

WINTER 2024

TIDINGS

CHRIST'S SANCTIFIED HOLY CHURCH

Repentance and Conversion

What does conversion mean? How do you know when a person is truly converted? We often use this word in conjunction with sanctification, as it is a necessary experience before a soul can be sanctified. As a result, perhaps we overlook this tremendous work of grace in anticipation of sanctification. But let's consider this miraculous work of grace on its own for a minute.

We find this term in the gospels and in Act 3:19, "*Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out...*". In this text, conversion takes place after repentance. So it is possible that a person could repent but not be converted, yet it is impossible to be converted without repentance. Repentance is asking God to forgive committed sin and then fully turning away from all known sin. The turning away from sin is the defining mark of repentance and distinguishes this work from forgiveness.

The scripture doesn't command that we merely confess sin and obtain forgiveness. It demands repentance, which is to say, a complete turning away from sin and a determination not to commit sin anymore. God is faithful to respond to this prayer with great power and the believer is filled with relief and gratitude.

Conversion is when that same believer begins to actively follow Christ. So the turning away from sin and the turning toward Christ is the mark of true conversion. The converted soul will love the Lord Jesus and try to emulate His character in all things. They talk of Christ and study His Word with a newfound disdain for things that are ungodly. It is normal that the experience of a newly converted person will be noticed by their peers and coworkers who knew them before. Then, as the forces of darkness rebel against this change, the power of God is present to help them through as they begin to identify themselves with Christ. This time is usually marked with happiness and positive emotion, even in the presence of suffering and uncertainty. Christ is real and personal to them and His smile warms their new heart.

This experience, however, is not the full blessing of sanctification. As there has been a complete death to committed sins in the heart of the converted soul, there must also be a complete death to self before the full baptism of the Holy Spirit is experienced. That is the fulfillment of the scriptural promise given from the book of Genesis and made possible by the resurrection of Christ.

But, remember, there are no shortcuts to this sacred ground. First, the work of conversion is essential, miraculous, divine, and beautiful. If you have not enjoyed this in its fullness, please follow the scriptural exhortation to repent, and do the first works. Let us consider the work of God for what it is and not rush past this experience. Let us remember the words of Jesus, "*Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*" (Matthew 18:3). So I want to leave you with this testimony, that I am glad to be converted...and sanctified.

Bro. Jeff Price

"And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

Isaiah 42:16

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"I'm pressing on the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining every day;
Still praying as I onward bound,
"Lord plant my feet on higher ground"
Lord, lift me up, and let me stand
By faith on Heaven's tableland.
A higher plane than I have found,
Lord plant my feet on higher ground"

By Charles H. Gabriel &
Johnson Oatman, Jr.

He Makes All Things New

Rev. 22:5: *"Behold, I make all things new . . ."*

Christmas always gives me pause...in the moment in which the world finally seems to slow down and take a breath from the never-ending activity of modern life, the past, present, and future seem to come together in a miraculous way in the observance of the Son of God coming down to save fallen man. Reflection mingles with expectation, stories and remembrances of the past mix with hope for the future.

Transitioning from Christmas, we turn over the calendar to a new year. This year, I want to be resolved first and foremost to be mindful of the One who *"makes all things new"*. When we think of "new" in our modern age, we tend to think of disposing or doing away with the old. However, in Revelation 22:5, He that sat on the throne said He would make ALL things new. Existing things made new. God seems to have in mind RE-newed. He doesn't throw out the old altogether.

Many a craftsman excels at making some completely new thing. But how beautiful it is to see something old brought back to life and restored.

Our economy thrives on the disposability of the old. The producers in the American economy today even have a concept called "planned obsolescence". The idea is that what is currently being sold "new" to the consumer is already "old" to the producer, who is hard at work on a newer version of the same thing. It is a method of creating demand; in many cases where it wouldn't naturally or of necessity exist. The producer also puts a marketing scheme to work to influence fashion and perception such that the buying public will be wanting the newer product that is still in the pipeline. The quality of the product is also held to an "acceptable" minimum so that breakdown of the soon-to-be-outdated version will further stoke the appetite for the newer version.

