

“The Old is gone and the New is here” is the message in second half of 2 Corinthians 5:17. ***Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*** The thought of being a new creature carries with it the idea of renewal in the Lord. **Old things are passed away:** the old course of living and old companions and acquaintance often need to be dropped. Maybe it is former sentiments of religion that are relinquished. This was true with the early Christians in Thessalonica. ***1 Thessalonians 1:9b ... how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;***

Behold, all things are become new. This renewal means to connect or for some to reconnect with Christ. Maybe your past has been riddled with a lot of regrets. It may be that you had some bad experiences in life and it could be some of those bad experiences were with other Christians. Maybe it was a real effort for you to get up and come to worship. If so, I hope you will “Reconnect with Jesus.” Through Jesus Christ, we have been made new and old things are passed away. The Old is gone and the New is here. We have a fresh start; we’ve been made righteous. ***2 Corinthians 5:21 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.*** As we consider this matter of drawing closer to Jesus, I want us to notice three things from Matthew 11:25-30. In this passage we have (1) a prayer from Jesus, (2) a message from Jesus and (3) an invitation from Jesus.

First let us notice the prayer. ***Matthew 11:25-30 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. (26) Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.*** Notice Jesus’ prayer in light of what had been done. Maybe you have had those bumps in life and you may have questioned why God let those things happen. Maybe you say, *“I’m not really sure how I’m supposed to thank God; things that haven’t worked out the way I wanted them to.”*

Jump back up a few verses and notice that before this prayer of Jesus there was a list of woes. These woes were to three cities, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum,

where Jesus spent most of his time and did most of his work. These are the places that got to see the wonders of God, the works of Jesus miracles. Yet in spite of Jesus work there and all the convincing evidence; none of them repented – thus the woes. ***Matthew 11:20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:*** How could they be in the presence of Jesus and not repent. Don't you know Jesus was disappointed? Jesus went on to say that if the mighty works that had seen had been done before Sodom of long ago, that city would have repented and still remain. ***(23) ... for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.***

Now the people in these three cities were not bad people. They were not known for great perversion of sinful behavior as was Sodom. They were just people that didn't do anything. Jesus came and he worked there, he revealed his power there, and proclaimed his message of God's kingdom there and they did not respond. Try to imagine how disappointed and dejected Jesus must have been. For sure this is not what he wanted. Yet Jesus still finds a way to offer up prayer of thanksgiving.

It may be good for us to model this kind of prayer when things are difficult. Especially when you say, "Lord I've given you the best; I'm doing all that I can but I'm not seeing it happen." But isn't this the case with Jesus? Jesus thanks God here for the little one, the babes. The wise and the learned; those that should have known didn't respond. But Jesus was thankful for the insight of the babes. Perhaps our prayers ought to include thankfulness for the little, seemingly insignificant things. The little things do matter. It is a series of little things that lead to great results.

Now notice the declaration or message. ***(27) All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*** Here we have Jesus claiming to be the Son of God. Who Jesus is matters. He was not just a historical figure; a masterful teacher; a story teller, or miracle worker. He is the ONLY DIVINE

BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD. This is why we praise him today and glorify his name. Jesus is the divine revelation of God himself. How we treat Jesus has a reflection on God the Father. Let us not lose sight that God sent his only begotten Son to make available to us an exclusive relationship that no one has ever known before. This relationship is so intimate and special that it can only be known between a father and a son and to those to *whomsoever the Son will reveal him*. Everything we want to know about God we can see in the fleshly revelation of God. To Phillip Jesus would say *John 14:7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him*. Jesus tells us like he told Phillip that we need to know the Father.

Thirdly we see the invitation. We talk about Matthew 28 and the great commission; let us not overlook Matthew 11 and the great invitation. *(28) Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light*. If Jesus was literally in our assembly today and asked the question “*Is there anybody that is weary and burdened?*” some of you would likely raise your hand. We need this passage when we are feeling low. We need this passage when we had rather stay at home than gathering with the saints. What Jesus is offering here is not a church campaign or religious slogan, He is offering himself. The church has existed some 2000 years but the message and mission has not changed.

Our goal and desire is the same. We want people to be connected with Jesus; the Son of God and our Lord. Jesus is alive today and is made manifest in the church. *Ephesians 3:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God*. You can't connect with Jesus without connecting with the church. And you can't connect with the church without connecting with the people of the church. Did you know that there are over

forty “one-another” statements in the NT.

Jesus is the purpose and the way that we come to God. It’s bigger than the sign out in front that says “the church of Christ meets here.” Jesus Christ is more than this building. Jesus is here to give you rest and to help you with your burden. Jesus tells us in v29 to come, *take up my yoke and learn of me*. We allow the pressures of life to be more difficult than they need to be. **(30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.** This does not mean that the Christian life has no problems or burdens. But what Jesus is offering here is deliverance and freedom that can’t be found anywhere else. I don’t know what’s around the horizon for you but know assuredly that there will be some issues with which you will have to deal. But what it means is that Jesus is not going to walk out on you and forsake you. **Hebrews 13:5 ... be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.** I hope this gives you confidence. We have the invitation to follow Jesus and to learn from him. There is no other invitation like this invitation.

But what comes with this invitation is submission. **Luke 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.** You see this is a conditional invitation. We have to yield over to the Lord our will and desire for control. Submission takes consistent investment over time. We live in a fast pace world where we are accustomed to things happening quickly, but your process of learning and having a relationship with Jesus develops over a period of time. It’s not an immediate event. Attending a church service now and again is not going to be enough to connect with Jesus. It’s going to require spending time with the Lord in prayer and studying his word. This will have a dramatic effect on the way you think, the way you feel and the way you treat others. Your language will be affected and your heart will be changed.

Frank Laubach was a missionary in the Philippines several decades ago wrote a book about how to experience Christ presence and he said he decided in his desire to grow personally closer to the Lord to think about Jesus one second out of every minute.

While that may not seem like very much, he said after about four weeks his life had been dramatically changed. He said he felt closer to God and saw God's presence in the little things that were happening around him that he hadn't noticed before. It was because he had consciously changed his mind set into thinking about Jesus.

What are some things that you can do that might help you to reconnect with Jesus? Cultivate your faith. Let me remind you that Paul wrote ***Romans 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*** Then on another occasion Paul told Timothy, ***1 Timothy 4:13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.*** Then he adds in verse (15) ***Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.*** Somewhere in this submissive reconnection with Jesus there has to be commitment and learning about Jesus.

There was a time in John 5 where Jesus healed a lame man that had been place beside the pool of Bethesda. We see in v6 a strange question that Jesus asked this man. In essence he said, "Do you want to be made well?" ***John 5:6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?*** Perhaps Jesus asked this question because the Lord expected "confirmation." He still wants people to confirm him today by verbally confessing him. To connect with Jesus will require a willingness to change.

Jesus extends a marvelous invitation in Matthew 11 but if you don't want to change, then you won't receive the benefits that he is offering. But if you want your burdens to be lightened; then Jesus is willing to help you as you learn of him and submit to his will. He can help you in ways you cannot conceive. ***Ephesians 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,***

Where are you today? This church family is not here today to cast stones and point fingers; this church family is here today to encourage you to reconnect with Jesus and come join us in our journey toward heaven. If you are here today and have not

obeyed the gospel, then why not today? Jesus has already paid the price and paved the way. All you need to do is come to him on his terms.

Invitation