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VOLUME 72 NOVEMBER 2012
THE NEW CREATION

Greetings in the name of our awesome and eternal Creator- the beginning and the end and the Alpha and Omega!

We hope and pray that everyone is experiencing the peace and joy that comes only from the presence of our Lord and Savior!

Before we begin this month's teaching, I wanted to give you a quick update on a couple of things regarding our ministry...

I am pleased to announce that in terms of our India book project, we have raised almost to the dollar the exact amount needed to send and distribute **6,000** of my pocket books throughout India (2,000 of each book from my relationship with God series)! To show you how awesome this is, we had basically two options- we could send 6,000 total or 15,000 total. The price for 6,000 after printing, shipping, and other fees was \$1830. The price to do the same for 15,000 books was \$3,775. Now get this... **We raised \$1834- that is the exact amount needed for 6,000- plus \$4!** Ain't God good!?!

So a big thanks to all of you who contributed to this project (you know who you are)! There will undoubtedly be many people who are born again and who will come to a clearer understanding of what Christianity is all about through the messages contained in this series, and you will have a part in this harvest for all eternity! Isn't that awesome!?! I look forward to that day when we are met by some of our India brothers and sisters on the streets of gold and they thank us for helping them to understand before they got to heaven that Christianity is not about religion but is about a relationship! And this will happen!

Now let me give you another testimony of what God is doing in our lives and ministry... As many of you know, for over 4 years Shannon and I have been waiting for God's call on our lives to come to fruition and, praise be to God, we believe that we have entered into the beginning phases of that season.

Sure, we have been doing several things over the past few years like establishing our ministry, traveling overseas, holding Bible studies, and doing a lot of writing such as our monthly Living Logos newsletters and 4 different books, but there is another part to the calling God has on our lives that we have yet to fulfill. We have been productive, but on the other hand, we have always known that God has so much more in store for our lives and ministry than we have accomplished so far. And this is why we are excited about what we see happening right now.

In case you missed it, a couple of months ago I revealed that Shannon and I believed that God had given us the green light to begin a fellowship on Sunday afternoons here in Macon, GA. Well, we had our launch service on November the 4th and things went very well! We had a very good crowd of close to 30 people, and while we do not determine our success by numbers, it is quite apparent that God is working to grow our fellowship quickly. On top of that, God has supernaturally provided us with a core group of people that

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has helped meet and supply every need so that we have **zero overhead!** Now that, my friends, is a sign of God's hand being on this fellowship and we are excited to see where we are going from here.

So I invite you if you are in the area, come and see what God is doing every other Sunday in Macon, GA! As I have been repeatedly saying regarding this gathering, this is the start of something special! We praise God for His great faithfulness and have been blown away by His abundant, Ephesians 3:20 kind of provision! To God be the glory!

So since we have been in what I believe to be the beginning stages of something special, what seemed good to me to begin teaching on Sundays was on the subject of beginnings. So I want to begin to share with you this month what I shared with our group on our kickoff service on November the 4th. Let's begin in 2 Corinthians chapter 5...

THE NEW CREATION

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new."

Notice that the Apostle Paul states that if anyone is in Christ- that is, if we are born again and have been grafted into His body- we are a "new creation." The original King James version says that we are "new creatures" but the literal translation is "creation." One expositor said that this word translated "creation" describes a new species of being that has never existed before. So this means that just as God created the original creation from nothing, likewise he made us a new creation out of nothing. He took our "nothing" and made us something- a new creation in Christ! Hallelujah!

Now, in our situation, we were not technically created out of nothing. We had "old things" that "passed away"- namely, an old man that was crucified with Christ. We had an old sin nature that needed to be crucified on the cross of Christ. This was that old man that had death abiding in it. It was the part of us that could not love and serve God. It was the part of us that was incapable of living in obedience to Him. And, finally, it was the part of us that could not experience the life of God and experience salvation. This old man had to "pass away" and die.

And this is what happens in that moment that we make Jesus the Lord and Savior of our life... The old man dies and, behold, all things become new! Glory to God! In other words, all things in our life begin afresh and anew! There is a new beginning in our life! Everything wrong and sinful that we had said or done before we came to know Jesus Christ was washed away in His blood! It doesn't matter how big our sins were. It doesn't matter how many sins we committed. They were all washed away in the blood of Christ and even the old sin nature that we had that inspired us to commit those sins was crucified. So, in essence, it is as if we were created out of nothing. Not that there was never a life we lived before we were born again, but the slate has been washed so clean by the blood of Christ that it is as if our world never existed before salvation.

