

“The New Creation” Joshua 5:9-12 / 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 (3/30/25)

When my wife and I knew my wife was pregnant for the first time, we were so excited and gave many thanks to God. We were so excited about becoming parents. However, my wife’s pregnancy was very challenging. Her morning sickness was so serious, and she had this serious morning sickness until my son was born. Through my wife’s pregnancy, I learned that a human could have a very sensitive sense of smell. My wife was about to vomit and felt disgusting even when I just opened the refrigerator. She rebuked me all the time when I opened the refrigerator and when I ate something in the room. She always told me, “Stop opening the refrigerator.” “Be prepared before you open the refrigerator door. Imagine and think where the food is in the refrigerator, then, open it and catch it close the door quickly.” At this time, we lived in a studio school dorm in Hawaii, so the pregnancy was so difficult for my wife and for me. Not only this sensitive sense of smell, but my wife could not eat American food well because of the morning sickness.

The worst thing was that we did not have medical insurance that covered pregnancy at the time because of our Visa status, and I did not have any information about the health insurance system in the United States, so we missed the time to have another health insurance that covered pregnancy. So, my wife could not see the doctor in the United States for 9 months of the pregnancy period.

Fortunately, because her morning sickness was so serious, Sunwoo's parents and I decided to let Sunwoo go back to South Korea for the check-up and have some of her mother's food. She could get some medication for the morning sickness in Korea. And she had to take the medication until my son's birthday.

So, we were really looking forward to the baby's birth during the pregnancy. We expected that everything would be fine once the baby was born. We wanted to be free from all the challenges and difficulties that came from the pregnancy. We hope to go back to our normal life after the baby's birth.

However, after my son was born, our life with a newborn baby was totally different. It was a new life that we had never experienced before. We studied a lot about the newborn baby through YouTube, but we did not know many things about reality. We needed to feed my son every 1-2 hours, even during the night, we needed to wake up and feed the baby. Sometimes, we should wash all the blanket and clipsheets when baby poop overflowed from diaper. The one thing we really did not know about the baby was that the baby does not wait for parents to sleep enough, take enough rest, or eat enough.

Not only for us, the life after birth was also a new life for my son, Sooho. When he was in his mother's womb, he did not need to worry about sleeping, eating,

pooping. But once he was born, he needed to learn how to call his parents, how to sleep, how to eat, how to walk. After birth, every moment of Sooho was a new experience and learning. His life was the life of growth.

The life of Christians is the same. We, Christians, are the new creation in Jesus. Christian's life is not the life that developed from the previous life. We, our sinful natures, were dead with Jesus on the cross, then we became the new creation, we had a new life with the eternal life of God when Jesus was resurrected. Christian's life is a completely new life that comes from after death.

Paul taught Christians in Corinth that Christians were the new creation. In the Bible, we have 1 and 2 Corinthians. But in history, Paul wrote more than two letters to the Corinthian Church. Some scholars argue that 1 Corinthians was the second letter, and 2 Corinthians was the fourth letter. And some argue that 1 is the first and 2 is the third. There would be no way to know that they were the first or second letter, but there is no doubt that 2 Corinthians was the letter that was sent to the Corinthian Church after 1 Corinthians.

This means that there was a reason that Paul wrote so many letters to the Corinthian Church, and something happened in the time between 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians. Paul taught a lot about Christians' lives through 1 Corinthians. He

taught how Christians should live in the diversity of cultures, religions, and idolatry. However, some people in the church still did not accept Paul's teaching, and they did not change their lives as Christians. Furthermore, those people who did not like Paul and his teaching challenged Paul's apostleship. In addition to challenging Paul's apostleship, they also disagreed with the Gospel that Paul delivered. So, Paul wrote 2 Corinthians to the Corinthian Church to defend his apostleship and to explain the Gospel that he delivered.

In this background, Paul said, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." He taught that Christians were the new creation in Christ. According to Paul's teaching, we are the new creation in Christ. When we believed in Christ, our sinful nature totally died on the cross with Christ, and we lived again with the new life of Christ.

Then, what is the new life of Christians? How should we live the new life? Firstly, the new life of Christians is living by faith. The faith that Christians believe that we were totally dead with Christ and lived again with Christ. Christians are not pursuing new life by good works, but by faith.

When I was in training to be an Air Force officer, on the first night of the training program, the instructor gathered all candidates and asked what we wanted

to be when we finished the training program. It was interesting because most of the candidates said they wanted to be a new person. They wanted to have leadership, enough health and strength to lead the soldiers, and some of them wanted to change their lazy lives. The training program was very tough. The instructors not only handled our training program, but also controlled our lives after the training schedule every day. We had to fold the clothes into the perfect size and shape, hang all uniforms with the same gap and form on the hanger. We had to wake up, sleep, and eat according to the program schedule. Changing lifestyle to be an officer was much more difficult than the military training program.

Even though the lifestyle control was very difficult, all of the candidates were very familiar with the officer's lifestyle on the last day of the training program. However, it took only a week, just a week, to return to the old lifestyle. When we became officers, when we had free time after work hours, we started to live as we had lived before the officer training program.

If we try to be the new creation, to live a new life as Christians by our work, we probably will turn back to our sinful nature, or we need to discipline ourselves forever not to return to our sinful nature. We can have our new life through our faith. We are not the people who discipline ourselves not to return to our sinful nature. We

are people who were born again in Christ and live with Christ to grow up to be perfect Christians.

Secondly, the new life of Christians is the life following God's guidance. In today's Joshua Scripture, the people of Israel started to eat the food from the promised land. All of them were born in the wilderness. They had food that God gave to them every day for 40 years. However, they did not complain to God when they should have had food in the new way and from the new land. They gave up their old habits and lifestyle and accepted the new lifestyle that God guided them.

When God guides us to live the new life with Christ, if we just wish to stay in our old life, if we do not want the change, we will not grow. We cannot see and experience the new life with Jesus if we just want to live as we lived before.

Thirdly, the new life of Christians is the life for Jesus. In 2 Corinthians, Paul said, "and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised." God gave us new life to live as God wants. Jesus did not die just for our fertile lives. Jesus died as the reconciliation sacrifice. So, Christians live the new life for our Christ.

We are in the Lent season now. We have this season not for our discipline to be a good person, or to be a better Christian. We have this season as the new creation.

We have this season of Lent in our new life that was given to us by Jesus. We have this season to grow up after our new birth in Jesus. Through this season, I hope we can experience joy as the new creation. I hope God guides us to live as people who have new life from our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.