

New Creation : All Of This Comes From God

[based on 2 Corinthians 5.17-6.2]

Introductory Notes

Second Corinthians 5.17-6.2 is one of the great declarations of the new life given in Christ. In this passage, Paul calls believers to accept and embrace the new identity given them in Christ. They have not merely adopted a new philosophy or gained new knowledge or spiritual insight. In the depths of their being their very natures have been changed. And this has not been just the scattered redemption of select individuals, but part of God's over-riding action of restoring all of creation. [In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul speaks of Christ's resurrection as the "first-fruits" of this restoration.] New creatures participating in God's new order.

Paul's exuberant declaration, however, is accompanied by a warning: do not accept this grace and gift of new life in vain. Embrace it. And as new creatures, Paul calls the Corinthians to be God's agents of reconciliation, God's righteousness in the world.

This choral reading was composed to be performed as a "blast" of Scripture intended to ring in the listeners' ears [and hearts]. It takes these seven verses from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians and explodes them with resonance through other parts of Scripture. Interweaving with the Second Corinthians text are references from Genesis, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, 1 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, Hebrews, 2 Timothy, 2 Peter and Revelation. So the pace is meant to be fast and tight, the tone — bright and exuberant. The occasional joyous outburst would not be inappropriate.

New Creation : All Of This Comes From God

a dramatic reading in three voices

[based on 2 Corinthians 5.17-6.2]

A So if anyone is in Christ
B in Christ
C in the body of Christ
B in the truth of Christ
C in the freedom of Christ
B in the love, hope and grace of Christ [2 Timothy 2.1]
ABC in Christ
A If anyone is in Christ
B there it is
C look
B look again
C there it is
A — new creation
B new
C creation
[
B Like the first creation
C when God the Spirit hovered over the waters
B first creation
A light where there was darkness
 life where there was chaos
 breath into flesh [Genesis 2.7]
B first creation
A Only now
 everything old
C the old order of things
A has passed away
B Look
A Everything has become new!
B Look again
A What is new has arrived!
C No need to remember past events
 No need to think what was before [Isaiah 43.18]
A A new heaven and a new earth [Revelations 21.1]
B the place where righteousness will be at home [2 Peter 3.13]

C A taste of the time
 B when hunger and thirst [Isaiah 49.10]
 death and mourning and crying and pain
 ABC are no more [Revelation 21.4]
 B are swallowed up [1 Corinthians 15.54]
 [
 C All this comes from God
 the author and finisher of our faith [Hebrews 12.2]
 B the fountain of life [Psalm 36.9]
 C of living waters [Jeremiah 2.13]
 A our refuge [Psalm 62.8]
 our rock and our salvation [Psalm 62.2]
 C All this comes from God
 A in God
 B in Christ
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 A And so now
 C now is the day of salvation
 A as new creatures in Christ
 B as reconciled to God through Christ
 A Now in Christ Jesus
 B as you who were once far away
 have been brought near to God through Christ [Ephesians 2.13]
 C when he made peace [Colossians 1.20]
 he himself is our peace [Ephesians 2.14]
 B becoming sin who knew no sin
 C by his death on the cross [Colossians 1.20]
 A This is the righteousness of God
 B the righteousness that is of God
 the righteousness that comes from God [Philippians 3.9]
 C As new creatures in Christ
 B we are now ambassadors for Christ
 A appointed and anointed agents
 trusted agents
 B called in righteousness [Isaiah 42.6]
 A given the ministry of reconciliation
 C to be a covenant for the people [Isaiah 49.8]
 [
 B And so now that we are reconciled
 we are called to reconcile
 C We urge you

ABC Be reconciled to God
 B as we work together with him
 ABC Accept this grace of God
 C Now is the day of salvation
 B as we become
 ambassadors for Christ
 A standing firm in Christ [2 Corinthians 1.22]
 C as God's righteousness
 as God's handiwork [Ephesians 2.10]
 B making God's appeal through us
 C God's ambassadors
 A Now is the day of salvation
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 C God is in you
 B re-creating you in Christ
 A Now is the day of salvation
 C All this comes from God
 [
 B New creation
 A New creatures in Christ
 ABC All this comes from God
 Amen

