

# Old Things Are Passed Away

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**Bible Text:** 2 Corinthians 5:17

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## **Shreveport Grace Church**

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Welcome to the Grace Abounding broadcast brought to you by the congregation of the Shreveport Grace Church that meets at 2970 Baird Road in Shreveport, Louisiana. My name is Ken Wimer and it is my privilege to bring to you today a message that seeks to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and is glorious person and finished work of salvation accomplished for sinners at the cross. Please stay tuned.

My text is taken today from 2 Corinthians chapter five and I want to begin reading in verse 14 and read down through the end of the chapter and talk to you about old things being passed away. Here in 2 Corinthians chapter five in verse 14 the apostle Paul writes:

“For the love of Christ constraineth us.”<sup>1</sup>

Speaking there of those who are the Lord’s whom God the Father has chosen in his mercy and grace from eternity and for whom the Lord Jesus Christ paid their entire debt and the Spirit of God being given them it is the love of Christ that constrains them. And Paul says:

“...because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.”<sup>2</sup>

And when the Scriptures speak of Christ dying for all, he is talking about those for whom he laid down his life, all kinds of sinners from every tribe, nation and tongue. Some people confuse that word all to mean every single person and we know that if, indeed, the Lord Jesus Christ had laid down his life for every single sinner throughout the world, then there would be no more condemnation. When Christ paid the debt, he paid it in full.

Paul here in writing of the one who died for all it was to address the issue with the Jews that somehow the Messiah would be only a Jewish Messiah. And Paul himself being a Jew and yet converted by the grace of God to Christ was a preacher among the Gentiles and his message that Christ died for all was to show that God’s mercy and God’s grace was not reserved to one race, but to sinners of every kind and sinners from every tribe,

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:14.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

nation and tongue. So Paul's point here is that if Christ died for these, then it is because either, one, they were all dead already in condemnation in Adam, but I believe the understanding there goes even further, that when Christ died when it says:

"...then were all dead..."<sup>3</sup>

It is speaking there of their own legal death being accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ. When he died, they died legally, justly, in other words, as their substitute. And he goes on in verse 15 to say:

"And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."<sup>4</sup>

So we see the end of Christ dying for sinners from every tribe, nation and tongue is that they should live. But in living, not live unto themselves. No man can follow Christ who honors himself. No man can declare that he is the Lord's who trusts in his own righteousness which there isn't any, but a professed righteousness based on one's own works. Here it says:

"And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."<sup>5</sup>

And verse 16 of 2 Corinthians five we read:

"Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more."<sup>6</sup>

What he is speaking of there is that Christ came, lived, died and rose again as a man and while he was on earth he was known in the flesh, but now that he is risen and ascended on high no longer to be seen with these physical eyes here on earth until he should come again, Paul is showing that Christ is alive, but reigning in glory, no longer in his state of humiliation here on earth.

And then verse 17, therefore. You see, verse 16 has a wherefore. Based upon Christ having lived, died and risen again and now verse 17, therefore, the conclusion.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."<sup>7</sup>

And that is where I have drawn the title of this message, old things being passed away.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:15.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:16.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Now verse 18 says:

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.”<sup>8</sup>

There again the world in the sense of sinners from every tribe, nation and tongue, not just the Jew, but Jew and Gentile of his choosing.

“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.”<sup>9</sup>

You say, “How so?”

Well, in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ

...not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.<sup>10</sup>

What do you do with old things? Some people like to keep old things. They like to hang on to them. Some like to collect old things and see value in them. There are some who would like to get rid of old things, but can’t or have some acquaintances that in their past and in their folly they committed certain crimes and were charged with felonies that to this day they are trying to get expunged from their record and no matter how much they try, the record stands once committed. It is done.

I often think what if that were the case with us before God. There would be no hope. Once Adam fell there in the garden if God were to mark iniquities who could stand? But here, dear friend, is a blessed truth when understood aright for any who are the Lords and have been taught of him by his Spirit and drawn to him in effectual grace. Note here in my portion of Scripture in verse 17 that the apostle does not write that old things are passing away as if the Lord’s children are reforming or being reformed slowly but surely. There are some who perceive their salvation in that manner. They make a decision for Jesus, so-called, and then they believe that based upon that decision God in return gives them the Holy Spirit and from that point forward they start cleaning up their lives. And you will hear them talking in terms of, “I used to do that,” or “I am doing it less and less,” or “I am getting better and better,” or some who proudly say, “I am able to withstand sin better today than I did yesterday.”

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<sup>8</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:18-19.

<sup>9</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:19.

<sup>10</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:19-21.

Dear friend, that is a delusion. We need to understand that this flesh is what it is. And that if it were to depend upon this flesh reforming there is none that could ever stand before a holy God. Even if today you determined never to sin again, were that a possibility, how would you expunge your record from what you have done from your birth till now? How would you expunge that record of having already fallen in your Father Adam? It stands against you.

