



The Era is Limited

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Part 2

For the love of Christ is constraining us, judging this, that, if One died for the sake of all, consequently all died. And He died for the sake of all that those who are living should by no means still be living to themselves, but to the One dying and being roused for their sakes. So that we, from now on, are acquainted with no one according to flesh. Yet even if we have known Christ according to flesh, nevertheless now we know Him so no longer. So that, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the primitive passed by. Lo! there has come new!" —2 Corinthians 5:14-17

Contrary to reports, I have not “taken time off” this week. I am formatting the “Greater Than Adam” series within the Romans Series for production as a paperback. This book is so good (your comments on this series have encouraged and fueled me) that I want to have it translated into several languages. I wish I could be more humble about it. I estimate it to be a 150-page paperback. For those of you looking for another week of the Revelation Series, I have been unable to broadcast. When these low times hit I can usually just throw on a pair of sunglasses and slog through. You should know my work ethic by now. Even so, I have been unable even to manage the shades. I presently occupy a terrible spiritual and emotional trough, partially explaining my need to “break the code” of the new creation, that is, to discover how one can be happy in the old creation while contemplating the immediacy of the new.

DARN “OTHER PEOPLE”

Part of my problem—and perhaps necessary to understanding the solution—has been that other people seem to be happy in the old creation. (I used to be this way myself.) I envy these people. They remind me of the Irish trans-Atlantic steerage passengers dancing in the bowels of the Titanic in the movie *Titanic*. They are poor, but live for the day. All that matters to them is their pints, the music, the dance. If you were to look up into the first-class sections of the ship for contrast, you would see wealthy though contemplatively sad people. Over-thinkers, all. Laughing and dancing, yes, but nothing at all like the laughing and dancing in third-class. The “First Classers” smoke, titter, drink tea. Outwardly “delighted,” they are all a moment away from crying. The rich carry so many cares and concerns. To them, the world is a ball of opportunity land-mined with innumerable economic pitfalls. The

rich have much to lose, whereas the steerage crowd has nothing, and will miss nothing. “Nothing” cannot be land-mined or otherwise sabotaged. This makes me wonder if we are designed by our Creator to live in the moment and whether or not a lack of worldly material and its resulting mental anguish better enables this. Better to say: Are we designed to live in the moment and have nothing?

I see people laughing in the street here and cannot account for it apart from the above Titanic theory, which may be abbreviated by the better-known axiom: “Ignorance is bliss.” You wonder how “ignorance is bliss” can mean the same thing as “living for the day and having nothing.” The astute, well-to-do people of sadness read the newspapers and find many reasons there to worry. The “ignorance is bliss” crowd, on the other hand, cannot even read. An ignorance of the pitfalls of wealth frequently accompanies “having nothing.” The tripwire here is if the ignorance works against the have-not, causing him or her to imagine wealth to be bliss. This is the dark side of ignorance, abbreviated by the better-known axiom: “The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence”—the unstated corollary being that “it’s not.” One can remedy this by jumping to the other side of the fence either as a sociological or personal experiment, or by force of circumstance. A societal dreg, for instances, wins daft amounts of money in a lottery and, for a variety of reasons well-documented but inessential to the present discussion, the new money eventually ruins his or her life. Then there is the converse phenomenon, when a movie star “hits bottom” and realizes “the bottom” to be a happy place of care-free living.

I believe ignorance to be the most embryonic form of bliss. I see insane people in this city—literally insane people—and they look happy. It makes me think of the Gnarl Barkley hit of 2006, “Crazy,” where CeeLo Green sings,

I remember when, I remember,
I remember when I lost my mind
There was something so pleasant
about that place.

I have been tempted since October 1, 1993 to want to lose my mind. As the years go by, the temptation grows stronger. When you “lose your mind,” you quite possibly gain it by paralleling the ironic statement of Christ in Matthew 16:25—“To gain one’s soul, one must first lose it.” (It is important to note here that you must only

lose a mind that you presently possess. You cannot lose something you don’t have. Some people are born with lost minds, so these people don’t count.) When you lose your mind, you can do anything and be forgiven for it, even justified:

“Why is that naked man licking doorknobs? I am alarmed.”

“Oh, don’t worry. He just lost his mind.”

“Oh, well then. How charming. Let us see what he will do next.”

