

In Christ, We Are A New Creation

2 Corinthians 5:14-21

MEMORY VERSE

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Pictures of caterpillars and butterflies (or have the students draw pictures: you will need paper and markers), dry erase board and dry erase markers.

Several written countries profiles (real or imagined) and props to represent each profile (a great resource for country profiles is “Operation World” by Patrick Johnstone).

Several items for a make-believe grocery store.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

New Creation Caterpillars

Bring some pictures of caterpillars and butterflies (may need to take a trip to the library or have the children draw them on a picture). Compare the differences in the caterpillars and the butterflies and how they go through a transformation. They go through a beautiful transformation and become “brand new.” Ask them to count how many differences there are.

Explain that **we are a new creation in Jesus!** Ask your students to name the differences between their lives before and after Jesus has come into their lives and list them on the board.

LESSON TIME!

In our lesson today, we will discover one of the most beautiful truths about what happens in the life of a person who has become a follower of Jesus Christ. The changes that happen in a life that belongs to Jesus are so great that the Bible describes it as becoming a brand new creation. We become a new person in Jesus! Everything becomes brand new. **We are a new creation in Jesus!**

The Bible is full of contrasts (or comparing things that are different from one another) such as God's holiness contrasted with man sinfulness or heaven contrasted with hell. In our lesson today, we discover the contrast of our old life apart from Jesus with our new life in Jesus. As Christians, we have been changed from the inside out, from a life that was spiritually dead to a life that is spiritually alive in Christ. **We are a new creation in Jesus!** Let's learn more together about this new life.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-15

For the love of Christ constrains 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.

How many people in this world can you think of who would love to have a brand new life? There is something about being human (it is called our sin nature) that seems to cause us to mess up our life. If left to ourselves we will usually choose to do those things that are not good for us.

Let's say that someone said you could have all the candy, cake and ice cream in the whole world and eat it all right now. What would happen? We would probably keep eating until we got a stomachache. That's because we can't always choose what is best for us. As we grow up the decisions get tougher. If we don't have the Lord to help us, we will live our lives according to our wisdom and sin. We will make a mess out of our lives. We need the Lord to help us. We need a brand new life.

God knew that man was in the need of a Savior. So He sent His Son Jesus to make a way for people to be cleansed from their sin and changed in such a way that they would be able to have a relationship with God and please Him in all they do. Jesus willingly laid aside His privileges to become a servant. The world would see His love demonstrated by His sacrifice on the cross (Romans 5:8). His life was given so that we could have a brand new life (John 3:16, Galatians 2:20).

We can be free from our old life, which is spiritually dead, and receive a new life in Jesus. Because of His death, we can be identified with Him, but we are raised with Him that we might "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). Because we have died with Christ, we can overcome sin, and because we live with Christ, we can bear fruit for God's glory (Romans 7:4). Jesus died so that we could live through Him (1 John 4:9). This is the blessing of a changed life. Through Him, we are saved into eternal life, and for Him, we live not for ourselves, but for His glory. **We are a new creation in Jesus!**

So why do we want to live our lives for Jesus? We are told that the love of Christ constrains us, or holds us. Being a Christian and having a new life doesn't mean that we have to go by a bunch of rules in order to go to heaven. We serve God and want to give our lives to Him because of His great love for us. His love holds us to Him. How can we go anywhere else? What else in this world is better than knowing Jesus? So we respond to God's love by serving Him with all of our hearts.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-17

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.

When someone becomes a Christian, they become a brand new person inside. They will not be the same anymore, but will receive a new life. Just think! We can have the Spirit of the Living God living inside of us. He changes the way we think, what we desire and who we are. **We are a new creation in Jesus!**

Our new relationship with Jesus has changed everything. The way we think about the world and everyone around us is completely different. Before we became Christians, we looked at Jesus and thought about Him as how the world thought of him. Maybe we thought He was a good person or a good teacher, but now, we have a new understanding of who Jesus is. We know that He is God who has come in the flesh so that we could receive eternal life. We do not just worship a babe in a manger; we also worship a glorified Savior who is at the right hand of the Father in heaven.

The Lord changes everything for us. It is amazing how God can change lives and make them brand new. There are so many good stories and books about people who have come to know Jesus and how their lives change completely. Maybe you have read one of those stories or know someone in your family who has completely changed because they came to Jesus. The Holy Spirit gives us a new life, and we are not the same anymore. Accepting Jesus into your life is the beginning of something new and wonderful, life with Him. He can even change the worst of sinners.

