

Sunday Celebration (March 8, 2009)
"Newness Means New Desires"

"Walking in Newness of Life" (Pt. 6)

INTRO ... What Do You REALLY Want?

Does "Walking in Newness of Life" mean something more than—the Same Old Me, with a New List of Do's and Don'ts

Ez 36:26

Jer 31:31-34 "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD.

THE NEW IS NOT LIKE THE OLD IN A NUMBER OF WAYS:

1. *In the Old there had Not Yet Occurred a DEATH... in the New there's been a Death that Preceded the New Life*

Col 2:20-23 If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations — ²¹ "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch" ²²(referring to things that all perish as they are used) — according to human precepts and teachings? ²³ These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

"A church which erects regulations about food and drink as a means of judging or excluding does not yet know what it means to die with Christ and be freed from the powers of the world. ...whenever authentic, joyful confidence in Christ diminishes, regulations are brought in to preserve what the power of Christ once created. If you erect enough regulations and build a big enough endowment, an institution can endure for decades after the spiritual dynamic that brought it into existence is gone." John Piper, "Brothers, We are Not Professionals", p. 157

2. *The Old had EXTERNAL Writing... the New has INTERNAL Writing*
Jer 31:33

3. *The Old was being practiced by people with HARD, HOSTILE, VEILED HEARTS... the New is being practiced by people with SOFT, PRE-PROGRAMMED, WILLING, INSPIRED HEARTS*

Ez 36:26; Jer 31:33 ... Soft and pre-programmed

Php 2:13 "For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work of his good pleasure."

Heb 13:20-21 Now may the God of peace ... 21 equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ,

HOLINESS... WHAT IS IT TO YOU?

- *Behavior that you're SUPPOSED to do, but don't really WANT to do?*
- *The Life that you MOST want to live... that you find attractive and rewarding and fulfilling and fun?*

Titus 2:11-14

- **Grace and Saying "No"** ... v. 12 "it teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions"

Paul told Titus that the grace of God appeared instructing us to say "No". ...Saying "No" is a vital part of holy living. The downward gravitational pull of human society is so all-pervasive that if we don't learn to say "No", we will soon be in trouble. If young people don't learn to say "No", they will be quickly compromised by the opposite sex. If they don't learn to say "No", they will soon be experimenting with drugs and alcohol.

No is a word we must be instructed to say. It is an anti-social word. It goes against the tide. It takes courage and commitment to say it. It needs strong motivation, and grace motivates powerfully. Terry Virgo, "God's Lavish Grace", p. 113

In the coming of Christ, grace suddenly 'appeared', not to lower the standards but to equip believers to rise to unprecedented heights. ...(grace) comes to motivate and enable us to live a totally new life. Terry Virgo, "God's Lavish Grace", p. 112

Grace – rightly perceived – compels holiness. This is not a natural logic, we must confess. In the popular mind those who are full of grace are supposed to say, "Ok, that's all right. Fine. Never mind. Go ahead." But for the apostle, grace means we say no." Kent Hughes, "1&2Timothy and Titus", p. 338

MYTH - Grace produces a freedom that leads to a casual/careless relationship with sin

MYTH BUSTER #2 ... Grace does not say "YES" to unrighteousness—it is saying "NO"!

Ez 36:27 "...I will cause you to walk in my statutes and you will be careful to obey my rules."

MYTH BUSTER #1 ... *Grace Enables me to DRAW NEAR to God... By Contrast, the Craving for Passing Pleasure is an INDICATOR of my DISCONNECT from Truly Experiencing & Seeing God. It is the SYMPTOM of a Life that is Unsatisfied and Distant from God—it is the Evidence of a LACK OF GRACE*

● **The DESIRE to Say "No"**

"People instructed by grace will make decisions that come from their renewed heart. Grace teaches US to say "No". This is very different from reluctantly yielding to an external law, which forcefully and unyieldingly communicates, "Thou shalt not!"

Sadly, when Christians have not discovered the riches of grace, they often give the impression that they are externally bound and even reluctant in their law keeping. They can communicate to the unbeliever that they are simply not allowed to do what worldly people do and that "Christians simply don't do those sort of things" – though perhaps betraying a hint that they only wish they could. Often, our failure to demonstrate wholehearted and joyful acceptance of God's holy standards communicates to the onlooker that we are unhappy and frustrated people chafing against the imposition of religious rules, which we are obliged to keep. The transformation which grace accomplishes is altogether different. Grace persuades and instructs us inwardly. It opens our eyes to the wonders of God's kindness and the attractiveness of God's ways." Terry Virgo, "God's Lavish Grace", p. 117

● **The Desire to Say "YES" ... v. 14 "a people who are zealous for good works"**

OBEDIENCE FROM THE HEART

Rom 6:17

Eph 6:5-6

1 Tim 1:5

Php 2:13 ... What does that look like?

"What do you REALLY want?"...