This example, though ridiculous, nears the truth of justification by faith and the phenomenon on which it is based: the new creation. I will soon explain this further. Give me time.

THE STRANGELY CONTENT

October 1, 1993 was the day I began studying, writing about, and speaking upon the truths of God full-time. On this date, my life took a downhill turn towards troughs and depressions I had never known. Every year is worse. Every year, I perceive in more grotesque and disturbing details the world’s insanity. I gained my mind on the above date. The problem was that the rest of the world still possessed lost minds—not found and lost,



mind you, but always lost; born lost, never to be found in this life. Even some of those closest to me had these sorts of minds and their fractured waves. These people were in river rafts caught in an eddy, swirling ‘round, ‘round, ‘round, never getting anywhere, always smiling at the same scenery and banging their heads on the same



rocks. Meanwhile, I was learning truth and gliding by spiritual means away from the eddies and into quiet little coves, which I called “freedom coves.” Each one of these happy places had different gleaming gems embedded into the walls. The smarter and more free I became, the dumber and more bound the world seemed. The more distance I perceived between myself and the eddy people, however, the more depressed I became. This would not have happened had I been able to confine myself to my freedom coves, but who can do that? People have lives, families, jobs, responsibilities. I certainly did. So out I ventured.

Now I was tempted to want to lose my mind, to become literally crazy and carefree and somehow be like everyone else. Or at least to become homeless. Or at least mentally debilitated. Or at least fatally infected like my friends Charlie Cronk and Nelson Cardwell, both recently dead within 18 months of each other via a killer-fast cancer. They both knew the twin truths of the reality of death and of the resurrection into eonian life. I spoke to Nelson over the phone the day before he died, a month ago. He was partially comatose; he could hear me, but could not respond. His wife Rhonda held the phone to his ear. I said, “Nelson, your body has betrayed you. All our bodies are betraying us, but your body has accelerated the process. I don’t know why. You are a pioneer. There is a new body

waiting for you. We have talked about this. You have run your course. I cannot wait to see your new body. When this part of the dissolution is over, it’s all good news for you. I love you, Nelson. I will see you soon.” Rhonda said that Nelson could hear me. She said he visibly reacted to my words, even across 5,000 miles. I don’t know how he reacted because I could not see him, but Rhonda said that my words did things to him.

I swear to you that homeless people here seem content. They lay in the narrow seams between sidewalks and buildings in this, the largest city in the Americas, little caring who sees them. The snappy world snaps by; it doesn’t bother them. Men in ties carrying briefcases and women in pumps shouldering purses fail to disturb either them or their cats. A man and his wife live in a collection of stapled-together “Tok & Stok” boxes down the sidewalk from here on the Avenida Brigadeiro Luís Antônio. They have two black kittens. The kittens frolic about. The kittens eat, sleep, and consider themselves the leaders of the free world. The man pets his kittens like crazy. One afternoon as I was heading down the hill toward the Pão de Açúcar, I saw the man’s hand shaking rapidly and thought, *That poor guy has a hell of a twitch*, but when I got closer I noticed that he was scratching the neck of one of his black kittens. The kitten pushed itself hard into the trance of its happiness. I don’t know where the wife was, or if she was simply a female companion. Perhaps she was the housekeeper. What I do know is

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that the kittens are content as hell. I’m wondering if their owners are just as content. My sister Kelly says that animals reflect the well-being of their owners, so I am thinking that the owners are frolicking of mind, if not of body. Their is not much frolicking to be had in a box. What I think I’m trying to say is that the owners are quite content. In any case, I envy both the owners and the kittens—especially the kittens.

What about the mentally disabled? I envy them, too. I am probably one of the few who do. Either I am a victim of the phenomenon described earlier concerning fences and grass, or God is giving me a sneak preview into the new creation. I think it’s the latter. I



see children bent over and drooling in wheelchairs. They talk incoherently, but they smile and laugh. Everything amuses them. How can it be so? Two adults led a teenage girl by the hands yesterday, going the other way—up rather than down—on Brigadeiro, away from the Tok & Stok family. A spoon fell out of the kid’s pocket and she sent up a wail that could probably be heard out to Avenida Paulista. “*How is that being happy, Martin?*” Like this: The kid’s world was a dropped spoon. When one of the accompanying adults retrieved the spoon, the kid’s world was restored and she was back to seeing everything through her personal little kaleidoscope, with God Himself twisting the little mechanism to bring exciting changes into the colors and prisms of the girl’s life. I believe that God compensates these physically and mentally challenged people by giving to them a *joi de vivre* unavailable to most of us. (They may very well look at us and think, *Those poor monochrome, uni-prismed schlubs.*) They get a sneak preview into the new creation. This is what I’m trying to imitate. If God won’t make me literally crazy or literally dead, then I must go the harder route and find ways to be metaphorically crazy and allegorically dead. Thus, the truths of the new creation are opening up to me, because this is exactly what the new creation does.