So let me encourage you that it doesn't matter what you did and it doesn't matter how gross the sin. If you have been born again- all the old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new in you!

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We have a new beginning- a new *genesis*, if you would. What God did in and through us is exactly what He did in the beginning of creation itself. In other words, **God's work in the old creation is a type and shadow of His work in the new creation!**

Now we know that the Bible teaches us that God created the heavens and the earth in seven days. Well, what I believe the Lord has shown me is that these seven days that are described in Genesis chapters one and two give us principles that are important to understanding His work in each of us when we were made new creations in Christ. So let's now turn over to Genesis chapter one and begin this month by looking at the account of God creating the heavens and the earth and see what treasures are contained in this chapter...

IN THE BEGINNING

Beginning in Genesis 1:1 we read: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

This verse not only shows how God created the heavens and the earth; it shows how He creates all things- *in the beginning!* For example, in the Garden of Eden, when man sinned and forfeited eternal life, God was not taken by surprise. 1 Peter 1:20 said that He had prepared a Lamb before the foundation of the world. That means that before we could mess up; God made provision for the mess!

This truth is emphasized in type and shadow form in Exodus chapter 12 during the institution of the Passover. Now we know that Jesus is our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7), so these verses reveal to us what Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection have provided for us. But what I want us to notice is that God reveals to us when He made provision for the sin.

In verse 2, the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron and said, "This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you." Here is 2 Corinthians chapter 5 again for us! When God instituted the Passover, He told them that their calendar had started over! Old things have passed away; Behold, all things have become new! Likewise, when we came to know Christ, we were born again. That old man had passed away and our calendar started over on that day! Praise be to God!

Now let me interject this: While many believers believe that the things we have done before we were born again have passed away, most of these that believe that truth do not believe that the consequences to those mistakes have passed away. And while certainly there are natural situations that are carried over into our new life with Christ, what I want to encourage us on is that things like generational curses, physical infirmities, and soulful hurts are not things that are to follow us into our new genesis in Christ!

Do you remember after the children of Israel had their Passover and were freed from the bondage of Pharaoh, how when they had come to the Red Sea that Pharaoh's army tried to follow them down and overtake them? What happened? God drowned their former oppressors, never to control them again! This clearly shows us that the former oppressions we experienced in our life before Christ have no right to overtake us again! They have been drowned in the waters of baptism and have no right in our life as the redeemed. **So pass through your Red Sea as on dry ground and enter into your promised land, for the battle is the Lord's and the victory is ours!**

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Now notice in verse 3 that the Lord told them that every man shall choose for himself and his household a lamb on the 10th day of this first month and in verse 6 that He told them to keep it until the 14th day wherein the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. Now this is what we need to understand: 2 Peter 3:8 says that a day to the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years to a day. So when God told them to pick out the lamb on the 10th day and then told them to slay it on the 14th day, we have an awesome truth here... You see, most scholars believe that from the beginning of creation in Genesis chapter one to when Jesus walked on this earth was 4,000 years. So God followed His own principle that he laid out to Moses and Aaron that He picked Jesus to be the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world and then He sent Him 4 days (i.e. 4,000 years) later to be crucified by the whole congregation of Israel! Wow! How great is His understanding!

But this is what I want you to understand... God always makes provision before the problem. He did the same with Abraham and Isaac after God had told him to take his beloved son to the land of Moriah and offer him up as a burnt sacrifice. When Isaac asked where the lamb was that they were going to sacrifice, Abraham said that the Lord Himself would provide the lamb. Well, as they climbed the mountain, apparently God had sent the ram up already because relatively soon after they got to the top they found the ram was caught in the bush.

This principle is also true in the new creation! He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love (Ephesians 1:4). Therefore, He chose us before we could ever reject Him. Better yet, this verse tells us that He chose you and I before the world was ever created. Therefore, He made provision for you and I before Adam and Eve ever ate the forbidden fruit. God's foreknowledge and preparedness are amazing! He alone is wise! Yes, **God made provision for the new creation in the beginning, not when the problem arose!**

WITHOUT FORM AND VOID

Next, in verse 2, we are told- "The earth was without form and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters."

Now this verse describing the state of the earth before God began His good work of creation was a type of us before He began His good work in us! In other words, Genesis 1:2 describes our predicament before we became new creations in Christ.