Presentation time: 3-1/2 minutes

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Now it is God who makes you stand firm in Christ.
He anointed you,
set his seal of ownership on you,
and put his Spirit in your hearts as a deposit,
guaranteeing what is to come [2 cor 1.22,23]

For we are God's handiwork
created in Christ Jesus to do good works,
which God prepared in advance for us to do [Ephesians 2.10]

The apostle Paul
saw the whole broad sweep of Scripture
the full broad story of chosenness and promise
as the story of God's righteousness
God's covenant faithfulness
reaching out
to reclaim
 a fallen creation and a broken humanity
For the apostle Paul this epic story is anchored in
God's universal promise
made through Abraham
the covenant renewal and restoration
made through Moses
and the revelation of God's salvation to all peoples
made through Isaiah
For Paul
the identity and mission of God's church
the community of believers
are found
are embedded
deep inside this dramatic story of redemption
[
God's righteousness
How does this give shape to Paul's understanding and his mission?
When Paul writes his second letter to the church in Corinth
he asks three questions
and he takes three answers from Scripture
[
Three questions
Question One
What time is it now?
[
God says in the words of Isaiah
"Now is the acceptable time
Now today
is the day of salvation"
So as we work together with him,
ambassadors for Christ
appointed agents
God making his appeal through us
we encourage you

we urge you
this day of salvation
not to accept the grace of God in vain
embrace the grace of God
for God is making his appeal through us

[
See
now is the acceptable time
Now is the day of salvation!
for the ends of the ages has come upon you
See, now is the day of salvation!

[
Paul's second question goes like this
We know God is in the world
What is God doing in the world?

[
God speaks again in the words of Isaiah
"There is no need to remember past events
no need to think about what was done before
Look, I am doing something new
now it emerges [appears]
can you not see it?

Yes, I am making a road
a highway in the desert
and rivers in the wasteland Isaiah 43.18
something new
And so if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation
new creation
See, everything has become new
Everything old has passed away
Everything has become new
All of this comes from God

[
Indeed
God the Father
has given us a new birth
new creation
by raising Christ from the dead
so that we have a sure and living hope
and the promise of an inheritance
that can never be spoilt or soiled and never fade away 1 Peter 1.3

[
All this comes from God
who reconciled us to himself through Christ
and has given us
given us
the ministry of reconciliation
that is
in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself
not counting their sins against them
and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us
the message of reconciliation to us
Now is the day of salvation

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The final question remains
What has God called us to do as his people?

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From now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view
Though at one time we regarded even Christ in this way
we do so no longer
This old way has passed away
We are now ambassadors for Christ
his authorized messengers
proclaiming the gospel of God's righteousness
since God is making his appeal through us;
And so we entreat you on behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.
Today is the day of salvation
For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin,
so that in him we might become the righteousness of God
the righteousness of God
called to embody the message of reconciliation
by ourselves becoming the righteousness of God
the righteousness of God
For God declares through Isaiah
The people I have shaped for myself will broadcast my praises Isaiah 43.21

[
All this comes from God

[
Thanks be to God
Amen

NOTES

God is in you re-creating you in Christ

God is and forever righteous

At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you." [check context]

What we have been waiting for is what he promised
the new heavens and new earth
the place where righteousness will be at home 2 Peter 3.13

reconcile :
restore friendly relations between
cause to coexist in harmony
make or show to be compatible
settle a disagreement

ambassador :
an accredited diplomat
official representative or promotor of a specific activity
authorized messenger

diplomat :
a person who is tactful and skillful in managing delicate situations, handling people
a person appointed by a national government to conduct official negotiations and
maintain political, economic, and social relations with another country or countries