**A New Life in Christ!**

**Luke 5:17-39**

**2 Corinthians 5:17** *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a* ***new creation****; the old has gone, the new has come!”*

The Christian life progresses in three stages:

Stage 1: The **Forgiveness** of sins by Christ!

Stage 2: A **Commitment** to follow Christ!

Stage 3: A **new life** to live in Christ!

Stage 4: A **personal relationship** with Christ!

**Stage 1: Forgiveness of sins by Christ.**

1. There are many very different religions in the world: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, atheism, and the list goes on and on.
2. **Churchism** refers to the tradition of belonging to a church, attempting to be a good person by living a good moral life, and then, expecting to go to heaven.
3. True Christianity is a **matter of the heart**, not rules to obey and traditions to follow. The problem with Churchism is that it is a religion focused on externals.
4. The gauntlet truly had been thrown down by Jesus as he, in essence, declared two truths:
* Jesus is God, and just like his Father, He is the only One who can forgive sins.
* Their man-made religion was not true religion just as it is still not today.
1. The Jews failed to see Jesus for who He is really is—God in the flesh. This is the same problem many religious leaders in our county have today: They fail to see Jesus for who he really is. Immanuel—God with us.

**John 1:1** and **14** declare this truth:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ,..The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory. The glory of the One and Only who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

1. Jesus is God! As God, he is the only One who can forgive us of our sins. This is the first stage of the Christian life. In this stage, you must recognize two things:
* Who Jesus is—God in the flesh. And…
* Who you are—a sinner in need of forgiveness.

**Stage 2: A Commitment to follow Christ!**

1. The Christian life should be a **constant celebration:**

**Bishop J.C. Ryle had it right when he said:**

*It is a far more important event than being married, or coming of age, or being made a nobleman, or receiving a great fortune. It is the birth of an immortal soul! It is the rescue of a sinner from hell! It is a passage from death to life! It is being made a king and priest for evermore! It is being provided for, both in time and eternity! It is adoption into the noblest and richest of all families, the family of God!*

1. If we are in Christ, we have been cured of something for more deadly than cancer, and that is the sin that so easily entangles all of us.
2. No one is righteous.

Paul makes this so clear in Romans 3:10-12: “There is **no one righteous**, **not even one**: there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; **there is no one who does good, not even** **one**.”

**John 3:16** and **17** declare this truth: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”

1. The essence of biblical Christianity:

Stage 1: You recognize Jesus as your God and Savior…confess your sins…and He forgives you.

Stage 2: You hear his call to come and follow…and just like Levi you leave your old way of life and follow Christ.

**Stage 3: A New Life in Christ!**

1. In Jesus’ response to John’s disciples, he teaches two very important principles about what it means to be a true Christian:
* Christianity is a relationship, not a man-made religion.
* Christianity is all about a brand-new life in Christ.
1. Judaism had become an old worn-out garment. The Law was never meant to save anyone. The Ten Commandments were given to Moses to reveal to the people their sinful hearts
2. The Old Covenant, Judaism, could not be patched over with a few things taken from the gospel of Jesus Christ. Something altogether new had to come.

**Jeremiah 31:31-34** “The time is coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the land to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord.

“This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

“I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they all know me from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the Lord.

**Stage 4: A Personal Relationship with Christ!**

1. This new life in Christ begins when you place your trust in the gospel of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. In that moment, your relationship with God through His Son, Jesus, begins. You come to know Jesus in a personal relationship.

In **John 10:14** and **27**, Jesus confirms this idea of knowing him personally when He says,

“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me…My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”

1. The new life in Christ, cannot and must not be constrained by the old life. We must put to death the old life and live in Christ and for Christ in this new life known as the Christian life.

**Verse 39**: And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, “the old is better.”

1. When people become set in their ways; they become reluctant to change their traditional religious ways to try the gospel.
2. The new life in Christ is better by far. For me, there is no going back.