

NEW COVENANT, NEW CREATION

THESIS: Live By Faith

TEXT: 2 Corinthians 3:5—5:21

OPEN: (*apnews.com* “Scientists Successfully Clone Monkeys: Could Humans Be Next?”)

In **2 Corinthians** let’s discover how to respond as a new creation in Christ to His new covenant for the good of the world and our community for an eternal difference.

2 Cor 3:5-6, 10 “Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life...For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory.”

The New Covenant is the undertaking of God on which the atonement for the sins of mankind is secured through the sacrificial death of Christ (*Eph 2:11-22; Heb 9:16-22*). Through faith in Jesus we’re promised the forgiveness of sins.

***Acts 2:38** “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

1. LIVE BY FAITH AS A NEW CREATION IN THE GLORIOUS NEW COVENANT WITH GOD.

A. **2 Cor 4:13-15** “It is written: ‘I believed; therefore I have spoken.’ With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the One who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in His presence. All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.”

1. *Do live by faith by believing and speaking about the glory of God and the gospel.*

a. **Believe** (Greek: *pisteuo*) means to put one’s trust in.

1. The glorious new creation includes our life now and a resurrected body later in Heaven.

a. **Revelation 22:3-4a** “No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and His servants will serve Him. They will see His face...”

2. As ambassadors for Christ here is what we should believe and speak with conviction:

a. **2 Corinthians 5:17-21** “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them...We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”

b. **Illustration:** (*foxnews.com* “Christian Convert From Iran Converting Muslims In Sweden”)

B. **2 Corinthians 4:16-18** “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

1. *Do live by faith so you don’t lose heart about the glory of God and the gospel.*

a. **Lose heart** (Greek: *enkakeo*) means to give up or become discouraged.

1. Outwardly (earthly body) we may be breaking down but inwardly the Lord builds us up.

- a. **2 Cor 3:18** “We, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”
 - b. **2 Cor 4:6, 8-9** “God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ... We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.”
2. Outward troubles and fears within may be painful and perplexing but God redeems them for earthly good and eternal glory.
- a. **2 Cor 1:4** “God comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.”
 - b. **2 Cor 5:5** “Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.”
 1. What *is* to come? Our earthly, mortal body transformed into heavenly, immortal one.
 - a. *Earthly body*: “We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us” (2 Corinthians 4:7).
 - b. *Heavenly body*: “We know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in Heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling” (2 Corinthians 5:1-2).
 1. When the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians refers to the temporary, earthly body as “jars of clay” or a “tent” in comparison to the eternal, heavenly body as a building or house—He’s teaching about the glory of the resurrection body.
 2. **Philippians 3:20-21** “Our citizenship is in Heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body.”
 - b. **Historical insight from Everett Ferguson**: “In Biblical times the doctrine of a bodily resurrection ran counter to beliefs of non-Christians. Many of these people advocated an afterlife in terms of the immortality of the soul only. They considered the body a hindrance from whose weaknesses the soul must escape. To define hope in terms of a return to a bodily existence was not what philosophical pagans such as Plato wanted” (*Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, p. 439-440).
- C. **2 Corinthians 5:7-9** “We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please Him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.”
1. *Do live by faith by pleasing the Lord on earth now so you’ll please Him for eternity later.*
 - a. **Goal** (Greek: *philotim*) means to be ambitious, to devote oneself zealously to a cause, to labor or seek after honor.
 1. Make it your zealous ambition (goal) to please the Lord because everyone faces Jesus on Judgement Day.
 - a. **2 Cor 5:10** “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body whether good or bad.”
 2. Make it your zealous ambition (goal) to please the Lord because Christ died so you may live.
 - a. **2 Cor 5:14-15** “For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live should

no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again.”

CONCLUSION: A way to please God is serving others—putting their interests before our own (*Philippians 2:4-5*).

Illustration: University of Virginia basketball coach Tony Bennett is a Christian. When he was playing professional basketball in New Zealand—he was active with a church there where two Johnson Bible College classmates of mine were preachers. Recently, *nbcsports.com* wrote about Bennett awarding a scholarship to a walk-on which emphasizes service: “UVA basketball coach Tony Bennett rarely begins his postgame media remarks with an opening statement. However, he made an exception after his Cavaliers beat Virginia Tech. Bennett was beaming as he shared that he awarded walk-on junior Justice Bartley a scholarship after the game. ‘I got to do something that is one of the greatest joys as a coach. Justice Bartley really embodies (service)—we talk about being a servant in our program a lot. He’s a walk-on that does all the little things. You should have seen the joy in his eyes and (that of his teammates). Bartley said, ‘My mom’s definitely going to be crying. I have a few siblings headed to college so this definitely helps out.’”

1 Peter 1:3-9 “In (God’s) great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in Heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”

CLOSE: Do live by faith and don’t lose heart for the glory of God and the gospel. If you do live—you don’t lose.