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2 Corinthians 5:17

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

Reflection

In our Summer Series at A Year With Jesus today we're looking at a great verse of Scripture taken from 2 Corinthians 5:17, that verse again,

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,

the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Set in context, Paul is writing to the Corinthian church, who are wealthy and impressive and very swayed by the world around them. Paul and the Corinthian church have a tumultuous relationship, lots of ups and downs, as Paul helps the young church that he planted and loves grow in maturity. He's often blunt. Like in 1 Cor 3:3 where he says point blank:

You are still worldly.

The same is in view here. Starting one verse earlier we read,

16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view.

Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

The Corinthians are worldly. They're overly influenced by the secular culture that surrounds them, they take pride in what is seen, and it's holding them back. So Paul says to them, memorably, and powerfully,

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

What I love about this verse is that it applies equally to the individual – my heart, my faith, my life and your's – but also to

our culture, where we now fit in the grand scheme of things.

On the personal level, if anyone is in Christ, if any belongs to Jesus, if anyone is a member of his church, then the new creation has come, the new creation has dawned in their heart. The old is gone, the new is here, we've been born again, we're now dead to sin and alive to Christ, we've been utterly transformed and remade into a new person. What we used to count as gain very often we now count as loss when compared to serving Jesus. All that used to occupy us and entangle us and fill up all our time is now seen in a completely new light. Some of our former life we embrace with renewed energy, but a whole lot we joyfully discard. Our old value system – gone. Our old worldview – gone.

Because something new and far greater is here. Which is just so helpful when we find ourselves sorely tempted, or regressing into some old sin or pattern of life that is completely out of step with who we are now in Christ. It's a great verse to commit to memory.

But at the level of our culture and our world, something far greater is also going on in this verse. In Rev 21:5, Jesus, seated on the throne at the end of days, says that he is making everything new as he ushers in the new heavens and the new earth. And this process began at the cross. Jesus' death and resurrection marks a radical break between the old age and the new, between a world enslaved to Satan, sin and death and the new creation in which he reigns and which broke into our world

as Jesus rose from the dead. From that point he began to make everything new, transforming and redeeming his people and our world. What's happening in your heart and mine is a tiny part of the movement of this new age in Christ, the renewal of our world. As Paul says triumphantly,

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

Think & Pray

Jesus is making everything new. This world is passing away. The new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

What does this mean for you today? How much of your former life is still holding you back as a Christian? Are you still worldly? This world is passing away which means that God would have us focus on what will remain. How much is your heart set on the little trinkets offered up by our culture that distract us and fool us and lead us to waste our lives? Perhaps consider what in your life will last into eternity: the people, the relationships, the lasting effect you have on those in your life, the glory you bring to God by doing good in his world. It's these things that God would have you invest in.

Pray today against worldliness that blinds and distracts. And pray that we would delight in the new creation, that we'd see it and nurture it everywhere, and that we'd long for it's full and final arrival. New bod-

ies, new planet, no more tears, death, mourning, crying or pain, and perfect relationship amongst God and humankind forever. Make this your vision today, because,

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