REPORTING FROM THE NIGHTMARE

There is nothing new in Scripture, including this. It has just been hidden, or ill-explained, or ill-experienced and *then* ill-explained. It has been expounded upon by people using the word “expounded.” It has been taught by ex-pastors buttoning too much of a shirt unstained by grape jelly. I’m trying to describe the new creation and the limited era in everyday terms via everyday experiences, while living the nightmare of the old creation. I do not write to you from outside the nightmare. I’m in the old creation, even while straining to think outside of it. I’m like one of those live reporters on the street getting blown sideways by the hurricane but still talking to you. I’m like a cop on one of those cop shows with the camera attached to his uniform. You’re watching me in action and reading my revelations as I run *toward* danger, rather than away from it, and *toward* revelation rather than in the opposite direction.

WHAT IF *KNOWLEDGE* COULD BE BLISS?

A man jumping from an airplane is visibly happy in the joy of free-fall, up until the time he realizes that he has forgotten his parachute. From this time on, his mood sours. Thus, his ignorance of the oversight produced a bliss that disappears at the recognition of fact. But then, having realized the inevitable result of his chute-less dive, he pierces through this veil to a greater joy: his life on this shitty planet will soon end. This returns his face to the pre I-don’t-have-a-parachute happiness, making his last facial expression as blissful as his first, although this time produced, not by ignorance, but by a realization that all pain will soon stop. Let’s analyze these three stages of revelation:

- 1) **happily free-falling; face happy and content**
- 2) **realization of no parachute; face rent by fear and worry**
- 3) **realization of end of shitty existence; face restored to happiness and contentment**

Even though ignorance is bliss, number 1 is not what you want. (On some days, I’d take it though.)

Obviously, number 2 is not what you want; it comes to you, but it’s not where you want to stay.

Number 3 *is* what you want, but you usually can’t get there without passing through numbers 1 and 2.

My mom stuck a magnet on our refrigerator door when I was a kid that said,

**"IF YOU CAN BE HAPPY DURING TIMES LIKE THESE,
PERHAPS YOU JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION!"**

That's it! Some refrigerator-magnet guy back in 1968 got to the heart of the problem without benefit of Scripture. It's the best I've ever seen the problem stated, without benefit of Scripture. How does one find the peace that



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understand the situation.**

comes by ignorance ("not understanding" the situation; "ignorance is bliss"), while at the same time being delivered of ignorance? How can one enjoy the benefits of going crazy without literally going crazy? How can one relish in the release of death without actually dying? (I have always been upset at never being able to enjoy naps due to my being unconscious during them; I shall have a word with God about this when I see Him.) How can one skip the wheelchair and the spoon and the cancer and the Tok & Stok boxes while still attaining to the happy results of these "unfortunate" things?

The answer is: By appreciating the spiritual reality of and anticipating the physical proximity of the new creation. Entering the new creation is metaphoric craziness, allegorical death, and figurative homelessness. No one en-

tered it more fully than Paul. It is what made that apostle say, "The world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Galatians 6:14). This is a rational "craziness" and an exotically relieving "death" wherein nothing matters as it once did, not even having a home. With the new creation, priorities shift. Worldly things fade as spiritual things rise from the mist to become graspable realities.

The new creation is not a theoretical place, but a real world that can only, for now, be grasped mentally; we are not yet physically there. Christ, no. Look out the window. Do not let anyone tell you that we presently, physically inhabit the new creation. Those who insist on this are unfamiliar with the figure of speech known as *prolepsis*, where God calls what is not as though it were so as to vitally connect us with something that is so sure to happen that it is spoken of as though it has already happened. We are to live and think *as though* citizens of the new creation. (I will soon be detailing for you the passage of Scripture describing the new creation; perhaps I should have started with this, but there is a method to my madness that I'm discovering myself as I go; thank you for bearing with me.) The new creation is not a parallel universe. We are not to think of it as running side-by-side our present existence, as though we were able to choose one universe over another. (There is only one universe.) Rather, the new creation is to be thought of as having replaced the old creation. It has elbowed it out of existence.

