

THE NEW COVENANT: LIVING BY HIS LIFE

The reality of the new covenant is an ever-present-now reality. For all of its mystery, the new covenant is a very material spirituality. In contrast to gnosticism or mysticism, genuine Christianity is concrete, solid, substantial... it is a fully embodied spirituality. It is not New Covenant theology that makes us "so heavenly minded that we are of no earthly use." Rather, it is our appropriation of the New Covenant truth that makes possible "on earth as it is in heaven".

For starters, the New Covenant emphasizes an actual righteous implanting in the human spirit. More than imputation, we have an impartation of the righteous life of Christ. (II Co 5:17-21) The righteousness of God may be impossible to imitate or to generate, but not impossible to receive. In the New Covenant, righteousness does not lie in a legal column as an impersonal credit to my heavenly bank account. Righteousness lies inside of me in the here and now as a personal deposit of the righteous life of Christ. It is more than "positional", it is "dispositional".

With the righteous life of Christ comes a relational empowering. In the relationship of our personal union and communion with Him, we have both the willing and the working of God in us (Phil 2:13; I Thess 2:13; Heb 13:21). Because of our oneness with Christ, we have received a corresponding supply of His life for every directive God gives us and for every temptation we face (II Pet 1:3,4; Col 2:9-10; I Co 10:13). In other words, we do not forgive, love, turn the other cheek, go the second mile because it's what good Christians do. We do these because we have a forgiving, loving, turning the other cheek, second mile Life in us. We do not return evil for evil, hold grudges, tell lies, or yield to lusts - not because good Christians don't do these things - but because the Life within us does not do these. We are empowered to live differently because of Christ's indwelling relationship to us (Phil 4:13).

In our personal union with Christ (Ga 2:20; Col 1:27), we have relocated imperatives. Grace does not remove the imperative mood, but relocates it. There are still commands, but they are not directed toward us so that we try hard to fulfill them. They are directed to our new creation selves - the new self joined to Christ - so that we learn to trust His life in us to fulfill and carry them out. Because of who we are and Who He is in us, this is how we must live. Obedience is not rejected or ignored, but proclaimed on the basis of what's already been given to us in Christ. As we abide in Christ, the imperatives of our faith remind us of the indicatives of our new life. The imperatives and commands are no burden to His life within us.

How about a celebration in the new year of the ever-present-now realities of our new creationness? How about a reaffirmation of our full and perfect Savior Who provides for us a full and perfect salvation? How about a new year intent to personally experience "on earth as it is in heaven?"



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Praise Reports & Prayer Requests

GREETINGS

Even though much of the Christmas celebration has faded by now, I pray this new year will be one in which we celebrate the unfading gift of Jesus Christ. Although there's nothing inherently wrong with giving and receiving perishable gifts, Christmas is the celebration of the imperishable gift of life in Jesus Christ.

The after Christmas "let down", the post holiday "blues" are really God's way of reminding us we were made for more than the material. We were made to be filled with the unfading beauty and imperishable quality of God Himself.

It is somewhat ironic that Jesus Christ came to break our dependency upon the material, yet we have turned the celebration of His coming into a corrupted consumption of goods - as if more things, more food, more parties and the like could somehow be our consolation, our redemption.

Let's make this new year a daily celebration of the imperishable and unfading. Let's remember where (or Who) our consolation and redemption is. Let's rejoice in God's gift that fills us with the imperishable - Jesus Christ our Unfading Life!



CALENDAR



JANUARY

1,8,22,29 CCF

10 Alachua Study

13-14 Sebring, FL (864-382-6265)

JAN 29 - FEB 1 RecLab, Orlando, FL

FEBRUARY

17-19 Florida Retreat

MARCH

2-4 Vero Beach, FL (772-563-0430)

9-11 Houston, TX (713-643-8014)



WINTER RETREAT



FEBRUARY 17-19, 2012



ALACHUA FLORIDA



\$275 couple (all inclusive)

\$150 single (2 to a room)

\$230 single (1 to a room)

Includes:
conference fee
& 5 meals

or

\$65 person conference fee & 3 meals

(no lodging
or breakfast)

or

\$20 person conference fee

RESERVATIONS:

\$50 per person **DUE BY JANUARY 20th**

No reservation fee necessary to attend meetings only

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