Just a Thought

What's New?

"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life." John 5:24 (ESV)

What is new when you become a Christian?

Perhaps the simplest answer is: far more than you realize.

You may look exactly as you did yesterday. You live in the same house, have the same family, go to the same job, and face many of the same problems. Your memories remain. Your personality has not been exchanged for another. The circumstances of your life may not have changed at all. Even the temptations with which you struggled yesterday may confront you again today.

And yet everything of eternal consequence has changed.

Jesus says that you "have passed from death to life." Notice what He does not say. He does not say that someday you may pass from death to life if you prove sufficiently faithful. He says it has already happened. You who were spiritually dead have been made alive.

So, what is new?

You have been regenerated. God has given you a new heart and made you alive together with Christ. What you could never accomplish for yourself, God has accomplished for you.

You have been justified. The guilt that stood against you has been answered by the righteousness of Christ. You no longer stand before God as a condemned sinner awaiting judgment, but as one declared righteous in Christ.

Your sins have been forgiven. The debt you could never pay has been paid by Another.

You have been adopted into the family of God. The God before whom you once stood guilty is now your Father. You have not merely been pardoned and sent away. You have been brought into the household of God and received as His child.

You have been set apart for God. You belong to Christ. The Holy Spirit dwells within you and has sealed you for the day of redemption. The work of sanctification has begun, and God will continue that work throughout your earthly life.

You have a new relationship with God, a new relationship with sin, a new family, a new citizenship, a new inheritance, a new purpose, and a new destination.

And you are secure.

The God who gave you life is the God who keeps you. Your salvation does not ultimately depend upon the strength of your grip upon Christ, but upon the strength of Christ's grip upon you. The One who began the work will bring it to completion.

None of this means that everything immediately feels new.

You will still struggle with sin. You will still experience suffering and disappointment. You may become discouraged. You will get sick. You will grow older. You will grieve. There may be days when the change Scripture declares to be true seems much greater than anything you can presently see in yourself.

But your salvation does not rest upon what you can see or how you happen to feel at a particular moment. It rests upon what God has done.

You have passed from death to life. From condemnation to justification. From alienation to adoption. From guilt to forgiveness. From bondage to freedom. From being without Christ to being in Christ.

So, what's new?

Someone passing you on the street may see nothing different at all.

But according to God, everything is.



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