



UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

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Good day and welcome to Let the Bible Speak. It's my privilege to be with you today to spend a few minutes together in the word of God. The bible is God's Word, and it contains the power of God through His Spirit to change and transform our lives. And that's what I wish to talk to you about today.

In 2 Corinthians 5:14-17, Paul writes: "For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

Paul here explains that he and all those who are saved see Christ in a whole different light than before. The carnal mind which saw the Christ as an earthly and political deliver and which judged men based on whether he was a Jew or Gentile; rich or poor; bond or free, now sees Christ for who He truly is, and evaluates men solely based on their relationship to Him. Paul summarizes this transformation of thought and life by saying that if a man is in Christ, he is a new creation and everything about Him has changed; all that was old has now become new.

This suggests a theme that I want us to consider in our own lives today: Under new management. What changes when Christ takes possession, moves into our heart, and takes over as our Lord? Is your life under new management?

Perhaps you've been to a restaurant and went away disappointed and dissatisfied. The food was cold or didn't taste very good; the dining room was dirty; the staff was lazy or disorganized and the service was lacking. When such is the case, the problem can usually be traced back to poor management. Either someone doesn't know how to run a business, or they don't know how to manage employees and over time, that establishment falls into a state of neglect and will probably eventually go out of business. But one day you pass by and there is a sign in the window or by the road that says in bold letters "Under

New Management” and you decide to give it another chance. You walk in and everything seems to have changed. The servers are friendly and helpful, the food is good, the inside is clean and perhaps updated and suddenly that establishment has a whole new appeal. In fact, it doesn’t even seem like the same restaurant. You would conclude that NEW MANAGEMENT meant a new way of doing business and if that management is good -- the difference can almost immediately be seen.

The same is true in life. When we try to live under our own oversight, we’re really under the management of the devil. Paul said in Romans 6:16, "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?" When we serve the devil, his intention is to make a mess of our lives and to ultimately bring death and destruction. This is, of course, where most of the world is today. In trying to live life their way and in resisting the Lordship and authority of Jesus over their lives, they are instead serving Satan and Satan is a poor manager. Paul also said, "For the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23) But the person who is converted through the power of the gospel and becomes a Christian enters an entirely new domain. Paul says in Colossians 1:13 that "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love," The very term 'kingdom' implies rule and Lordship over subjects and over a territory. Satan is the ruler of this world which has rebelled against God, but when we are redeemed from our sins by the death of Christ, we are brought into His kingdom, and we become His subject and we recognize Him as our King. Thus, we are under new management.

The apostle Paul characterized it like this in our text: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." Now, notice carefully how Paul says we become something entirely new. He doesn’t say that Christ changes a few things about our life, but rather he says we become a new creation in Christ. In other words, everything changes in Christ. Sometimes, I hear well-meaning church members say concerning some moral person who has not obeyed the gospel, "if they would just be baptized, they really wouldn’t have to change much." But regardless of how morally clean of a life a person may live, such a statement misses the whole point of conversion and sanctification. When a person is outside of Christ, there is more amiss in their life than merely a few indiscretions, weaknesses, or failings. Before any person comes to Christ, they are unclean, unholy, unconverted, and unfit to enter the presence of God. It may not immediately appear so to us, but one who has not obeyed the gospel of Christ belongs to a different kingdom; thinks on a different plane; lives by a whole different rule; is motivated by something entirely different; and is ultimately from another world and destined for a far different place. All of that changes when one enters Christ. Christ remakes that person. He or she is born again. They start life anew and everything about that life from the inside out changes. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a NEW CREATION... ALL things have become new." He or she comes under new ownership and new management. What does that mean? What does that look like?

First, the person who comes under Christ’s ownership and management, has a new life. The scriptures teach of every sinner that he or she is "dead in trespasses and sins" but when they come into Christ they are "made alive". (Ephesians 2:1) Paul told the Romans in Romans 6:4 that when they were "...buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Just as Jesus died on the cross, when in faith and repentance we are baptized in Christ, we too die; that is, the old man dies with Christ and just as He was raised up on the third day for our justification, so we are raised from the waters of baptism to a new creation, forgiven of our sins, declared righteous in Him, and begin to walk in a new life. This is the essence of conversion. The old man is to be buried and a new man or woman is to come forth. The

Christian life is truly the Land of Beginning Again. It is not only the erasing of all the sins of the past, but it is a whole new life set before us. That's God's will for you!

I think most people at one time, or another, wish they could live at least part of their life over again. I think at some point, the regrets and failures and missed opportunities of life come back to haunt us and we sigh and wish that only we could go back and do it over again. Well, we can't go back and undo the past, but God, by His grace and in His mercy does offer us the opportunity to go forward with the past forgotten and a new life in Christ. You can have that today. If you're willing to believe and trust Christ and turn away from your sins, thus surrendering to Christ in obedience; to take your stand with Him by confessing Him as the Son of God; and are willing to be immersed in water for the forgiveness of your sins, He has promised a new start for you and a new life can be yours to live. Christ didn't come to improve your life. He didn't come to give you some pointers to make the life you have happier and more successful. He has declared the life you have lived under your own management a failure and lost cause and He wants to take possession, bury that old life in the sea of His forgetfulness, and give you a whole new spiritual existence – ALL THINGS NEW.

Second, when we come under Christ's ownership and management, we have a new position and attitude toward sin. Go back now to Romans 6 and look at what Paul wrote in verses 5 thru 7. He says, "For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin." The Christian's relationship to sin is entirely different. Not only does Paul say that the body of sin is done away with, and we are freed from sin, he rhetorically asked in verse 2, "...How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" Now, the reason Paul asked that question is because he is answering the objection that would be raised by the legalist who says that if salvation is by grace thru faith, then why not continue in sin and just receive more grace? Paul says that's unthinkable! "Certainly not!", he says. "How shall we who DIED to sin live any longer in it?"

