

# Two Creations (Reading)

by Watchman Nee

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*We are dead in Christ, and our spiritual experience is already true in Christ, which we enter into by abiding in him.*

**Duration:** 28:11

**Scripture:** John 15:4, Romans 6:4, Romans 8:1, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:10, Colossians 2:10

**Topics:** "New Creation", "Faith In Christ"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that the work of God in our lives is mysterious and beyond our understanding. He explains that through the new birth, we receive a new and divine life that is separate from our natural life. This new creation in Christ is made possible through the cross and resurrection of Jesus. The preacher encourages believers to abide in Christ and rest in the fact that God has placed them in His Son. He emphasizes the importance of focusing on Christ rather than trying to produce fruit, as it is God's work to fulfill His promises in our lives. The sermon also highlights the distinction between the kingdom of this world, dominated by Satan, and the kingdom of God. The preacher urges believers to have faith in the objective facts of the Gospel, which will transform them and make them fruitful in their Christian walk. The key message is to continually look to Christ and see ourselves in Him, rather than focusing on our own efforts or circumstances.

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## Transcript

Though we have already spent long on this matter, there is a further thing that may help to make it clearer to us. The scriptures declare that we are dead indeed, but nowhere do they say that we are dead in ourselves. We shall look in vain to find death within.

That is just the place where it is not to be found. We are dead not in ourselves, but in Christ. We were crucified with him because we were in him.

We are familiar with the words of the Lord Jesus, abide in me and I in you. Let us consider them for a moment. First, they remind us once again that we have never to struggle to get into Christ.

We are not told to get there, for we are there. But we are told to stay there where we have been placed. It was God's own act that put us in Christ, and we are to abide in him.

But further, this verse lays down for us a divine principle, which is that God has done the work in Christ, and not in us as individuals. The all-inclusive death and the all-inclusive resurrection of God's Son were accomplished fully and finally apart from us in the first place. It is the history of Christ which is to become the experience of the Christian.

And we have no spiritual experience apart from him. The scriptures tell us that we were crucified with him, that we were quickened, raised, and set by God in the heavenlies in him, and that we are complete in him. It is not just something that is still to be affected in us, though it is that of course, it is something that has already been affected in association with him.

In the scriptures we find that no Christian experience exists as such. What God has done in his gracious purpose is to include us in Christ. In dealing with Christ, God has dealt with the Christian.

In dealing with the head, he has dealt with all the members. It is altogether wrong for us to think that we can experience anything of the spiritual life in ourselves merely and apart from him. God does not intend that we should acquire something exclusively personal in our experience, and he is not willing to effect anything like that for you and me.

All the spiritual experience of the Christian is already true in Christ. It has already been experienced by Christ. What we call our experience is only our entering into his history and his experience.

It would be odd if one branch of a vine tried to bear grapes with a reddish skin, and another branch tried to bear grapes with a green skin, and yet another branch with a very dark purple skin, each branch trying to produce something of its own without reference to the vine. It is impossible, unthinkable. The character of the branches is determined by the vine.

Yet certain Christians are seeking experiences as experiences. They think of crucifixion as something, of resurrection as something, of ascension as something, and they never stop to think that the whole is related to a person. No.

Only as the Lord opens our eyes to see the person do we have any true experience. Every true spiritual experience means that we have discovered a certain fact in Christ and have entered into that. Anything that is not from him in this way is an experience that is going to evaporate very soon.

I have discovered that in Christ, then praise the Lord it is mine. I possess it Lord because it is in thee. Oh it is a great thing to know the facts of Christ as the foundation for our experience.

So God's basic principle in leading us on experimentally is not to give us something. It is not to bring us through something and as a result to put something into us which we can call our experience. It is not that God effects something within us so that we can say I died with Christ last March, or I was raised from the dead on January the 1st 1937, or even last Wednesday I asked for a definite experience and I have got it.

No. That is not the way. I do not seek experiences in themselves as in this present year of grace.

