

A New Life

We are celebrating new life today as we baptize some individuals who have discovered that new life in Jesus Christ. We are going to do something a little different today. I'm going to share a few thoughts and then we are going to hear a testimony from someone who has experienced this new life.

We are talking about life, death and a new life. We tell someone Jesus saved us from our sin and they act like "that's nice. I bet you feel a lot better." Listen, salvation is not about feeling better about yourself or eternity. Salvation is not the difference between being bad and good, salvation is the difference between being dead and being alive. I heard Louie Giglio say, "The question is not how are you doing, the question is 'Are you alive?'"

The bible says, "**As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins...**"

Ephesians 2:1. "When you were dead in your sins..." Colossians 2:13 Apart from Jesus and his saving grace, we are dead. Dead in our trespasses and sins. Dead in our spirit. Cut off from the giver of life. Dead and we don't even know it. If we are dead in our sins, we need more than trying to turn over a new leaf, we need more than a self-help program, we need a new life. If we are dead, we don't need to try to do better, we need a new life.

Let me tell you something, apart from Jesus, there is no life. The bible says of Jesus "**Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life.**" **John 1:3-4** In him was life! Apart from him there is no life. We don't have time to go through all the Scriptures that testify to this. Jesus said "**I am the way, and the truth and the life.**" **John 14:6.** Jesus told Mary and Martha, standing in a cemetery where there brother Lazarus was buried, "**I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live...**" **John 11:25** Then to prove he was indeed life and the life giver, he raised Lazarus from the dead. Jesus said the enemy has come to kill, steal and destroy, but "**I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.**" **John 10:10**

Jesus is THE life and the life giver and apart from him there is no life. This explain a lot of the problems we encounter in our lives. That beautiful girl you are so crazy about, even though she looks so pretty on the outside, if she doesn't know Jesus, she may look good and sound good, but she's dead. The boy you are crazy about, he looks so good but if he doesn't know Jesus, he's dead. Now let me tell you something about dead people and dead bodies. Before long they start stinking. When Jesus got ready to raise Lazarus from the dead, he told

them to roll the stone away from the tomb and Mary and Martha said, “No Lord, don’t do that because he stinks. He’s dead. His body is decaying.”

She’s so pretty. He’s so handsome. We had things in common. Why is this marriage falling apart? Because she doesn’t know Jesus. He doesn’t know Jesus. You’re dead and regardless of how good things look on the outside, dead is dead and pretty soon things are going to start smelling like death! Death will start effecting the relationship. You need life!

It’s not just in a marriage relationship. It’s in everything. Sin and death effects everything. Death contaminates whatever it touches. If you watched the reports of the destruction in Indonesia last week after the earthquake and tsunami, tragically they were burying people in mass graves for fear of contamination and disease spreading because of the dead bodies. I know I’m being a little graphic and I don’t mean to be insensitive to anyone’s loss, but I’m talking about spiritual life and death! Spiritual death brings contamination. It contaminates others. It spreads disease and destruction and more death.

The bible says not to be unequally yoked together with an unbeliever. It warns a believer not to marry an unbeliever. You know why? Because she’s dead! He’s dead! Without Jesus, without the life Jesus alone can bring, that person is dead in their sin. Apart from Jesus we are dead in our sin. There is no life in us. It’s hard to make a marriage when one person is alive and one is dead. You need two life giving, life producing, life sharing people. If you are already in a marriage where the other person doesn’t know Jesus, keep praying, keep speaking life, keep showing life and living as close to Jesus, the giver of life as you can live. But be aware and don’t allow your heart and your spirit to be affected or influenced or drawn away from Jesus, the source of life, by an unbelieving spouse. If you aren’t married, but you’re dating someone who is not a believer, not a follower of Jesus, pay attention to what I’m telling you today!

In Jesus we have life. We quoted from Ephesians and Colossians a moment ago. **“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins...” Ephesians 2:1.** Look what Paul goes on to say, **“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ, even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ...” Ephesians 2:4-6** Yes we were dead, but God in his mercy gives us life through our faith in Jesus Christ and his saving grace! You don’t have to stay dead. There is new life available! He will raise us up to new life in Christ!

Paul writes, **“When you were dead in your sins... but then goes on to state, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins.” Colossians 2:13.** Jesus is our life. I said earlier, if death is your problem, nothing short of new life is your only answer. He will forgive your sin and give you his life. New life, in Christ!

We come to Christ, dead in our sin. We repent and trust in him for the forgiveness of our sins and he faithfully forgives us and imparts to us this new life. We become new creations in Christ Jesus. Paul writes of our baptism as being a sign of that new life. We are joined with Christ, buried with him in baptism and resurrected, coming up out of the water to walk in a whole new life. **“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” Romans 6:4** We leave behind that old dead way of living and thinking and behaving and rise to walk in a brand new life in Christ.

A new life. That’s what I’m talking about. A new life that produces new fruit. The old stuff, the anger and rage and jealousy and unforgiveness, holding grudges, hurting people, lying and deceiving – all that was what death produced in you. That’s the contamination that comes along with death. But life, new life in Christ produces life giving fruit! The fruit of new life, of a new Spirit at work in us: “Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” That’s the fruit of a new life. Just as death contaminates and brings disease and more death, new life in Christ influences and spreads healing, hope, laughter and peace to those around us. When you meet Jesus and you receive that new life, you become a carrier of new life. Are you contagious? Is the new life of Jesus at work in you contagious? I hope so! Be a spreader of new life. Thank God for that new life!

I want Michael Hudson and Pastor Brian to join me this morning. Michael shared his testimony a few months ago in New Community on Wednesday night and I wanted him to tell a bit of his story. I knew Michael’s grandfather. He was an A/G preacher but Michael didn’t exactly follow in his grandfather’s footsteps. I want him to tell you about his journey and his discovery of new life.