Now, sometimes you hear people who claim to be Christians today say, "I'm just an old sinner..." If you point out what the bible says about some sinful practice or behavior, they will say something like: "but we're all sinners anyway" as if to say "why make such a big deal about sin when we're all sinners anyhow..." Now, on one hand, it's true that nobody but Jesus has lived a sinlessly perfect life. John, writing to Christians, said in 1 John 1:8 "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." But he didn't say that to justify a Christian continuing in and living in sin. He said it pointing out the need to confess our sins (which implies repentance) and seek cleansing in the blood of Christ. It's true, as James said in James 3:2 "For we all stumble in many things..." and the Greek word for "stumble" there is the same Greek word he used in chapter 2:10 when he said if we 'offend' in one point of the law, we're guilty of all of it. The word means to trip and figuratively it means to sin or to fail. So, it's very true that as we grow in the likeness of Christ we still contend with sin. But this is no rationalization or justification for a child of God continuing in sin without repentance and without impunity. Absolutely not! And anyone who tries to use the grace of God to justify a Christian continuing in any kind of sin is perverting the gospel and doing so to their own damnation and perhaps to the damnation of others they influence with such an ungodly doctrine.

What does the bible mean when it says we are made free from sin; we have delivered from sin; or we no longer live in sin? It not only means that we have been freed from the guilt of the sins of our past, but it means that have been delivered from the bondage and dominion of sin in our hearts and our lives. The Christian is to strive to live a sinless life. We are to strive to only do those things that please and honor

Christ. We are to treat sin as a deadly interloper and a hated enemy and fortify our heart and our body against it.

I've used this illustration before: if you come home one day to find a thief has broken into your house and stolen something, you would be horrified! You would be alarmed! You would call the police and give them whatever help you could in catching the thief and putting them behind bars. They weren't welcome there and they didn't belong there. And not only that, but you would also be asking for more trouble if you didn't check the doors and windows and reenforce your home against intruders after it was over. You would want to know how they got in; where the breakdown in security was; and you would take action to keep them out in the future. You certainly wouldn't open the door and turn down the covers in the guest room. That's how it is with sin in the life of a Christian. It doesn't belong there. It should not be welcome there. We should fortify our faith against its temptation. We should take whatever steps we can take to avoid it and keep it out. God hates sin and a person who is in Christ hates sin as well. If that's not your attitude toward sin, you're not living under Christ's management. Paul said in Colossians 3:5-6 "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience," That certainly doesn't sound like the Christian just shrugs and excuses sin in his or any other Christian's life under the guise that he's just a sinner anyhow... The Christian has been made free from sin and is to thus live.

But the person under new management lives by a different rule. In Romans 8:1, Paul writes: "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." Now, there are two rules or two forces by which a person lives their life. They either live in the flesh or according to the Spirit. The flesh in and of itself is not wrong. Human beings have instincts and physical appetites and desires. It's not wrong to be hungry. The body needs food to live, and it craves food when it needs it to survive. To become a glutton however is a different matter. Gluttony is a sin. When one gives into overindulgence, he is being controlled by the flesh. Sexuality is not wrong in and of itself. God created it for a purpose. When it is practiced between a man who is scripturally married to a woman, it is a holy and wholesome thing. However, when one is controlled by their instinct or their desire, they are allowing the flesh to rule. The Christian doesn't allow the flesh to control them, but rather they bring the flesh under the control of the Spirit. God's Spirit determines how we live; what is right and what is wrong; what is proper and what is unholy and when we walk in the Spirit, we are controlled by the Spirit who guides and teaches us by means of the word He inspired and gave to us. N

ow, the world does what it does because people in the world live according to the flesh. They do what pleases them. They do what brings them pleasure. They do the things that bring temporal reward to the flesh. The Christian is different though. He now walks by a different rule and is controlled by a different power and that is God's word and God's power. He lives to please the Lord and not himself. He subjects himself to the influence of God's Spirit through the means of the living and transforming Word of the Spirit... the Word of God. You can't expect the world to do much different than what it always has. If you're waiting around for the world to become a better place, that's not going to happen. The world is the world; has always been the world; and always will be the world because the people of the world live according to the flesh and are thus under the dominion of the devil. The gospel changes people though. Christ changes people. Those who are IN CHRIST are not only no longer under condemnation according to Paul but walk according to the Spirit and not in the flesh.

Finally, when NEW management takes over, we live by a different motivation. We live for those things that are not seen as opposed to the things that are. People of the world live for the here and now. They don't live their lives in view of judgment and eternity. They don't live their lives in view of what pleases and honors God. They are wrapped up in the things OF the world and all their hopes lay in the things of this life. Paul however said in 2 Corinthians 4:18, "while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." Everything about the Christian is different, not only because of what Christ is doing for him or her now but because of what Christ has promised them in the future. We are but pilgrims passing through this dark and troubled world. We are strangers here. We have no permanent city here but look for one to come. And we do not look at the things that we can see but at the things we cannot see, which are lasting and eternal.

Friend, that's what happens when you let Christ take over. You become a new creation. Old things pass away, and all things become new, and your life is something it never could have been under your own management. Won't you hand over the keys to the door of your heart and sign the deed over to Him today in gospel obedience? Be baptized into Christ and rise to walk in the joys and wonders of a brand-new life IN HIM.

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