Time must not be allowed to dominate my thinking here. The point is that God does not give individuals individual experiences. All that they have is only an entering into what God has already done.

It is the realizing in time of eternal things. The history of Christ becomes our experience and our spiritual history. We do not have a separate history from his.

The entire work regarding us is not done in us here but in Christ. He does no separate work in individuals apart from what he has done there. Even eternal life is not given to us as individuals.

The life is in the Son and he that hath the Son hath the life. God has done all in his Son and he has included us in him. We are incorporated into Christ.

Now the point of all this is that there is a very real practical value in the standard of faith that says God has put me in Christ and therefore all that is true of him is true of me. I will abide in him. Satan is always trying to get us out, to keep us out, to convince us that we are out and by temptations, failures, suffering, trial to make us feel acutely that we are outside of Christ.

Our first thought is that if we were in Christ we should not be in this state and therefore judging by the feelings we now have we must be out of him. And so we begin to pray Lord put me into Christ. No! God's injunction is to abide in Christ and that is the way of deliverance.

But how is it so? Because it opens the way for God to take a hand in our lives and to work the thing out in us. It makes room for the operation of his superior power, the power of resurrection. So that the facts of Christ do progressively become the facts of our daily experience and where before sin reigned we make now the joyful discovery that we are truly no longer in bondage to sin.

As we stand steadfastly on the ground of what Christ is we find that all that is true of him is becoming experimentally true in us. If instead we come on to the ground of what we are in ourselves we will find that all that is true of the old nature remains true of us. If we get there in faith we have everything.

If we return back here we find nothing. So often we go to the wrong place to find the death of self. It is in Christ.

We have only to look within to find we are very much alive to sin. But when we look over there to the Lord God sees to it that death works here but that newness of life is ours also. We are alive unto God.

Abide in me and I in you. This is a double sentence. A command coupled with a promise.

That is to say there is an objective and a subjective side to God's working. And the subjective side depends upon the objective. The I in you is the outcome of our abiding in him.

We need to guard against being over anxious about the subjective side of things and so becoming turned in upon ourselves. We need to dwell upon the objective. Abide in me and to let God take care of the subjective and this he has undertaken to do.

So in our walk with the Lord our attention must be fixed on Christ. Abide in me and I in you is the divine order. Faith in the objective facts makes those facts true subjectively.

As the apostle Paul puts it we all beholding the glory of the Lord are transformed into the same image. The same principle holds good in a matter of fruitfulness of life. He that abideth in me and I in him the same beareth much fruit.

We do not try to produce fruit or concentrate upon the fruit produced. Our business is to look away to him. As we do so he undertakes to fulfill his word in us.

How do we abide? Of God are ye in Christ Jesus. It was the work of God to put you there and he has done it. Now stay there.

Do not be moved back onto your own ground. Never look at yourself as though you were not in Christ. Look at Christ and see yourself in him.

Abide in him. Rest in the fact that God has put you in his Son and live in the expectation that he will complete his work in you. It is for him to make good the glorious promise that sin shall not have dominion over you.

The kingdom of this world is not the kingdom of God. God had in his heart a world system, a universe of his creating, which shall be headed up in Christ his Son. But Satan, working through man's flesh, has set up instead a rival system known in scripture as this world.

A system in which we are involved and which he himself dominates. He has in fact become the prince of this world. Thus in Satan's hands the first creation has become the old creation and God's primary concern is now no longer with that but with the second and new creation.

He is bringing in a new creation, a new kingdom and a new world and nothing of the old creation, the old kingdom or the old world, can be transferred to the new. It is a question now of these two rival realms and of which realm we belong to. The apostle Paul of course leaves us in no doubt as to which of these two realms is now in fact ours.

He tells us that God in redemption delivered us out of the power of darkness and transformed us into the kingdom of the Son of his love. But in order to bring us into his new kingdom God must do something new in us. He must make of us new creatures.

