character. It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh."

As Christians we believe that the "greater and more equitable system" begins to take shape when men and women like us, here and across the world, get touched and changed by the powerful life, love and example of the One who opened a door for us from where we can reach and touch the face of God. If there is to be a holy war, then the weapons war must be of the Spirit and not of the flesh.

Who is Jesus? Who is the real Jesus? Who is Jesus really? As long as I can remember, I have been on a quest to find the truest possible answer to that question! Some of us in this Church have this search in common. Many of us are spending at least parts of our lives in search of meaningful answers to this searching question. We study, we seek and we learn from one another. If you have insights and answers that I still have to learn ~ please stop by and tell me.

A gifted author wrote that Jesus indeed turned the other cheek during his last week on earth when darkness came and the agonizing journey to the cross took place! When Pilate strikes Jesus on the cheek, sadly, Jesus smiles and **offers his other cheek**. He responds on a different, higher level and demonstrates the power of his words with his very life.

The Bible provides some unique glimpses of Jesus in action. He takes sides for the losers when no one else seems to care. He disappears with a degraded tax collector Zacchaeus into a sinner's home in Jericho and emerges with a repentant son of Abraham, willing to repay all the wrong that he had ever done. He comes between a fallen woman and her executioners and sets her free from death, shame and sin. He refuses to desecrate the temple while others profit. He teaches forgiveness, seventy times seven, for those who trespass against us, while we think that even seven times are plenty. He tells Peter to put his sword back in its sheath and not to defend him with earthly might.

When we draw our swords and descent to lower levels of response, **joining the wolf packs and act like wolves**, he invites us to follow him, rise to higher ground, and respond in different ways. In the story of the prodigal son, he introduces us to a father **who loves when hate seems to be the natural option**. Thus, he gave us the winning image of God ~ granting forgiveness to every prodigal child, even when severe punishment seems to be justified.

He chooses to break the chain of hate and revenge and **shocks people with his precious acts of love, hope and forgiveness**. As we watch him in amazement, we begin to understand the power of his doing, we begin to adore the truth that we never saw or realized before.

Jesus taught us the secret! Where there is alienation and bitterness between people, between individuals ~ someone has to take the first step, someone has to do the unexpected **and break the downward spiral of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth**. Someone has to be big enough to sacrifice own pride, and follow the example of a Master who said, **"Forgive, for they know not what they are doing!"**

Love bids you and me to take the first difficult steps to break through the chain of hate, and thus break out of the paralysis brought about by the old way of responding to the world around us.

Even today, we can choose anew to follow the Prince of Peace as he guides towards a better tomorrow. Jesus shows the way for the building of bridges where relations are broken. **"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see ~ everything has become new!"**

What was the outcome of Jesus' Ministry on earth, now so long ago? What happened to the mighty empire of his executioners? The Roman Empire did not withstand the test of time. Its remnants can only be found in museums and forgotten places. What happened to

the people of long ago who sought his death? We have even forgotten their names.

The journey of Jesus, the living Prince of Peace, continues through the ages. Countless millions have discovered **the power and majesty of his example and words**. The image of the insignificant, despised, pale bleeding figure on the cross have conquered death and out-lived them all and is still moving through the centuries with recreating power.

Paul wrote, "We are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

Today, I entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

AMEN