No, dear friend, the Word as it is written here is an absolute definitive statement. Old things are passed away. So if at first thought you think that this means that the old nature is no more, then settle it in you mind that such is not the case. If that were eth case there would be no need for exhortation in other Scriptures such as Ephesians chapter four and verse 22 where Paul writes:

“...put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.”<sup>11</sup>

Note: is corrupt, continues to be. The sin nature in us is what it is, sin. And so long as we are in this flesh it will continue to be sinful. The apostle Paul wrote of this in Romans chapter seven and verse 21.

I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am!<sup>12</sup>

Such is the cry of every sinner whom Christ has redeemed and the Spirit has taught and regenerated and brought to Christ.

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.<sup>13</sup>

That is all this flesh can do is sin.

So coming back to my text here in 2 Corinthians chapter five and verse 17, I want to consider the right approach to this verse of what it means that old things are passed away. I would answer in two ways. One would be a concrete approach and the other a spiritual approach. Now when I talk about a concrete approach I think about what is objective. In other words, it can be said that old things are passed away based upon the objective death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. That is the reason I took the time in reading in the beginning to lay the context of this verse where Paul is speaking of the death of Christ having accomplished salvation for those for whom he died. The absolute substitute that

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<sup>11</sup> Ephesians 4:22.

<sup>12</sup> Romans 7:21-24.

<sup>13</sup> Romans 7:24-25.

upon completion of his death there remained no sin. Christ put it away. And therefore there only remained righteousness for God the Father to impute to the account of those for whom Christ died. And therefore it could be said that when he finished the work, there was a new creation. Old things were passed away. The word creation or here in the King James version it says he is a new creature, it is the word founded or founding, something new that was instituted. This verse begins with the word therefore and so the preceding verses are with reference to what the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross by his death, that absolute redemption, that absolute justifying, declaring righteous of his people and sanctifying, the setting apart of his people unto God upon completion of Christ's death. Our Lord Jesus Christ came to establish righteousness. He earned it and God the Father imputed it because Christ fulfilled every aspect of God's law and justice and satisfied a holy God upon completion of his death. There was that laying of the foundation which is what the word creature means. The foundation was laid of Christ.

You see, the wages of sin is death. But by Christ's death the curse of the law, the curse of sin and the accusations of Satan himself were done away forever on behalf of those for whom Christ shed his blood when he finished the work.

So in that sense concretely, objectively, legally, justly, it can be said that the old things of the law are passed away. The old things of sin and condemnation in Adam are passed away. They are no more. That is why Paul wrote there in Romans chapter eight and verse one those very precious words to any that are the Lord's.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.”<sup>14</sup>

Now who are those who are in Christ Jesus? Well, they are described as those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. They don't walk after the works of the flesh or works of the law, but after the Spirit, the Spirit guiding them into all truth, the Spirit directing their hearts and minds unto the Lord Jesus Christ, the Spirit giving them the eye of faith to look to Christ alone and rest in his finished work alone for salvation. They are they for whom there is now condemnation. That little word now is not just added for punctuation, but it has to do with time. It is at time word. There is therefore now.

You say, “What was previous?”

Well, until Christ died and paid the debt, there was the curse of the law. There was the curse of sin. There was Satan the accuser who could justly accuse sinners before holy God in some way thinking that God was just overlooking their sin and yet Satan, as he accused Job before God, he didn't have foreknowledge. He didn't see how it was that God would be just to justify one even like Job and in time put away his sin. Job know. He said, Job 19:

“I know that my redeemer liveth.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Romans 8:1.

<sup>15</sup> Job 19:25.

So he was given eyes to see. Abraham knew. Christ said, “Abraham saw my day and rejoiced.”

David knew. He was given eyes to look, unto Christ. Moses knew. He told the Israelites that they would come when God would raise up another prophet like unto him. He said, “Hear him.”

So these were given eyes of faith to look to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. But Satan himself did not know. He continued to accuse these before God, but God owes Satan no answer and his justice will not be demeaned or diminished in any way. It was fully satisfied when he sent his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world to lay down his life. And therefore it can be said, based upon Christ having finished the work, this concrete answer to that question: How can God be just and justify? How can it be said that old things are passed away? Well, legally, judicially, satisfactionally, it was done in the Lord Jesus Christ and his death.

