

Menifee United Church of Christ

Established in 1962 by God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit

SERMON FOR

June 14, 2015

“You Are A New Creation



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Live Life Fully Alive!

Psalm 92:12-15

The righteous flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the LORD; they flourish in the courts of our God. In old age they still produce fruit; they are always green and full of sap, showing that the LORD is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

2 Corinthians 5:15-17

And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

“You Are A New Creation”

A man is in church, struggling to stay awake through the sermon, finding it long and boring. He finally falls asleep. The preacher has been watching the man sleep and is upset about it. So, at the end of the sermon, the preacher decides to make an example of the man. The preacher says to his parishioners, “All those wishing to have a place in heaven, please stand up.” The whole congregation stands up, except for the sleeping man. Then the preacher says even more loudly, “And all those who would like to find a place in hell please STAND UP!” The sleeping man awakes and, half asleep stands up, only to find that he’s the only person in the pews standing up. Confused and embarrassed he says, “I don't know what we’re voting on here, Preacher, but it sure looks like you and I are the only ones standing up for it!”

You are a new creation. That’s what I want to talk with you about today. You are a new creation. Whether you are a preacher or a parishioner. Whether you are wide awake or half asleep. Whether you are headed for heaven or - hopefully not - on a path to perdition. You are a new creation. What does it mean to be a new creation? I believe there are at least three ways you can know that you are a new creation.

Jesus died so that we would not live for ourselves, but so that we would live for Jesus and for others, and when you do that, you are “a new creation,” according to the Apostle Paul. According to the Psalmist, even in old age, we can “still produce fruit,” we can still help others. And according to President Kennedy, who said in his inaugural address (unfortunately his only inaugural address), God wants us and needs us to help others: “let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking [God’s] blessing and [God’s] help, but knowing that here on earth God’s work must truly be our own.”

When you live for others, and not just for yourself, you are a new creation. You are a new creation: when you do God’s work by helping others, when you live for Jesus by helping others, and when you do the bidding of the Holy Spirit by helping others. We weren’t put on this earth just to help ourselves. We were put on this earth to help others. Feed the hungry. Clothe the naked. Welcome the stranger. Care for the sick. Visit the prisoner. House the homeless. And when you do that - and people in this church now are doing more of that - you are a new creation.

“God is spirit,” Jesus tells us. And the Book of Genesis tells us that God created us in God’s “image.” So it makes perfect sense when French philosopher and Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, proclaims, “We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience.”

You are a spiritual being and not just a physical being, and when you realize that, you are a new creation. You are a new creation: when you allow God to seep into your soul; when you allow your soul to seep into God; when you listen to the still small voice within; and when you listen to the whisper of the wind. Get in touch with your spirit. Meditate. Pray. Go for gratitude walks: thank you God for the heavens above; thank you God for the earth below; and thank you God for the oceans. Go inside to gain insight. And when you do that - and people in this church now are doing more of that - you are a new creation.

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another,” Jesus tells his disciples...and us. First Corinthians tells us, “And now

faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.” And, First John tells us, “God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.”

God loves you, and when you know that, you are a new creation. You are a new creation when you know that: God did not create you to hate you, God created you to love you; you are loved by God, by the universe, by all that is; you are the light of the world, shining brightly; you are the salt of the earth, adding spice to life; you are a child of God, living divinely. Rejoice in who you are, celebrate who you are, you were created to be who you are. No one is exactly like you, you are one of a kind, you are unique. Be like a shining city on a hill. Radiate God’s love. Let people see God’s love within you. And when you do that - and people in this church now are doing more of that - you are a new creation.

Louis Armstrong sings a song that I believe will help you understand that you are a new creation. “What A Wonderful World.” Louis Armstrong sings...

*“I see trees of green, red roses, too,
I see them bloom, for me and you
And I think to myself
What a wonderful world.”*

When you are able to see past the sometimes awful world that we live in and instead are able to see the often wonderful world that we live in: You are a new creation.

Let us pray...

*God of Love,
Help us to know that we are a new creation.
Help us to help others to know that they are a new creation.
And help us to continue to be a church that’s a new creation.
Now and forevermore.
By the power of the Holy Spirit.
And in the name of Jesus.
Amen.*