Unless we are created anew we can never fit into the new realm. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

However educated, however cultured, however improved it be, flesh is still flesh. Our fitness for the new kingdom is determined by the creation to which we belong. Do we belong to the old creation or the new? Are we born of the flesh or of the spirit? Our ultimate suitability for the new realm hinges on the question of origin.

The question is not good or bad but flesh or spirit. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and it will never be anything else. That which is of the old creation can never pass over into the new.

Once we really understand what God is seeking, namely something altogether new for himself, then we shall see clearly that we can never bring any contribution from the old realm into that new thing. God wanted to have us for himself but he could not bring us as we were into that which he had purposed. So he first did away with us by the cross of Christ and then by resurrection provided a new life for us.

If any man is in Christ he is a new creature. The old things are passed away, behold they are become new. Being now new creatures with a new nature and a new set of faculties, we can enter the new kingdom and the new world.

The cross was the means God used to bring to an end the old things by setting aside altogether our old man. And the resurrection was the means he employed to impart to us all that was necessary for our life in

that new world. We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death.

That like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the father, so we also might walk in newness of life. The greatest negative in the universe is the cross, for with it God wiped out everything that was not of himself. The greatest positive in the universe is the resurrection, for through it God brought into being all he will have in the new sphere.

So the resurrection stands at the threshold of the new creation. It is a blessed thing to see that the cross ends all that belongs to the first regime and that the resurrection introduces all that pertains to the second. Everything that had its beginning before resurrection must be wiped out.

Resurrection is God's new starting point. We have now two worlds before us, the old and the new. In the old Satan has absolute dominion.

You may be a good man in the old creation but as long as you belong to the old you are under sentence of death because nothing of the old can go over to the new. The cross is God's declaration that all that is of the old creation must die. Nothing of the first Adam can pass beyond the cross.

It all ends there. The sooner we see that the better, for it is by the cross that God has made a way of escape for us from the old creation. God gathered up in the person of his son all that was of Adam and crucified him.

So in him all that was of Adam was done away. Then God made as it were a proclamation throughout the universe saying through the cross I have set aside all that is not of me. You who belong to the old creation are all included in that.

You too have been crucified with Christ. None of us can escape that verdict. This brings up the subject of baptism.

Are you ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death. What is the significance of these words? Baptism in scripture is associated with salvation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.

We cannot speak scripturally of baptismal regeneration but we may speak of baptismal salvation. What is salvation? It relates not to our sins nor to the power of sin but to the cosmos or world system. We are involved in Satan's world system.

To be saved is to make our exit from his world system unto God's. In the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ says Paul the world hath been crucified unto me and I unto the world. This is the figure developed by Peter when he writes of the eight souls who were saved through water.

Entering into the ark Noah and those with him stepped by faith out of that old corrupt world into a new one. It was not so much that they were personally not drowned but that they were out of that corrupt system. That is salvation.

Then Peter goes on which also after a true likeness doth now save you even baptism. In other words by that aspect of the cross which is figured in baptism you are delivered from the present evil world and by your baptism in water you confirm this. It is baptism into his death ending one creation but it is also baptism into Christ Jesus having in view a new one.

You go down into the water and your world in figure goes down with you. You come up in Christ but your world is drowned. Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved said Paul of Philippi and spake the word of the Lord to the jailer and his household and he was baptized he and all his immediately.

In doing so he and those with him testified before God his people and the spiritual powers that they were indeed saved from a world under judgment. As a result we read they rejoiced greatly having believed in God. Thus it is clear that baptism is no mere question of a cup of water not even of a baptistry of water.

It is a tremendous thing relating as it does both to the death and to the resurrection of our Lord and having in view two worlds. Anyone who has worked in a pagan country knows what tremendous issues are raised by baptism. Peter goes on now to describe baptism in the passage just quoted as the answer of a good conscience toward God.

Now we cannot answer without being spoken to. If God had said nothing we should have no need to answer but he has spoken he has spoken to us by the cross. By it he has told of his judgment of us of the world of the old creation and of the old kingdom.

