



Walking in Newness of Life – Part 2

READING FOR THIS LESSON:– Hebrews 12.

Baptism

When we are baptized, we are born again. One night when Nicodemus came to Jesus he was told that,

"No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." (John 3:3).

Jesus went on to explain that he was not talking of a natural birth, but of a birth of the Spirit. He continued in verse 6,

"Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."



When a baby is born, a new life begins. Likewise, when we are baptized, we begin a new life – a life *"in Christ"*.

The apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:17,

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation."

If we are to continue to grow in Christ, we have to do our part, always trying to overcome the old way of life, which we rejected when we were baptized. Otherwise it will control us again.

Help in the way

If we had to struggle alone, we could never *"grow up"* in Christ. But God has given us all we need for our spiritual growth. He has given us the great privilege of coming to Him in **prayer**. With all our difficulties, our joys and our sorrows, we may confide in Him, coming to Him reverently, and asking Him to hear us and help us, when we ask in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God has given us His Word, the Bible. We could have no better guide as it will teach us more about God's ways. The Bible will help us to live and act, as He would have us to, and to grow up into that *"new man"* in Christ.

We read in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 that,

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

God has given us the ability to think about His Word and His ways.

It is written in Psalm 119:105,

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."

If we let our minds think more and more on the things of God, we shall gradually become men and women more pleasing to Him.

Believing and doing

Reading, praying and meditating will help us to do things, which are right and pleasing before God. Someone once asked Jesus,

"Which is the greatest commandment in the law?" (Matthew 22:36).

We read the reply of Jesus in verses 37-39,

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."

These commandments are not easy to keep. We shall only be able to love God with all our heart and soul and mind if we keep reminding ourselves how much God has loved us, and how much He has done for us.

He has done such great things for us. How can we ever pay the great debt we owe Him? We can do nothing for Him, but to **love** and **obey** Him.

But what does Jesus give us as the second commandment? *"Love your neighbor as yourself."*

Here is something we *can* do. We can help other people, and show them thoughtfulness and love, as God has shown through His love to us.

The greatest thing we can do for others is to pass on to them the good news of the Kingdom of God, which we ourselves have come to believe. As God has invited us to keep His ways, and to share in the joys of His Kingdom, so we must invite others to share the joy, which we have found.

On one occasion Jesus said,

"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you." (Matthew 7:12).

God will accept the acts of love, which we show our fellows as if they were done to Him. So that is something we can do to show our appreciation of His love towards us.



The disciple of Christ and the world

There are many things in the world today which are ungodly. There are, for example, many books, papers, films; even friends, which quickly turn our minds to things that are evil and away from our love for God.

Sometimes these things appeal to us very much indeed. But, however much they appeal to us, we just have to turn away from them, no matter how hard it is to do so. But if we don't turn from them, they will turn us away from God.

Taking no part in the ungodly pleasures of the world will mean losing some of our friends – because they won't understand why we now refuse to do some of the things, which we once enjoyed.

But we shall find many new and lasting friendships, for all who, like us, have separated themselves from the world, will be united together in love for God and one another.

Together they will be children of God, and brothers and sisters in Christ.

Remembering Jesus Christ

Baptism gives us a fresh start in our life. We set out, when we are baptized, on the strait and narrow way that leads to God's Kingdom (Matthew 7:13-14).

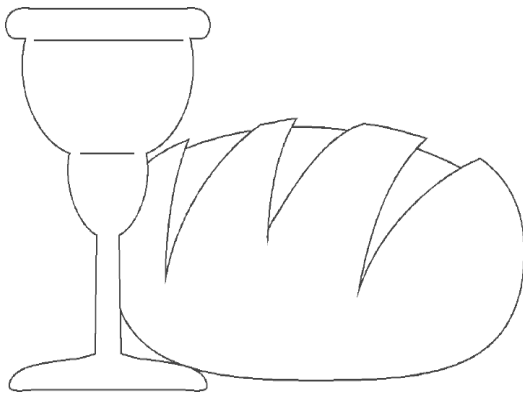
But we are still very human, and we soon forget how much Jesus did when he died on the cross for our salvation.

Jesus knew how easily his disciples would forget what he had done for them, so he showed them what to do to remind them. If you turn to Luke 22:14-20, you will read the story of what is usually called the "*Last Supper*". It was the last meal that Jesus shared with his disciples before his death.

Notice how the bread and the wine were to remind Jesus' disciples how he gave his life for them. He said to them,

" . . .do this in remembrance of me." (verse 19).

Now read the apostle Paul's directions in 1 Corinthians 11:23-28.



The early believers met on the first day of each week to remember Jesus Christ's death and resurrection in the way in which he had commanded them.

True disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ will also meet together, as the first disciples did (and usually Sunday is the most convenient day for such meetings), to break bread and to drink wine, remembering how Jesus' body was crucified and his blood (representing his life) was given for them.

As we continue to grow in Christ, remembering him in this way will become more and more important to us, helping us to realise that he is with us all the time.

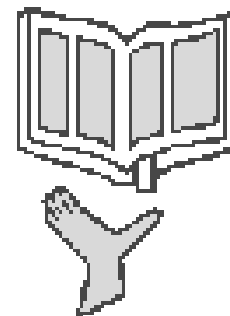
You must decide

As you finish reading these lessons, you will be like one who stands at the foot of a signpost. One way leads to **death**. The other way leads to **life**. Travelling along the way of life are those who have believed the Word of God, and been baptized into Jesus Christ. God and Christ are with them as they travel.

Will you also join them? Will you believe the glorious message of the Word of God? Will you be baptized into Christ?

Remember that he said,

"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved." (Mark 16:16).



May God bless you as you read His Word, the Bible.

Summary

1. Every day we must try to read something from the Bible, and pray to God.
2. After we have been baptized, we must try to meet with our fellow-believers every week, to break bread and drink wine in memory of Jesus Christ. Sometimes, this may not be possible, because there may not be people with the same beliefs in our part of the world. But we still should do so, even on our own!
3. We must try to give up all things likely to make us sin and turn us away from our love for God and Jesus Christ.
4. We must try continually to show kindness to other people and help them to find the way of salvation through Christ.