I wonder if this mindset hasn't carried over from the marketplace to social relations. I see way too many people treat other human beings - highest of God's creation, His very image - as a commodity to dispose of.

In a way, it would have been very clean for God to have treated humanity that way after the Fall from paradise-to simply throw it out and start over. He was close to doing that with the children of Israel, but He changed His mind after Moses interceded on their behalf.

Were it not for incomparable mercy, I would be lost for all eternity. I am so glad that Jesus came for you and for me. Thankfully God's wisdom and love are far, far greater than I could conceive of. As a *"wise masterbuilder"*, He can take our old sinful lives and make them supremely new. In fact, as Paul said in I Corinthians, in Christ *"all things are become new"*. It is why Jesus rose on the first day of the week; to symbolize the start of a new work of Creation.

His love is like a parent's love . . . He sees us both as we are and as we could be. His love continues to work to shape us into being even more lovable, and His delight in us grows as this takes place. His renewing power is matchless and unlimited. I wonder what new things He wants to see in mine and your lives this year.

Can a strained relationship with someone be renewed?


Can I experience a renewed passion for God in my sanctified life?

Can God renew and revive the congregations of our church?

Am I serious about wanting to win souls? Can God lead us to new souls hungry for the Gospel? Will it be in places I would never have expected? Would we have dreamed a few short years ago we would be contemplating how to help lost souls on the continent of Africa? In closing, the new message we must bring to the world is the same old Gospel. God help us to embody and preach it in our generation. Through us, I pray He works a renewal that leaves a mark for eternity on the lives of those we can reach. I am not sure that much else will matter when we stand before the throne that John saw...the throne of the One who makes all things new.

Bro. Riah Collier





“Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

Luke 12:27

CONSIDER THE LILIES

Several years ago I began to take an interest in flowers. It came from a hard time, when my daughter was born in January 2013, and there were complications with her birth. I came home without my baby (she had to spend some time in the NICU) and my house was full of flowers. While it was cold and bleak outside, those flowers brought life and beauty to my home. God taught me through this experience that I should not be concerned that the flowers were going to fade, but to enjoy their beauty while I could. Life is like that too. Our days are temporary so we should enjoy the good while we can. Since then I love having fresh flowers around.

In the last several years, I've dabbled in growing flowers. I've learned that plants often need a lot of time, attention and tending long before they bloom. I bought an Easter lily plant last spring and once the lilies had faded, I went to reuse the dirt for another plant and found several budding plants in the soil. I have replanted the small buds and watched small plants start to grow. All winter I plan to watch and protect these small plants in hopes that they will bloom in the spring. Consider the lilies.

Some of the most beautiful flowers only bloom if you begin rooting them in winter and some bulbs will not flower unless they reach freezing temperatures while at rest. It requires the time and attention to the temperature of the rooting process, the watering when there is no plant to be seen, and nurturing and caring for plants for several months before the flowers bloom. What happens to plants in their dormant phase when they're beneath soil in the cold of winter has great impact on the flowers.

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:” (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

As I reflect on this truth in light of God's providence, I see value and understanding of this in my own life, and the lives of my children and the lives of others. What we do to nurture our spiritual man in the cold season, when things are difficult, when we do not see the beauty, is important. As we consider the lilies, we cannot control when they bloom but we can control how much we water them, how we feed them and protect them from harm.

Our God is so gracious and gives us encouragement and protection on difficult days and blesses abundantly in His season. *“He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.”* (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

My friends, I want to encourage you to consider the lilies, know that each cold season is valuable and in His time God will show us His promise and the beauty of His glory in the lilies' bloom.

Sis. Amy Copeland

Christ's Sanctified Holy Church
4701 Wrightsville Ave, Ste 2-211
Wilmington, NC 28403

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"I am come a light into
the world, that
whosoever believeth on
me should not abide in
darkness."

- John 12:46

