

Field Guide Home Study: Week 2 (Sept. 22, 2019)
Creative Living in a Consumer World
New Creations

We have heard the Good news:
God loves us. We have deep, sacred worth. We have been named “beloved.”

Sometimes these truths are very hard to believe. In her book, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*, Anne Lamott writes: “You have to make mistakes to find out who you aren’t. You take the action, and the insight follows: You don’t think your way into becoming yourself.” Sometimes in order to come to believing we are beloved, we just have to start living into it. The “living into” part takes some faithfulness because it isn’t easy, but eventually, it becomes more of a rhythm. Over and over and over and over, we live as new creations, beloved of God.

“So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!”

If we are new creations in Christ, then we cannot hoard God’s love, grace or forgiveness; we are compelled to be conduits of divine love in the world. We have a call to create rather than consume, to slow and see beauty rather than speed by it, and to be persons who choose to forgive those who have harmed us because we know that holding onto the pain becomes toxic bitterness.

The creative process of becoming a new creation never ends. The old stuff is always passing away because we have so many complex layers as humans; we are always being transformed, sanctified. Thanks be to God for this wonderful gift and may it be so as we live as new creations of Christ!

Scripture Readings: (CEB Bible)

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

¹⁷So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!

¹⁸All of these new things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and who gave us the ministry of reconciliation. ¹⁹In other words, God was reconciling the world to himself through Christ, by not counting people’s sins against them. Christ has trusted us with this message of reconciliation.

²⁰So we are ambassadors who represent Christ. God is negotiating with you through us. We beg you as Christ’s representatives, “Be reconciled to God!” ²¹God caused the one who didn’t know sin to be sin for our sake so that through Christ we could become the righteousness of God. So then, from this point on we won’t recognize people by human standards. Even though we used to know Christ by human standards, that isn’t how we know Christ now.

Genesis 1:1-5 & 31

When God began to create the heavens and the earth—²the earth was without shape or form, it was dark over the deep sea, and God's wind swept over the waters—³God said, "Let there be light." And so light appeared. ⁴God saw how good the light was. God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God named the light Day and the darkness Night.

There was evening and there was morning: the first day.

31 God saw everything God had made: it was supremely good. There was evening and there was morning: the sixth day.

Questions to Consider:

- What does it mean to live as a new creation? Where do you need reconciliation in your own life? Who do you need to seek reconciliation with? What shame is keeping you from doing this? Who might help with this and what simple steps might it take?
- What burden do you hold that is no longer yours to hold? What are you counting against people. Is that fair? Do you know enough to make that call?
- In the most literal and practical way, what does your life look like this week as a new creation?
- On a larger level, what is your life mission as a new creation in Christ? What do you long to create with your life? What is it that makes you come alive?
- If we are new creations because of God's forgiveness and grace, then how are you extending forgiveness and grace into the world that others may come to know it?

Spiritual Practices:

+Center this thought in prayer, and post it on the fridge, phone or mirror:

*The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!
Reconciled and given the ministry of reconciliation,
We go as ambassadors of reconciliation who represent Christ to ourselves, each other,
and our world.*

+At the dinner table with your family or with a friend, share a story about a way in which you have grown emotionally or spiritually. For example, how has your life story changed in the last 10 years? What, in you, is new?

+As autumn slowly comes, take a walk outside and notice the old leaves passing away. Consider the seasonality of life and wonder how living seasonally can help you let go of the things which are no longer yours to hold.

+Consider what heavy burdens you have. Write it/them on a sheet of paper. Center yourself in prayer as you work to give those to God. You may consider having a fire and burning these pieces of paper as a symbolic way of releasing these burdens (Safety first!).

+As new creations, we are still responsible for the harm that we have done and part of being a new creation is seeking reconciliation. What reconciliation do you need to seek this week? Maybe it is reconciliation with God, or with yourself, or with another human being?

Prayer for the Week:*

Reconciling Christ, bless my efforts to bring about reconciliation.
Give me the strength to persevere without counting the hurts,
and to find within myself the capacity to keep on loving.

Give me the grace to be able to stand in the middle of situations,
and to be a conduit for the deep listening
which can lead to healing and forgiveness.

Help me to conduct myself with dignity,
giving and expecting respect, moving from prayer to action,
and from action back again into prayer.

Grant that I may be so grounded in Your love,
that my security is not threatened if You show me a
better way to live as a new creation.

Reconciling Christ, bless me and bless all who engage
in the sacred work of envisioning new wholeness,
and bringing people and nations together. Amen.

*Adapted from a prayer written by Ann Siddall, in *Lent to Easter liturgies: Year C*.
Posted on the website of the **Stillpoint Spirituality**
Centre. <http://stillpoint.unitingchurchsa.org.au/>

[Catch the sermon podcast for Sept. 22nd 2019 here.](#) (posted on Monday)