**Being New in Christ**

*“16From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. 17Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 18All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.20Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:16-21, ESV)*

 Through Jesus, old things have passed away, and the new has come. Greetings dearly beloved as we continue today to focus on the new life we can have in Christ, given that God has granted us to enter a new year. My prayer is that this new year will be a blessed and God-pleasing one for all of us, as well as a year of great spiritual progress. God did a huge thing by sending us His Son. Not only did He reconcile us with Himself through Jesus, but He passed on to us a ministry of reconciliation. The old way of living has no place for a believer in that ministry. For that reason, today we’re going to speak about that new spiritual status, which each of us Jesus-followers are called to live out and experience. Let’s move then to the examination of this new spiritual status.

 If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation, because old things have passed away, and all of life has become new. It is not only important that we know this truth, but that we also understand and believe it. The Apostle Paul was in a struggle with the Corinthian Church in this and previous verses in his letter because there were other teachers that were causing the believers, the church of God to stray from His path. He was battling against those teachers’ hidden or underhanded ways, and he was making it very clear that he had the ministry of an Apostle, because He had seen the Lord in a vision, as well as heard from Him in his years of training in Arabia.[[1]](#footnote-1) Paul says that being in Christ means living a new life. The thinking patterns, lifestyles, and especially the priorities of the past have passed away. Just as Jesus had said, “*If someone is not born from the top[[2]](#footnote-2), he cannot see the Kingdom of God.”* The Apostle Paul says that for a born-again believer, a Christian, everything pertaining to this new spiritual status comes from God. In other words, he or she that is reconciled with God through Jesus has a new direction in their life. They have a new work to do as a life goal. And what is that? It is the ministry (or life-service) of reconciliation. How is that work to be done? As the embodiment of God’s righteousness.

 There are stories that tell us about the end of the Second World War, in which we find out that some continued to fight even after the formal end of the war was signed. That took place because of old information. What needed to happen was the putting aside of the old intelligence, because it was out of place and the war had concluded and peace had already been restored.

 Today, on this first Sunday of the New Year, let us pay attention to our spiritual status quo in this same manner. Let us renew within us the realities of both having been reconciled to God, as well as the job to reconcile others to Him. Let us no longer continue the old battles; let us not resurrect old lifestyles/habits from the grave. Rather, let us live a reconciled and reconciling life.

 Again, if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation, because old things have passed away, and all of life has become new. May this New Year bring with it practical expression of our new spiritual status in Christ.

Through Jesus, old things have passed away, and the new has come. The Lord Bless you all – Amen.

1. This was because the Corinthian church needed to be reminded of who was truly in charge, and who had the correct revelation. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This is the closest English idiom to the literal Greek text – it gives us a sense of “again”, and “from above/heaven/spirit”. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)