

Behold! The Old Has Gone, the New Has Come!

Today's Scripture is 2 Corinthians 5:17, The Apostle Paul writes,

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come!" (ESV)

I would like to begin today's message with a fundamental question:

Why are we here to worship God?

Why have we gathered together at this time, in this place, instead of being somewhere else?

Is it simply because it has become our weekly habit? or

Is it because we would feel that something is missing if we did not worship on Sunday?

Or is it because our hearts are filled with gratitude for the Lord, who has made us new creations through Jesus Christ, and we have come to worship Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength?

I often ask myself: Why? Why am I here? Every time I ask that question, it leads me back to Jesus Christ.

In today's Scripture, the Apostle Paul reminds us: *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come!"* (2 Corinthians 5:17)

I believe we are here today because, through Jesus Christ, we have been born again as new creations and are called to live our lives with Him and for Him

Paul also declares in Romans 11:36, *"For from Him and through Him and for Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen."*

When we understand this truth, how could we turn away from the love of Jesus Christ? How could we turn away from His cross?

Instead, we are drawn ever closer to Him by His love.

As those who have become new creations in Christ, we know that we must be different from our old selves. Our lives, our hearts, our priorities, and our purpose are being transformed because we now belong to Him.

Think about Paul.

Before he became Paul, he was known as Saul—a man bound by the law before he encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus.

Saul came from a respected family, received an excellent education, and became a highly trained scholar of the Jewish law. He was deeply religious and sincerely believed that he was serving God.

Yet, despite all of these advantages, he could not accept those who believed differently from him. Instead of reflecting God's compassion for the weak, the poor, and the marginalized, Saul devoted himself to persecuting those who followed Jesus Christ. He even approved of their imprisonment and sought to destroy the early church.

Then, on the road to Damascus, everything changed.

Saul, driven by zeal and determined to arrest Christians, was suddenly confronted by the risen Jesus.

Acts 9:4–5 tells us:

***“He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him,
‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’***

‘Who are you, Lord?’ Saul asked. ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ He replied.”

That encounter changed Saul forever. When Saul met Jesus Christ, he became a new creation. His life was completely transformed. His understanding of God changed. His view of people changed. His mission changed. Even the way he loved God was transformed.

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”

²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? (Romans 7:24)

¹⁶ Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst? ¹⁷ If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person; for God’s temple is sacred, and you together are that temple. (1Corinthians 3:16-17)

Before becoming a new creation in Christ, lived for thirty-seven years without believing in God. I was trapped in my own world.

Caught in self-centered thinking, I climbed an endless ladder of desire—always striving for more: more possessions, more recognition, and higher status. Yet no matter how high I climbed, true satisfaction remained beyond my reach.

I majored in electrical engineering, received scholarships throughout my education from college through my Ph.D., and studied diligently for ten years before becoming a full-time university professor at

my age of thirty. **I achieved my dream quickly. I married at twenty-nine, welcomed my first son, and began a happy family life with my loving husband.**

Yet, despite all of these blessings, a corner of my heart felt empty—something was missing. I felt uneasy, restless, and I struggled endlessly to fill that void.

I practiced Taekkyeon, a traditional Korean martial art that unites mind and body, and learned danjeon breathing.

I even carried talismans in my pocket, hoping they would bring good luck

But the emptiness remained. Not even my husband's love could fill it. For thirty-seven years, I kept searching, striving, and chasing after things that could never satisfy the deepest longing of my heart.

Then, in September 2003, I took a sabbatical at UC Berkeley, carrying eight talismans, hoping to broaden my academic horizons and fulfill yet another desire for higher status. But God had a very different plan. There, I encountered Jesus—the same Jesus Paul met on the road to Damascus. Through His love, and through the love of people who faithfully followed Him, I came to know Jesus personally and received Him as my Lord and Savior.

After that, I realized that the emptiness in my heart—the void I had tried to fill for so many years—was a place that only God could fill. Only when He fills that space we can truly discern and know the truth.

Through His Word, the Lord began to reveal what was hidden deep within my heart. **I saw the rotten, stinking garbage of jealousy, envy, hatred, and arrogance—all the things I had used to build myself up. These were my old selves. The things I had accumulated over 37 years, without even recognizing them as sin, were lodged in every cell of my body.**

I realized that I had thought I loved others, but I didn't truly understand the meaning of love.

Paul's confession became my own. "24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?" (Romans 7:24)

One Sunday morning, as I listened to the sermon, I was confronted with the sinfulness within me. I felt the weight of the Lord's death on the cross—for me, someone who seemed beyond redemption because of my hidden sins. I could not hold back my tears. I could not even lift up my head.

And then, deep within my heart, the Lord's words came to me tenderly:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away; behold, the new has come!"

The words, "behold, the new has come!" sent ripples through me. It felt as if they resonated through every cell of my body. A ray of hope shone into the darkest parts of my heart.

I realized that even a sinner like me could become a new creation through the love of Jesus, who gave everything on the cross.

I also realized that everything I had pursued for thirty-seven years—success, recognition, and status—could never satisfy the deepest longing of my soul.

Only Jesus Christ could.

I understood that the kingdom of God comes not from status or achievement, but from spiritual maturity—by filling the empty spaces of our hearts with God Himself.

As those who have become new creations through Jesus Christ, I realized that our path is to walk with the Lord—to go where His love reaches others. I came to understand that God's glory is revealed through lives that help, encourage, and build up one another, guided by His love and grace rather than by competition.

God changed not only my heart but also the direction of my life.

He called me back to the United States, the place where I had first encountered His grace.

Although I had already become a tenured professor, I discovered that God's calling was far more valuable than my academic achievements.

By His grace, I studied theology, prepared for ministry, and was eventually ordained as a pastor in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Then God led me to the college campus, where I have been serving students since 2016.

Today, each of us has a choice.

Will we continue living according to our old selves, chasing the things of this world? Or will we choose, each day, to live as new creations in Jesus Christ?

At the beginning of this message, I asked, "Why are we here today?"

I believe we now know the answer.

We are here because Jesus Christ has made us new creations.

We are here to worship Him with grateful hearts.

We are here to grow in His love.

And we are here to share that love with a world that longs for hope.

The same Jesus Christ who transformed Saul into Paul, and who transformed my life, is still transforming lives today.

His invitation is the same for every one of us: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation.

***The old has passed away; behold, the new has come!*"**

May we leave this place today not simply as people who attended worship, but as people who have been renewed by the grace of Jesus Christ and are ready to live as His new creation every day.

May God bless you all. Amen.