But a second approach to this verse is spiritually. In other words, those taught of the Spirit of Christ in Christ and by Christ now have a new view, not only of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Savior, the redeemer, the substitute and the justifier, but they have a new view of themselves as the Spirit of God opens a sinner’s eyes to behold the Lord Jesus Christ and draws that one to him, that one is done with any carnal views of Christ or of themselves as new creatures done are the old sinful notions of God, thinking somehow God is like unto us as many believe, passive, waiting for the sinner to do something in order for him to respond in kind, false notions of Christ, the idea that somehow he came to this earth to attempt to save sinners, but, alas, they won’t let him, so it is a false blasphemous view of Christ, of salvation, thinking that somehow it is a cooperation between God and man and not sin as it is in truth all of God. The false sinful notion of so called free will for any to think that somehow their will is free.

It is true we have a will, but it is bound by what we are in our nature, sinful. And therefore, left to itself, it can only sin. Or self righteousness the false notion that somehow there is some good in man that recommends them to God by what they do, say or think or the false notion of salvation by works as if man could somehow offer something to God to satisfy his just and holy character or justification being justified either in whole or in part by anything other than the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians in Galatians chapter two and verse 21 that if righteousness come by the law then Christ is dead in vain. If righteousness come by any sinner himself fulfilling the law, then Christ is dead in vain. It would not have been necessary for Christ to come.

And so when it says here in 2 Corinthians 5:17:

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:17.

That old manner of viewing ourselves, that manner of viewing God or Christ or salvation, anything pertaining to salvation being anything other than the Lord Jesus Christ alone is done away. In Galatians chapter five and verse 25 the apostle Paul wrote:

“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”<sup>17</sup>

The Spirit’s work is ever to reveal Christ. It is not to glorify himself or glorify and exalt man. There is some today who give testimony and profess to be filled with the Spirit that they are doing nothing but glorifying themselves before God. Christ in John 16 and verse 13 told his disciples:

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.<sup>18</sup>

And that is really coming back to my text here in 2 Corinthians chapter five and these verses that I have read for you from verse 14 down to verse 21 is what the apostle Paul is describing is what the Spirit has taken and revealed unto his children those things that they have received of Christ. And it can all be summed up in that word reconciliation. Old things are passed away, behold all things have become new, because by the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ there is therefore now no condemnation.

Are we sinners yet? Yes. But if Christ paid the debt then that new standing with God the Father is one of holiness, of perfection, not in us, but in Christ. And we see the tenses of the verbs here in verses 18, 19 and 21 that leave no doubt that there has been a legal reconciliation of God’s elect by the death of Christ when he accomplished for them their salvation in his death. This is not something that is ongoing or requires the sinner to add to it, but it has been accomplished already.

And verse 18 Paul wrote:

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.”<sup>19</sup>

And verse 19:

“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world.”<sup>20</sup>

It doesn't say is. In other words, those that he has reconciled to himself he did it in that one time death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now I know Paul writes there in verse 20

“...we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Galatians 5:25.

<sup>18</sup> John 16:13-14.

<sup>19</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:18.

<sup>20</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:19.

But that is a matter of being reconciled to God in one's heart in these things pertaining to Christ. And spiritually when the Spirit of God reveals Christ in the heart all of that goes away. All of that rebellion, there is a laying down of one's arms in rebellion against God and surrendering, of bowing to the Lord Jesus Christ and an acknowledging that if he paid the debt, then I have salvation. But apart from his death there is no salvation. So this means that reconciliation has been accomplished.

And verse 21 that I read for you describes, again, how it is that old things are passed away. Verse 21 of 2 Corinthians five says:

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”<sup>22</sup>

Now the meaning is not that Christ became sinful or was himself changed into a sinner, no more than when the Word is said to be made flesh that somehow the divine nature was converted into flesh. That could not be. The divine nature assumed or took on flesh and even so if Christ took on himself the sin of his people, by imputation. Imputation means to charge to one's account. So Christ was made sin vicariously, in other words, as the substitute. He bore the guilt that was due those that the Father had given him and he took it upon himself by imputation. It was charged by God the Father to his account.

Now the judicial aspect of this reconciliation is evidenced in verse 19, not reckoning to them their trespasses. There was a charging of guilt to Christ rather than to the elect and there was the simultaneous attributing to their account of the righteous obedience of Christ, thereby making them all at one time just before God.

So it is this message of the accomplished work of reconciliation and through the death of Christ those old things, the old charges, the old curse of the law and sin being put away that is committed to the true preachers of the gospel today, those sent of God. Just to call men to repentance and make them believe that somehow their repentance is what gets it done is not the gospel. Rather, the command to repent or be reconciled to God is in response to the gospel, because the Spirit reveals Christ in the heart. There is a drawing to and a bowing to what Christ has already accomplished for his people. And any change in mind and heart is because of that reconciliation that already was accomplished at the cross.

Dear friend, can you say old things are passed away? It can only be said in, by and through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ that he accomplished there at Calvary.

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<sup>21</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:20.

<sup>22</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:21.



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