



## WEEKLY DEVOTIONALS FROM PASTOR LYLE WAHL

27 December 2024

### A fresh start

In just a handful of days we will enter a new year, 2025.

Then 2024 will be *in the books*, will be gone. There is always an ending that leads to a new beginning. So, on January 1 we can declare “The old is gone! The new has come!” While we cannot go back, take a mulligan for things we did badly, we can move forward and do better.

While evaluating and planning in overall terms is valuable and even essential, let's zero in on the spiritual dimensions. The apostle Paul writes,

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, this person is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

The opening word, *therefore*, points us back to what Paul has been writing. He has reminded us that Christ died for us, redeemed us, and now as His love controls us we are to live for Him, not ourselves.

Verse 17 looks back to this gracious, marvelous transformation of believers when they placed their faith in Christ, and also points us forward to how we should be living today, and each day that God gives us in 2025.

- We are born again, have new and everlasting life from and with Christ because of His sacrificial, atoning, propitiating death for us. As the apostle Peter wrote in his first letter, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1:3-5).

We are not what we used to be! We are new creations in Christ!



- We then are to live in, live out this new life. As Paul wrote in Romans chapter 6, “just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life” (4). Also, here in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, “[Christ] died for all, so that those who live would no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose on their behalf” (15).

You know all of this, I suspect. Being familiar to us, we can nod our head in agreement and move on past this truth without really taking it in and letting it impact how we think and live. Let me suggest two practical, and also familiar steps for us as we all have a fresh start on January 1.

- Read Scripture, think through God’s amazing gift of saving, transforming you. Dig into what the Bible says you were without Christ, what He did to provide for your salvation, and what He has made you. Then make and hold on to a *Thank You, God* list that you will use regularly to thank and praise God as you move into and through the next year.
- Do an assessment of where you are in your relationship with God, the good and not so good. Make corrections as needed. Look ahead to specific areas where you can grow in love, faithfulness and service for God in 2025.

Pastor Lyle