

“Under New Management”—2 Corinthians 5:17-18

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Under New Management”, is 2 Corinthians 5:17-18 → *If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, Who through Christ reconciled us to Himself.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

When a business changes ownership it may advertise itself as “under new management.” Hopefully such advertising will attract customers curious to see if the store has somehow benefitted under the new management. Many times the store will be hardly recognizable with changes in products, service, staff and even the décor. Of course, the real test for the business is if the customer feels the changes have been in his best interests and benefit him. After all, a satisfied customer brings a satisfactory return. Do you ever get asked to fill out a service survey at any places of business you frequent? Relentlessly!

Whenever a change takes place in life people are constantly looking for **positive** results, even though the process of change will prove stressful. You hope a procedure change at work will benefit you by “streamlining” your workload. You hope a tax change will be beneficial

to you personally as well as for your community somehow. You hope intervention and treatment for an addiction will benefit both the individual and those within the realm of his relationships. Likewise, when a person repents of his sins and believes in Jesus people look for positive changes in thoughts, words and behavior. Why? Because it says that he is “under new management” in the confession of the Christian faith: “I believe . . . in Jesus Christ . . . our Lord.”

Verse 17 of our text says: *If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.* In a sense, as you live *in Christ* you are “under new management.” Why do you need to live “under new management” ***in Christ?***

Life “under old management” is lived in accord with the devil and your sinful nature. It is a life lived to serve the “unholy trinity”—me, myself and I. This life is described many ways in the Scriptures. For instance, Galatians 5:19-21 says: *The works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.* Notice it says that behaviors displayed by life lived under “old management” are *evident*, that is, obvious.

Since all people are *under sin* and *none is righteous, not one* (cf. Romans 3:9-18), all people need to be ***in Christ*** in order to live “under new management.” Through repenting of your sins and trusting in Jesus’

work of taking the punishment of your sins upon Himself, the Holy Spirit makes you *a new creation . . . in Christ. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come!*

Such a statement presents a huge challenge because there is so much of life even as Christians where *the old* doesn't feel like it *has passed away*. The old sinful patterns and behaviors seem to creep into the present which satan uses to tempt us into living in the old ways of sin. Thoughts of times when sin has been placed upon you arise as your own sinful human nature strives to drag you into the sins of resentment, contempt, idolatry and even despair. Thus, in faith we cling to Jesus to live as new creations, "under new management," saying: *Thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:57)

Living "under new management" means we have a new Master—Jesus—and a new purpose—to live for Him. This forgiveness and new relationship to Yahweh as well as your commitment to Jesus as Lord of your life, is not something of your own doing. Verse 18 of our text says that *all this is from God, Who through Christ reconciled us to Himself*. In baptism the Holy Spirit connected you to the suffering and death of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins, making you His child. He empowers you daily to live in obedience to Christ and His Word in service to others. He transforms you from "consumers" into stewards of

all His gifts, both spiritual and physical.

It is this reconciling work of the love of God which controls the Christian's perspective and use of all His providence. Money and possessions are viewed as God's providence for the nurturing of our bodies **primarily to serve Him by serving others so they can encounter the Gospel of Jesus**. God's grace sanctifies the Christian's work according to Colossians 3:23-24, where it says: *Whatever you do, work heartily, **as for the Lord** and not for men . . . You are serving the Lord Christ. Ephesians 4:28 says we should do *honest work with our own hands, **so that we may have something to share** with anyone in need*. This love also controls functioning in all the relational vocations you fulfill on a daily basis, to display Christ Jesus in your behaviors and words. Scripture is resplendent with instructions of how Christians should treat each other in their vocations as parents, children, employees, employers, government leaders, citizens and so forth. (You can read a compilation of them under the "Table of Duties" in your Small Catechism. They are also listed page 328 in the Lutheran Service Book.)*

Because you are "under new management"—that of the Holy Spirit—everything, including the ways we, as a the body of Christ in this place, distribute and receive God's grace, love and forgiveness, is governed by the Holy Spirit. Living for Christ allows no room for self-love that denies the priority of God and of service to others both in and

outside our congregation in our daily lives. The Holy Spirit, working through God's means of grace in which He gifts you with His forgiveness of your sins, pulls you away from a gratification of your old nature and of fleshy desires or of seeking security in earthly things of human ingenuity and strength. He then moves you as stewards of God's gifts to use them to serve the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Such are the offerings of our time, abilities and possessions in service to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Romans 12:1 instructs us Christians *by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*

Living under His "new management" definitely benefits all who trust in Christ and those with whom they come into contact. Those benefits are out of this world because they bring people into contact with the world to come on the Last Day! Why? Because *if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation* and it shows. Amen.

*For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this:*

*that One has died for all, therefore all have died;*

*and He died for all, that those who live*

*might no longer live for themselves*

*but for Him Who for their sake died and was raised.*

(2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

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