But it still exists! Yes, I know. That's the frustrating part. The old creation still exists, but we are to think of it as having passed by. It's similar to traveling to a distant country and experiencing the time change. Does the time ever really change? No. There is only one time: the present. But when you fly, say, from New York to Sydney, you "gain" 16 hours. What to you was only recently 7 a.m. is now 11 p.m. The best way to adjust to jet-lag, it is said, is to completely forget the old time. It's hard to do. When first arriving in Australia, you constantly compare the old and the new times. You say to yourself, "Back home I'd be going to bed, and here I am expected to be waking up." For several days, you do the mental math to see what time it is "back home." Some people take to wearing two watches. This is a mistake. The ideal course, upon landing in Sydney, is to immediately immerse yourself in "Sydney time" and forget the time back home. Forget that there is a place such as "back home." The faster the mind adjusts to the "new time," the faster the body will follow suit. The body follows the mind here as well as in spiritual matters. After having



adjusted, there is once again only one time: the present.

But hell's bells, there has *always* been only one time: the present. I know. It's the same with the new creation. It has "been here" since Jesus Christ died on the cross. Paul was the first to announce it in 55 A.D. Before 55 A.D. and the writing of 2 Corinthians, no one had ever heard of such a thing.

To anyone hoping to inhabit the new creation, it will not pay to be of a duplicitous mind, thinking back and forth between old and new. What good is it to say to yourself, "I was once condemned for this," or "I remember how God used to seem so frightening to me," or "my reputation was once so sterling in the world; I wonder what my old associates think of me now," or, "why am I now so different than everyone else," or, "why does the world appear darker and stupider to me?" Stop recalling these times, these feelings, these people, these past opinions and present comparisons. The ideal thing is to adjust quickly to the new declaration of God: You are declared to be righteous through the cross of Christ, Romans 3:21-11, and God has killed the old humanity, Romans 6:6, and He thus now considers you a new creature. Throw away the old "watch." There is only one truth for you, and this is it. Stop looking back, even to compare. (I'm trying myself, and sometimes succeeding.)

CHEATING, BUT INTERESTING

What a magical place, this new creation. Drugs only imitate it. I do believe that God created certain mushrooms (hallucinogens) and certain other green plants (cannabis) to give earthlings a sneak preview into "new creation" truth. These things perhaps become a catalyst for otherwise narrow-minded people to break free of self-doom into a grander cosmos. God also arranged for the fermentation of grapes and grains for the same reason: to help earthlings become less inhibited, less bound by present circumstance, more apt to embrace something outside themselves. While these natural substances do offer "sneak peeks" into high truth, the essence of such truth comes only by spiritual illumination of God's Word as recorded in accurately translated Scripture and explained by someone in a jelly-stained shirt.

Before hopping off this particular train, I direct your attention to a fascinating video of a controlled laboratory experiment from the 1950's, where a "normal, everyday" housewife was administered LSD. The medical doctor interviewed her before and after ingestion. Had the universe changed in the wake of this woman's LSD experience? No. Only the woman's perception changed. I say "only," but the change is profound. See for yourselves:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=miCDPzJHvjK>

I, personally, have never taken LSD, nor have I ever smoked marijuana, nor have I ever ingested “magic mushrooms.” I do not condemn those who have. Far from condemning them, I am always deeply interested in hearing of their experiences. Do tell.

WHAT’S IN A TITLE?

“Martin, what does the title of this series, ‘The Era is Limited,’ have to do with the new creation?” I realize that I am sneaking into this topic of the limited era through the back door. Maybe I should have called this series, “The New Creation.” All of this truth—the new creation and the limited era—is related to Romans chapter 6, where I left off in the ZWTF series: “Death of the Old Humanity.” That is what set me upon this sidetrack. In my mind, all three of these topics are related: 1) the death of the old humanity, 2) the new creation, and 3) the limited era. I feel as though God is deepening these connections for me so that I may better bring alive and illustrate truth to you. This is what Paul meant to happen, so we are all on the right track. Paul was so scatterbrained in the telling of these things that I feel I must gather the fragments of his overwrought mind. One must pick this truth here, that truth there, then carefully bake the precious glop into bread. I hope to focus us. Before any of us lose our way, let’s analyze the connection between these three topics. My goal is to ease both the pains and the pleasures of this life by contemplating our new life in Christ and not only holding it theoretically, but living in accord with it. I don’t claim to do it perfectly. I do claim to be trying like heck. In some areas, I’m succeeding. Other areas, no. I fully believe that Paul meant for us to succeed; it is obvious that he did. The imminence of our change will greatly assist us, and it is here where the truths of “the era is limited” (1 Corinthians 7:29) serve us well.

