



ALL THINGS NEW

FIRST EPISCOPAL DISTRICT BIBLE STUDY

SEPTEMBER 2017

September Theme: A New Creation

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A New Word

Through Christ Jesus we become a new spiritual creation in God. There is no hierarchy in Christ based on national heritage, race, social order, or sex. He died for all so that all could live. Even through our differences we are created anew as one.

A New Understanding

The Second Letter to the Corinthians was written about 57 AD by the Apostle Paul to the Christians in the city of Corinth. Corinth was a port city in Greece, a crossroad of many cultures, with a history of sinful and idolatrous living. When the converted Corinthian Christians came out of such a culture of paganism, it is no surprise that they were slow in learning Christian ways. In previous letters to the Corinthian church, Paul voiced concerns about how they treated one another and answered their questions about worship. Second Corinthians is composed of two new letters: a letter of joy and reconciliation (chapters 1-9) and a "harsh" letter (chapters 10-13). In Second Corinthians, Paul addresses the church's response to his previous letters and defends his ambassadorship for Christ.

Our study passage finds Paul employing a defense of his own ministry as an opportunity to clarify the significance of the New Covenant. Paul, who had once persecuted Christians he wrongly judged to be blaspheming God, now faced persecution from critics who judged him to be an unworthy messenger of the gospel because of

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KEY VERSE

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

- Galatians 3:28

STUDY

PASSAGE

2 Corinthians

5:11-21



A New Understanding (continued)

his look and speech. Paul encourages the Corinthians to embrace what he himself had to learn – that Christians are not to judge others by outward appearance, but should look at the heart of the individual. Furthermore, the truth of the gospel is that all are “reconciled” or forgiven by God for their sins through Jesus Christ. When a person is in Christ they have new life, a new status, a new outlook, and a new role. As ambassadors for Christ, we represent God and share the message that all have the opportunity to be forgiven and to change; all have the opportunity to repent and become new creatures who die to their old sins and rise to walk in a new life in Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

¹¹Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. ¹²We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. ¹³If we are “out of our mind,” as some say, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵And 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. ¹⁶So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

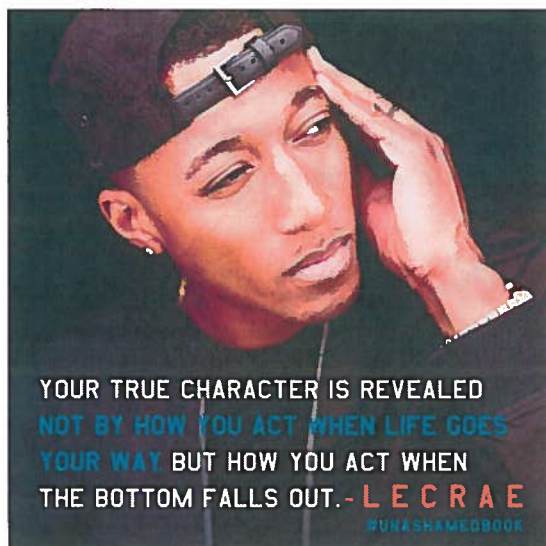
The Old in the Text

1. What is the relationship between the way Paul is viewed by his critics in Corinth and the way that Paul himself previously viewed Christ and His church?
2. Compare and contrast the old lifestyle of the Corinthian people to their new life as Christians.

The New in the Text

1. What does Paul mean when he says that all things are passed away and all things have become new?
2. What does the scripture identify as the “new” things in a sinner’s life after they receive Christ and become a new creation?
3. This scripture reveals the good news of the new beginning one can enjoy. What responsibility comes with this gift of being a new creation?

A New Look



In his memoir, “Unashamed,” Lecrae Moore, a Christian and award winning rapper, tells his story of abuse as a child, abandonment by his father, an adolescence of rebellion and misbehavior, and experiences as a young adult with drugs, promiscuity, gang identity, and attempted suicide. At the same time, Lecrae had a loving grandmother who sowed seeds into him as she introduced him to Christ and the church. At an early age Lecrae realized his love for and talent for hip-hop music and poetry. Hip-hop did not judge him, but gave him a voice for expression. Through his music he found an outlet to “name his wounds” and talk about his abuse and pain. He found helpful role models in hip-hop and achieved “success.” Yet, he still felt

lost and unfulfilled. As a result, he abused women and himself. This was his old life.

Lecrae’s life changed at a watch night service where he heard the words from 1 Corinthians 6:20, “For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” At that moment his life passed before him and he then began to realize that God loved him despite everything that had happened to him and everything that he had done. The next thing he knew he was saying, “Please forgive me God, I’m sorry. Please forgive me, I’m so sorry.” Lecrae recalls, “At the countdown of midnight we counted down to Happy New Year. This moment marked more than a new year for me. It was a new era, the first day of the rest of my life.” This was the beginning of his new life, a new creature in God.

Lecrae began to study the word and follow the ministry of Renovation Church and Pastor James White and other ministers. He continued to make a lot of mistakes, but God kept working on him. Many Christians questioned his hip hop music and if it was appropriate in the church. Many non-Christians and those in the music industry did not accept his music because he is a Christian. Despite the adversity, his 2014 album, *Anomaly*, debuted at #1 on *Billboard* “Rap, Gospel, and Christian” charts. He has been nominated for many awards and recognized for his faith and his music. Lecrae is now married with three beautiful children. In addition, he founded ReachLife Ministries, a nonprofit that seeks to bridge the gap between faith and the urban context.

[Summary from *Unashamed* (B & H Publishing Group, 2016) by Lecrae Moore].

Special Note: You may wish to play the song “Tell the World” by Lecrae (ft. Mali Music) as a companion to this story.

A New Conversation

1. What is the righteousness of God in v. 21? As new creatures, why are we to become the righteousness of God? How do we see this exemplified in Lecrae Moore's story?
2. As a Hip-hop artist and rapper, Lecrae represents some of the cultural differences that millennials present to the church that baby boomers have difficulty accepting. Can you name some of these differences?
3. Although Hip-hop culture has a negative reputation, it reflects the lived experience of a large segment of our community. Because of some of our old views, it also presents hindrances to the church's acceptance of young people. What aspects of Hip-hop culture can the Church incorporate to draw young adults into a new life in Christ Jesus?
4. As ambassadors for Christ how can you and your Church reach out to the unsaved?
5. How can the Church encourage and minister to new converts in their new walk in Christ?

Notes:

A New Walk

1. In what ways do you see yourself as a new creature in your daily walk?
2. Do you find it difficult to accept others who once struggled in their old, sinful life now that they have become a new creature in their acceptance of Christ as their Lord and Savior? If yes, are you able to see how they are also like you? How does God see all of us?
3. What are some of the responsibilities of being a new creation and being reconciled to God?
4. What steps should we as new creatures in Christ take to develop a righteous life and become ambassadors for Christ?