

# Better Way Apostolic Church- Bible Class

## Subject: Changing the Label: 2 Corinthians 5:17

### Changing the Label

A distinguished Methodist minister of the city of Adelaide, Australia, preached on sin, and one of his church officers afterwards came into his study to see him. He said to my friend, the minister, "Mr. Howard, we don't want you to talk as plainly as you do about sin, because if our boys and girls hear you talking so much about sin they will more easily become sinners. Call it a mistake if you will, but do not speak so plainly about sin." Then my friend took down a small bottle and showed it to the visitor. It was a bottle of strychnine and was marked, "Poison." Said he, "I see what you want me to do. You want me to change the label. Suppose I take off this label of 'Poison' and put on some mild label, such as 'Essence of Peppermint,' don't you see what happens? The milder you make your label, the more dangerous you make your poison."—J. Wilbur Chapman

### Clothes Do Not Make the Man

The program committee for a national barbers' convention devised a graphic means of demonstrating the effectiveness of their profession. They found a social derelict on skid row with long, dirty hair. His face was unshaven and his clothes were ragged and filthy. His body reeked with odors of cheap liquor and filth.

The barbers cleaned him up. They gave him a bath, shampoo, shave, haircut and a manicure. They liberally sprinkled talcum powder on him and added spicy cologne. He was dressed in a new suit and was presented before the convention as a changed man. He certainly looked the part. However, within a week the man was back on skid row, back in the gutter, back in his former pattern of living. The barbers altered his appearance, but their tonsorial services had not changed his inward nature."

Anyone can spend a bit of money and put a man in a new suit, but it takes being clothed with the Spirit of the Lord to put a new man in that suit! "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV). —Norman Bales

### 2 Corinthians 5:9-13

How can such opposite emotions as fear and love dwell in the same heart? Certainly they are found in the hearts of children who love their parents and yet respect them and their authority. "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling" (Psalms 2:11).

The phrase "the love of Christ" means His love for us as seen in His sacrificial death. "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). He loved us when we were unlovely, in fact, He loved us when we were ungodly, sinners, and enemies (see Romans 5:6-10). When He died on the cross, Christ proved His love for the world (John 3:16), the church (Ephesians 5:25), and individual sinners (Galatians 2:20). When you consider the reasons why Christ died, you cannot help but love Him.

He died that we might die (v. 14). The tense of the verb gives the meaning "then all died." This truth is explained in detail in Romans 6, the believer's identification with Christ. When Christ died, we died in

Him and with Him. Therefore, the old life should have no hold on us today. 'I am crucified with Christ' (Galatians 2:20).

He died that we might live (vv. 15-17). This is the positive aspect of our identification with Christ: we not only died with Him, but we also were raised with Him that we might "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). Because we have died with Christ, we can overcome sin; and because we live with Christ, we can bear fruit for God's glory (Romans 7:4).

He died that we might live through Him: "God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (1 John 4:9). This is our experience of salvation, eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. But He also died that we might live for Him, and not live unto ourselves (2 Corinthians 5:15). This is our experience of service. It has well been said, "Christ died our death for us that we might live His life for Him." If a lost sinner has been to the cross and been saved, how can he spend the rest of his life in selfishness?

In 1858, Frances Ridley Havergal visited Germany with her father who was getting treatment for his afflicted eyes. While in a pastor's home, she saw a picture of the Crucifixion on the wall, with the words under it: **I did this for thee.** What hast thou done for Me?" Quickly she took a piece of paper and wrote a poem based on that motto; but she was not satisfied with it so she threw the paper into the fireplace. The paper came out unharmed! Later, her father encouraged her to publish it; and we sing it today to a tune composed by Philip P. Bliss.

I gave My life for thee,  
My precious blood I shed,  
That thou might'st ransomed be,  
And quickened from the dead;  
I gave, I gave My life for thee,  
What hast thou given for Me?

2 Corinthians 5:9-13

Christ died that we might live through Him and for Him, and that we might live with Him "Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him" (1 Thessalonians 5:10). Because of Calvary, believers are going to heaven to live with Christ forever!

He died that we might die, and He died that we might live. But He also died that we might share in the new creation (2 Corinthians 5:16-17). Our new relationship to Christ has brought about a new relationship to the world and the people around us. We no longer look at life the way we used to. To know Christ "after the flesh" means to evaluate Him from a human point of view. But "the days of His flesh" are ended (Hebrews 5:7) because He has ascended to heaven and is now glorified at the Father's right hand.

Adam was the head of the old creation, and Christ (the Last Adam, 1 Corinthians 15:45) is the Head of the new creation. The old creation was plunged into sin and condemnation because of the disobedience

of Adam The new creation means righteousness and salvation because of the obedience of Jesus Christ. (See Romans 5:12-21 for the explanation of the "two Adams." Because we are a part of the new creation, everything has become new.

For one thing, we have a new view of Christ It is unfortunate that too great an emphasis is given in music and art on Christ "after the flesh." The facts about the earthly life of Jesus are important because the Christian message is grounded in history. But we must interpret the manger by the throne. We do not worship a Babe in a manger, we worship a glorified Saviour on the throne.

Because "an things are become new," we also have a new view of people around us. We see them as sinners for whom Christ died. We no longer see them as friends or enemies, customers or coworkers; we see them the way Christ sees them, as lost sheep who need a shepherd. When you are constrained by the love of Christ, you want to share His love with others.

During an especially controversial presidential election, a church officer came into a Sunday School class wearing a large pin that promoted one of the candidates. The pastor stopped him and advised him to take it off until he was out of church.

"Why take it off?" he argued. "He's a perfectly good candidate!"

"But suppose the pin is seen by an unsaved man of the other party?" the pastor replied. "Will it upset him and maybe keep him from hearing the Word and getting saved?"

Sullenly, the man removed the pin; and then he smiled and said, I guess I should remember that people aren't Republicans or Democrats. They're sinners who need a Saviour - and that's more important than winning an election."

But we should also look at other Christians as a part of the new creation, and not evaluate them on the bases of education, race, finances, or position in society. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

### The Wages of Sin

In one of our large industrial towns a plant was erected for the manufacture of artificial flowers. The work was enjoyable, and the wages paid to the employees were far better than they had been able to earn elsewhere. The establishment was looked upon as a godsend, and the proprietor as a benefactor to the community.

Very soon, however, the health of one of the brightest and most capable girls began to fail. She went listless and weary to her work, and when it was done was barely able to drag herself home. One day she was not able to leave her bed, and a week later the undertaker's hearse stood at the door. She had been the support of a feeble mother and several small children. Suddenly other employees went home from the factory white and fainting, to go to work no more. Finally an investigation was made, and it was found that the workers had been all the while inhaling the most deadly chemicals, which were used in the coloring of the flowers. While they had been generously paid in money, a part of the real wages was— death. Does this not make plain the words of Paul, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)? Sin may pay you liberally in mirth or money, but that is not all. There is a part of the pay that can be deferred for a time, but it is sure to come. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die!" (Ezekiel 18:20).