

**The Word of the New Creation**  
2Corinthians 5:14-21  
Good Friday, March 30, 2018  
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

If all have died because He died, then all have died.

If all have died, they have died such that as they live may live for the One who died for them and was raised.

If they have lived, however, they have died while they have lived. Thus God when God talks about the new creation in 2Corinthians, chapter five, He is not talking about the new creation that takes place at the end of time where the final enemy, death, is once and for all defeated. He is talking about a new creation that takes place while you are alive.

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. It is as simple as that. The reason that if you are in Christ the fact that He has died for all applies to you. It is imputed to you. God reckons it to you. God reckons you dead such that you no longer live for yourself, but for Him who died for you and was raised again.

The new creation consists in the fact that you have died to living for yourself and now live for Him. To put it in existential terms, you are a new you. To put it in creation terms, you are a new creation. To put it in Good Friday terms, you have died and risen again. You are in Christ. You are a new creation.

New creations do not come about by themselves. New creations are like the old creation in this way. The old creation did not come about by itself. The new creation does not come about by itself. God spoke the new creation into existence by His word of power. God spoke and speaks the new creation of being dead to self and alive to Christ by the word of His power.

The word of His power that brought the creation into existence was a simple set of words. He said things like, "Let there be light," and there was light. He said, "Let there be an expanse to separate the waters under the expanse from the waters that are upon the face of the expanse," and it was so. He said, "Let the waters under the expanse be gathered together into one place and let the dry land appear," and the waters gathered themselves together into seas and the dry land appeared. He said, "Let there be lights in heavens to rule over the day and over the night. Let them mark the times for seasons, days, and years," and it was so. He said, "Let the earth bring forth vegetation with seed in it according to their kinds," and it was so. He said, "Let the birds fly on the face of the heavens and let the waters team with the great sea creatures," and it was so. He said, "Let the earth produce animals according to their kinds, the beasts of the field and all things that creep upon the earth," and it was so. He said, "Let us make man in our image and according to our likeness and let them rule over the fish the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing," and it was so. In the image of God He made them. Male and female He made them.

The word of His power brought the creation into existence. The word of His power was all commands. He commanded light to exist and it did. He commanded the expanse that we call sky or heaven to exist and it did. He commanded the sun and the moon and the stars to exist and they did. He commanded them to set the times for days and months and years and seasons, and they do. He commanded the fish and the birds to exist and they do. He commanded them to be fruitful and multiply and they do. He commanded the earth to appear and to bring forth vegetation and it does. He commanded the earth to bring forth all of the living things and He told them be fruitful and they exist because of His command and they are fruitful because of His command. Even the word that brings forth

those who are made in His image is in the form of a command. He commands and they exist. He commands them to be fruitful and they are.

It should be obvious from the foundational chapter of the whole Bible that not all of the commands of God are about obedience. Some commands are, but these initial foundational commands are about creation not obedience. Light cannot obey God when God commands it to exist. It doesn't exist to be commanded! Sun and moon cannot obey God when God commands them to mark the seasons, days, months, and years. They are not made in the image of God that they should obey Him. They are not even animals that they should be trained. They do what they do because the word of God's power creates them to do what they do.

Thus also when He commands us to be fruitful and multiply that is not a word that we obey. That is a word that makes it possible for us to be fruitful and multiply. To do otherwise is not merely disobedience, but living contrary to one's creation, to live contrary to one's very being.

Thus when the incarnate God tells a deaf man's ears to be opened, it is obvious that the deaf man is not obeying Jesus when suddenly he hears. His ears cannot hear the command of Jesus, much less obey it. And even if he could read Jesus' lips or something like that, he still could not make himself hear. The command of Jesus to the ears of the deaf man is a creative command. The command creates the thing that it commands. Jesus is opening the man's ears Himself by telling them to be opened.

The same thing is true when Jesus tells dead Lazarus, "Come forth." Dead Lazarus cannot hear Jesus. He is dead. Dead Lazarus cannot obey Jesus. He is dead. The command that the incarnate God issues to Lazarus is the command that raises Lazarus from the dead. It is a creative command.

And so it is with all of the miracles of the Lord where He issues a command. And so it is with the Lord when He tells you to repent....

You were dead in your trespasses and sins. You cannot perform one act of righteousness before God, none whatsoever. Therefore when Jesus issues you the command to repent, that is not a command that you can obey. It is rather a command that creates repentance within you.

This is why Luther's discovery of the proper translation of that Greek term is so important. The proper translation is not "Repent!" but rather, "Be penitent!" The Lord is telling you to be something that you cannot be, but do not worry He is the God who raises the dead. He told Lazarus to come out and he came out. He tells you to be penitent and you are. And from that penitence that He grants to you comes all of the fruit of people who no longer live for themselves, but rather for Him who died for them and rose again.

This is why it is so important that you do not reduce the word of those who serve as God's ambassadors.

Sometimes this happens. I bring to you a word of the Lord and you do not like it and so you tell others, "Pastor says." Even though I can quote book, chapter, and verse to support that what I said comes from God, you don't like and so you say, "Pastor says." In a context where you are dealing with a word of God that you do not like and you will not admit that God says it, but rather try to reduce the impact of what it says by saying, "Pastor says," you are tying my hands. If I cannot bring you a word from the Lord that you don't like, how can I bring you a word from the Lord that you do like? Or to put it another way, if you will reduce what God says when He tells you something that you don't like to being merely pastor's word what is to stop the word of salvation that I bring from being merely pastor's word? That is why so many of you doubt your salvation. You do not believe that you have heard from God because you do not believe what God says about His word.

Paul says it as clearly as he can in 2Corinthians, chapter five. We are Christ's ambassadors. When he says, "We are Christ's ambassadors," he is talking about himself and his fellow apostles and his fellow pastors who are working with him. In 2Corinthians he is specifically talking about Timothy, the pastor at Ephesus.

He furthermore says that through them God is delivering His word to the Corinthian congregation. That is what ambassadors do. They deliver the words of the one who sent them to the person to whom they were sent. The word carries the power and the authority of the one who sent the ambassador. If an ambassador of the United States correctly delivers the word from the President to a foreign authority, the foreign authority may count that the word carries the authority of the President himself.

And what is the word that Paul delivers to the Corinthians and thus also through me to you? "Be reconciled to God!"

That is a creative word. It reconciles you to God because the command itself carries the authority of the God who sent me to tell it to you. It creates reconciliation between you and God. How is this reconciliation founded? It is founded upon the fact that God made Jesus who knew no sin to be sin so that those to whom God issues His command to be reconciled would become the righteousness of God.

If you are the righteousness of God because Jesus has taken away your sin, then anything that would separate you from God has been removed. If your sins have been removed, your separation from God is over. You are reconciled to Him. Listen to the word of His power, "Be reconciled to God!"

This life with God that His death and resurrection brings about, is a life where you do not live for yourselves. You don't need to anymore. You don't need to worry about your salvation anymore or be concerned with your standing before God any more. To live with those worries and concerns is to lead a life that is for yourself.

Since you are reconciled to God, you are free to live a life for others knowing that you are reconciled to God and you have a life with Him.

This is a new creation. It is brought about in the old creation so that you may serve as ambassadors to those to whom God has called you.

It is brought about like all things that God makes, by the word of His power, "Be reconciled to God!"

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.