

Remnant Life Church  
May 26, 2024  
**Transformed By Truth**  
2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Last week we talked about the increasing frequency and comfort with lying

- We see it in the news media
- We have come to realize over the past 200+ years that our government is not open and honest with us
- There is no such thing as truth in advertising
- And it has now made its way into our churches
  - The truth of God's Word is being compromised in order to appease a culture and society that wants little if anything to do with the righteousness of God
  - Entire denominations are now presenting the lies of the world as the truth of the Bible
- That is why it is so important that we know what is true and what is false in order to hold and live by the truth

We looked at two instances where Paul addressed in his letters the issue of false doctrine or teaching

- The first was to the new church in Colosse, warning them about the cults and teachers who were saying that Christ was not the only way to God and that more than Christ was needed for salvation
- Then, in **I Timothy**, Paul encourages Timothy to not only warn the people but oppose the false teachers
  - In all of that, he writes that the only truth is that of Christ and Christ alone
- Jesus certainly encountered those who were leading the people away from God with false teaching
  - Most notably, the Pharisees and Sadducees
  - They were supposed to lead the people in their spiritual walk instead, they taught them things that were not about the love of God but rather their own personal gain

How can you determine if what is being said is the truth of the Gospel?

1. First and foremost, it must align fully and wholly with the Word of God
2. The emphasis must be on what has been done for you, not what you do
3. It must promote unity, not division, among the people
4. The leadership or speaker must be humble and not filled with pride

And so because truth is the foundation for our belief, what impact should the truth have on your life?

- In other words, what should the truth do if lies must be exposed to protect you from their effects?
- Very simply, it should transform you!

**READ – 2 Cor 5:16-21**

**2 Corinthians 5:17**, perhaps more than any other verse in the Bible, encapsulates the transformative power of Christ in our lives...all things become new.

Let's examine this morning how this should impact our lives...

1. What does it mean to be a 'new creation?'
  - a. Paul is describing a fundamental change to our life because of Christ's presence in our heart
  - b. The phrase "in Christ" is at the center of this change
    - i. The literal translation from the original Greek of 'in Christ' is...
    - ii. *A fixed position with the anointed Son of God*
    - iii. It is a vital, all-encompassing relationship with Jesus through faith
  - c. This differentiates between the old life and the new
    - i. The old life is characterized by sin and, because of that, separation from God
    - ii. This new life is marked by righteousness and fellowship with God
    - iii. **Gal 2:20** - *I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*
      1. Notice what Paul is saying here
      2. The old life has been crucified – meaning put to death
        - a. That includes the sinful nature
        - b. As well as its power over us!
      3. Jesus now lives in us
        - a. Because of that, our identity, our motivations, and our actions are all molded and shaped by the presence of Jesus in the person of the Holy Spirit
      4. This is what it means to be a new creation
    - d. And that transformation is made in both the internal and the external portions of our lives
      - i. It begins on the inside, within your heart and mind
        1. Because your heart is now different, it impacts the way you think
        2. And the way you think will change the way you act
      - ii. This is not, nor can it be, external transformation only
        1. People may say they have changed and may even demonstrate that for a while
        2. But unless the nature and the identity of the person have been transformed, the change on the outside will not last.
    - e. The transformation of the caterpillar is a perfect example of what happens to the life fully surrendered to Jesus
      - i. The caterpillar's old life is one of crawling and hiding among the leaves that it eats
      - ii. But when it emerges from the cocoon, it has been completely transformed into something completely different...a beautiful butterfly
      - iii. Now it does not crawl, it flies and moves about pollinating flowers to spread beauty because of what it has now become.

- iv. So, too we are transformed in a similar way having now been set free to live in His glory
2. This new life means we are now free of the old life
    - a. I believe that many Christians fail to grasp the depth of this truth
      - i. Your sinful nature, your past mistakes, the separation from God that sin brings is not just put aside, it is completely eradicated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ!
      - ii. **Eph 4:22-24** - *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*
        1. Look again at what that says...*put on the new self*
          - a. The literal translation of that phrase is to sink into a garment
          - b. Totally enveloped
          - c. It covers you from head to toe
        2. Consider that action
          - a. You must determine to put the garment on
          - b. You must, in the same way, determine to reject your old nature
          - c. The deceitful desires will always be around you
          - d. But we have been given a renewed mind with renewed thoughts through the presence of the Holy Spirit
        3. And the renewal brings about the outward change
          - a. Consider the story of John Newton
            - i. He was an 18<sup>th</sup>-century Anglican cleric, but that was not always his life
            - ii. For nearly 10 years, he served as the captain of slave ships and invested himself in the buying and selling of African slaves
            - iii. Following a conversion to Christianity, he became a staunch abolitionist and lived to see slavery ended in England
            - iv. He then served God through the pastoring of 2 English parishes and became a hymn-writer
            - v. He is, in fact, the author of Amazing Grace.
        4. That is what a transformed life looks like
          - a. As Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 5:17**
          - b. The old is gone and everything becomes new
3. With the old life gone, the new life begins
  - a. What must be understood, however, is as the new life begins, it is not a one-time event
    - i. Salvation - yes
    - ii. But living it is an ongoing process of growth, repentance, and forgiveness

- iii. It is about learning, maturing and walking a path that strengthens your commitment to living for Christ every day
  1. A new-born baby does not begin by running
  2. It begins by lifting his head and rolling over, then he creeps, then crawls, then slowly develops strength and coordination to stand, walk, and finally run
- iv. In the same way, we are continually growing and being renewed in the image of Christ
  1. Paul writes in **Col 3:10** (LB) - *You are living a brand new kind of life that is continually learning more and more of what is right, and trying constantly to be more and more like Christ who created this new life within you.*
  2. It was the mid-20th-century German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer who wrote...
    - a. *Being a Christian is less about cautiously avoiding sin than about courageously and actively doing God's will.*
  3. He not only wrote those words but lived them as he was hanged on April 9, 1945, in Nazi Germany at the age of 39 for his actions of resistance and speaking out against Hitler and the regime.
- b. It takes time, falling, getting back up, and dealing with consequences as we grow in this new life
  - i. I want to encourage you not to allow for the old to return
  - ii. Be tougher on yourself than others are
    1. Meaning, don't compromise
    2. Too many times, we dismiss the old ways, creeping back in with a knowing smile as if to say, "Well, that's always been a weakness."
- c. Pray regarding those areas
  - i. Be accountable to someone
  - ii. Renew your mind every day in the truth of who you are in Christ

**Romans 8:1-4** - *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

The truth of God and His Word will transform your life

- Fully embrace your new identity
- Let go and reject your past failure and sin
- Seek to grow continuously in your walk with the Lord – through prayer, reading the Word, and fellowship with other believers
- Live out your new nature every day in every circumstance you encounter

We must recognize and be aware of the lies and what is false, but it is His truth that will set you free and change you both inside and out.