We also know that new life in Jesus means that every day He desires to guide us and help us with our daily problems. Our relationship with Him will grow as we humbly entrust our lives in His care. The control of our old life of self and sin is gone (Romans 6:6-14). Our new life of devotion to Jesus means that we have new attitudes and actions (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). In Christ we are new creations!

2 CORINTHIANS 5:18-19

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Because of man's sin and rebellion to God, we (mankind) became His enemies. It is kind of like we declared war on God and wanted nothing to do with Him. As a result, we could no longer enjoy fellowship with Him. God never turned away from man, man turned away from God, but God didn't want to leave us in that condition.

Jesus' death on the cross has brought man and God together again. He made a way for us to have a relationship with God. This is what "reconciliation" is. It means bringing two sides who were once enemies back together again. We have been reconciled to God because Jesus died for us so we would not have to face the judgment of sin. God now has a relationship to all that will turn to Him through His Son Jesus. God blots out our sins and makes us righteous (Ephesians 2:13-18, Romans 5:10-11).

It is amazing that we are the ones that turned away from God, but He does everything to make it possible for us to return to Him. It would seem like we should be doing things to "make up" for our sin, but that is not how God works. He is so loving and kind that He has done everything for us, even giving His Son for us so that we can have a relationship with Him. We can now enjoy a close relationship with Him, along with all the blessings of His heavenly riches. **We are a new creation in Jesus!**

Because of our relationship with God, we have been given the privilege to encourage others to turn to Jesus, so they too can be reconciled to God like we have.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:20-21

Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

An ambassador is an official representative from one country to another. As believers, we are Christ's ambassadors, sent with His message of reconciliation to the world. As believers, we have an awesome responsibility to share the gospel to others. May we never take this responsibility lightly, for Jesus Himself has commissioned us (Matthew 28:18-20).

Being an ambassador also means that you represent the king and the kingdom (or country) that you are sent from. As Christians, we represent the Kingdom of God to this world and the King, Jesus. So we need to only do and say those things that would be a good representation of who He is. It is kind of like when you go out into public. If you are a bad example or disobedient to your parents, it is a bad reflection on them. But if you are a good example, obedient and have a good attitude it is a good reflection on your parents. We need to be a good reflection of the light of Jesus Christ in this dark world.

Ambassadors

Divide your class into several groups. Give each one a country profile outlining a real or imagined place. A great resource for this is "Operation World" by Patrick Johnstone. Give each team a prop or paper hat to help the ambassador rightly represent his country (like a green top hat for Ireland, rice for India or Asia, wooden shoes for Holland, etc.).

Each group should choose an ambassador to tell the class about its country. Explain that God has chosen to use us as His ambassadors. How well do we represent Him? Have one or two children share with the class how they might represent the Kingdom of God and our King, Jesus.

How are we doing as Christ's ambassador? God will give us the ability to accomplish this ministry through the work of His Holy Spirit, for His glory. As Christians, we have been blessed and it should be our desire that others share that same blessing.

When we believe in Jesus, we receive forgiveness and a relationship with the Father. Our sin was placed upon Jesus when He was on the cross. These verses teach us that Jesus became sin for us so that we could have eternal life. Jesus was perfect and sinless, yet He took on all of our sins so that we could have a relationship with God. It is hard to fully understand what has been done for us because of God's great love!

God offers us righteousness, which is something of immeasurable worth for something worthless. How grateful we should be for His goodness to us. What a blessing it is to have a new life, living as a new creation in Christ. Let's live out this new life that Jesus has given us to the fullest. Let's give our new lives to Him every day and live for His glory. Let's be the best ambassadors we can be with the help of the Holy Spirit living inside of our hearts! **We are a new creation in Jesus!**

Grocery Shop 'Till You Drop

Set up a simple grocery store in your room or on a table in plain sight. Form pairs and let one child in the pair give a list of three things to his partner. When you say, "go" the shoppers all rush to the store to try to get the right items. Only supply one or two of most of the things so that not everyone will get what he wants.

After the game discuss how when someone is sent to do a job they should want to do it right. God has sent us to represent Him as ambassadors; do we do it right and with our whole hearts?

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving for the work He is doing in our lives to make us like Jesus. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.