You see, just as the earth was "without form and void", we too were "without form and void" before we came to Christ... The words "without form" literally described having nothing similarly to how a wilderness has no life or fruit and the word "void" literally described "emptiness." So when you put these definitions together, you could translate it that the earth had nothing and was empty. Likewise, we had nothing and we could do nothing before coming to know Christ! No amount of righteous deeds or good works could save us. There was nothing we could do and there was nothing we had to produce salvation. But, like we said, in Christ, there is a new creation; old things had passed away, all things became new! And all things were of God- therefore, we have something and are complete! Apart from Him we can do nothing, but in Him we can do all things! Without Him, we know nothing, but in Him we know all things! Outside of Him we have nothing, but in Him we possess all things! Hallelujah!

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Then notice that Genesis 1:2 said that “darkness was on the face of the deep.” Likewise, darkness was on our face! We were blind before we came to know Him- we had no light being blinded by the darkness of the god of this age lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ should shine on us (2 Corinthians 4:4). Therefore, it was necessary that we be illuminated- where the switch was turned on and we became enlightened! And this is exactly what happened next...

The last part of verse 2 says, “And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters”... This is when the Holy Spirit comes onto the scene! He moves upon our blind and empty state and begins to draw us to Christ and the Father, for none comes to the Father unless the Spirit draws him. He is the One who opens our eyes to the truth and does the work of regeneration in us- letting us know through illumination what the truth is and of our need to repent, and then when we make that decision, He does the work of recreation in our spirit.

This truth of the Holy Spirit “hovering” over the earth is purposefully similar to how Gabriel explained that Jesus would be conceived in Mary... When Mary asked, “How shall these things be?” Gabriel answered and said, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the highest will overshadow you” (Luke 1:35). This is the exact same word picture as Genesis 1:2 of the Holy Spirit “hovering” or “overshadowing” the face of the deep! So what we see here is that **just how the Holy Spirit hovered over the virgin Mary and caused her to conceive the Son of God, He also hovered over our spiritual barrenness and was ready to illuminate and regenerate us by placing the spirit of the Son of God in us!** Hallelujah! The presence of the Holy Spirit is the first thing that could bring about the new creation!

LET THERE BE LIGHT!

Now let’s wind up this month’s teaching by looking at what happened next in verses 3-5... It says, “Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.”

So after the Holy Spirit has begun to move upon our hearts, then the light is ready to come. And how does this light come? It comes from the Word of God! Notice how verse 3 begins by saying- “Then God said...” This is how it always will be- we are born again through the Spirit and the Word. The Word is the Seed (see the Parable of the Sower) and the Spirit is the germinator! So the Word was spoken, the Spirit acted on the Word, and light came. Likewise, when we testify and witness with God’s Word, then the Holy Spirit convicts the one we are witnessing to, and light (i.e. illumination) comes into their heart! And this should be no surprise to us that it works like this for the entrance of His Words brings light (Psalm 119:130)!

But not only does God’s Word bring light to our soul; this also produces light in our spirit! What I mean by this is that we are not just enlightened in terms of our understanding of the truth, but we are literally made light! Jesus Himself said that we are the light of the world just as He said that He was the light of

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the world (Matthew 5:14). Paul said in Ephesians 5:8 that we are light in the Lord. So when God's Word was sown in our hearts and we were born again, our spirit was made light and as God said here, that light was good!

But, you see, it is important for us to understand that when we were born again and were made children of light that God did indeed make a separation between us and the darkness around us. In other words, He set us apart and sanctified us from the dark and perverse generation that we live in. So our job is to shine as lights in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation and reveal God to others!

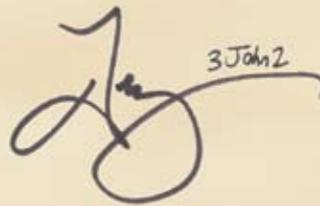
He made us light that we might be separated from the darkness in others who have not been made God's children. Therefore, it is our duty to walk as children of light and let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16). As we do this, we will have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness and expose their deeds (Ephesians 5:8-13).

So I want to encourage you this month, let your light so shine before those who are around you! Allow the fruit of that new creation that you have been made in Christ to radiate from you in your words and actions. It is important, particularly during this holiday season, that people see the true "reason for the season." For you might be the only Bible your neighbor will ever read!

Surely, as we have seen this month, God has done a special work in each of us- taking us who were "without form and void" and who had "darkness" over our face and sending His Word and His Holy Spirit to make us new creations in Christ by His amazing grace! Now it is our duty to be vessels that God can use to bring this special work of grace into others. Amen?

Lord willing, we will continue this series next month. But till then- Maranatha!

Victoriously,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Trey', with the text '3 John 2' written to its right.