The cross is not only Christ's personally an individual cross it is an all inclusive cross, a corporate cross, a cross that includes you and me. God has put us all into his son and crucified us in him. In the last Adam he has wiped out all that was of the first Adam.

Now what is my answer to God's verdict on the old creation? I answer by asking for baptism. Why? In Romans 6 verse 4 Paul explains that baptism means burial. We were buried therefore with him through baptism.

Baptism is of course connected with both death and resurrection though in itself it is neither death nor resurrection it is burial. But who qualify for burial? Only the dead. So if I ask for baptism I proclaim myself dead and fit only for the grave.

Alas some have been taught to look on beans to death. They try to die by getting themselves buried. Let me emphatically say that unless our eyes have been opened by God to see that we have died in Christ and been buried with him we have no right to be baptized.

The reason we step down into the water is that we have recognized that in God's sight we have already died. It is to this that we testify. God's question is clear and simple.

Christ has died and I have included you there. Now what are you going to say to that? What is my answer? Lord I believe you have done the crucifying. I say yes to the death and to the burial to which you have committed me.

He has consigned me to death and the grave. By my request for baptism I give public assent to that fact. There is an old world and a new world and between the two there is a tomb.

God has already crucified me but I was consent to be consigned to the tomb. My baptism confirms God's sentence passed upon me in the cross of his son. It affirms that I'm cut off from the old world and belong now to the new.

So baptism is no small thing. It means for me a definite conscious break with the old way of life. This is the meaning of Romans 6 verse 2. We who died to sin how shall we any longer live therein? Paul says in

effect if you would continue in the old world why be baptized? You should never have been baptized if you meant to live on in the old realm.

When once we see this we clear the ground for the new creation by our assent to the burial of the old. In Romans 6 verse 5 still writing to those who were baptized Paul speaks of our being united with him by the likeness of his death. For by baptism we acknowledge in a figure that God has brought an intimate union between ourselves and Christ in this matter of death and resurrection.

What in fact does this union imply? The real meaning behind baptism is that in the cross we were baptized into the historic death of Christ so that his death became ours. Our death and his became then so closely identified that it is impossible to divide between them. It is to this historic baptism this God-wrought union with him that we are sent when we go down into the water.

Our public testimony in baptism today is our admission that the death of Christ two thousand years ago was an almighty all-inclusive death. Mighty enough and all-inclusive enough to carry away in it and bring to an end everything in us that is not of God. If we have become united with him by the likeness of his death we shall be also by the likeness of his resurrection.

Now with resurrection the figure is different because something new is introduced. I am baptized into his death but I do not enter in quite the same way into his resurrection for his resurrection enters into me imparting to me a new life. In the death of the Lord the emphasis is solely upon I in Christ.

With the resurrection while the same thing is true there is now a new emphasis upon Christ in me. How is it possible for Christ to communicate his resurrection life to me? How do I receive this new life? Paul suggests I think a very good illustration with these very same words united with him for the word united may carry in the Greek the sense of grafted and it gives us a very beautiful picture of the life of Christ which is imparted to us through resurrection. I do not know how it is done.

The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the voice thereof but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth. So is everyone that is born of the spirit. We cannot tell how God has done his work in us but it is done.

We can do nothing and need to do nothing to bring it about for by the resurrection God has already done it. God has done everything. There is only one fruitful life in the world and that has been grafted into millions of other lives.

We call this the new birth. The new birth is the reception of a life which I did not possess before. It is not that my natural life has been changed at all.

It is that another life, a life altogether new, altogether divine has become my life. God has cut off the old creation by the cross of his son in order to bring in a new creation in Christ by resurrection. He has shut the door to that old kingdom of darkness and translated me into the kingdom of his dear son.

My glorying is in the fact that it has been done, that through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ that old world has been crucified unto me and I unto the world. My baptism is my public testimony to that fact. By it, as my all witness, my confession is made unto salvation.

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