DEATH OF THE OLD HUMANITY

► RELATED TOPIC #1: “Death of the Old Humanity.” There can’t be anything new until something old dies. Read Romans, chapter 6. In God’s mind, our old humanity was crucified with Christ. In other words, God metaphorically killed our old selves. (This is the portal to the new creation.) The “old humanity” is the part of us that screwed up all the time and could rarely enjoy anything guilt-free because we worried incessantly about sin and how it affected God’s opinion of us. According to this view, God was never really pleased with us. He was always

disappointed in us. Our behavior worsened His opinion by the day. In the old humanity, we perceived God “up there” and us “down here.” God was perfect; we were far from it. He was grouchy. Every evening, He stroked His long white beard and reviewed a long list of grievances against us. This has changed. God’s case against sinners is closed. Christ rescued sinners from condemnation by dying on the cross. Our identity is now wrapped up with Christ’s identity; we are not sold separately from Him. Thus, God now considers us to be a new humanity, alive with Christ. He looks at Christ and sees us. This is the best thing that could have happened to us. Now if only we could look at ourselves the same way.

We can’t physically see or feel this truth. We are only asked to believe it and live as though it were physically emanating from our bodies without measure, which it will soon be. This is where the “crazy” comes in. It’s why you’re suddenly different from everyone else. No sickly action of yours can foul God’s favor of you. When you live this new life, or even attempt it, people will think you’re crazy. Most people are still stuck either in ruts of religion or ruts of the world: same deal; only the names of the ruts are different. Religious people are just as bound up and fouled as worldly people, only more. The religious people have to “not do” stuff in order to please a still-angry God (the religious people, themselves, are on probation), while the worldly people feel they “have to do” the same stuff in order to rebel against a God Who probably hates them, so “take *that*, God!” is what they probably say to themselves, or scream out loud in the bathroom.

In *our* world (the new world), we can do anything we want. There is no rebellion because there is no fighting against sin, or rules, or laws, or God, or self. We’re finished fighting. Jesus Christ did all our fighting on the cross. This is why we’re different from religious people *and* from worldly people: we have this “no guilt” and “no rebellion” thing going on that irritates both groups. The church people watch us drink beer and smoke cigarettes and say, “Shame on you people!” The world watches us drink beer



and smoke cigarettes and they laugh like pirates and say, “Arrrgghh! Now you’re one of us!” We look at both the church people and the worldly people and say, “No, we’re really not either of you. We don’t care what you, the church people think because God likes us better than you like us, and no, we’re not rebelling against God like *you* are, worldly pirate people, because we’re free in Christ and He likes watching us frolicking about in our little freedom coves.” Both the religious people and the worldly people “freak out” at this. Neither group can grasp how one can live freely without either guilt (the religious people) or a spirit of rebellion (the worldly people).

This is where “smiling even though you’re living in a box” comes in. This is where the “looking blissful



even though you’re about to hit the ground without a parachute” comes in. In fact, you’ve already hit the ground without a parachute: your “old self” got crucified with Christ. Ouch. But now, everything is free and clear. “Dead” people can’t be condemned. Who can criticize them now? Who will kick them and make them behave? Who kicks a corpse and says, “That’s not the right way to act in this world!” We ought to be deaf to such condemnatory speech, even to the speeches we give ourselves from our “old selves” that want to rise from the dead occasionally and send us packing, back to the old creation.

This is where “losing your mind” comes in. You’re

not *really* crazy, but you now live “recklessly” as though nothing you do can harm or damn you—because it can’t. It’s like you’re on the other side of death, “death” being the crucifixion of the old humanity. You can lick doorknobs naked and God is amused. The cops might arrest you if you’re at the mall, but God is amused. Get it? You’re on the other side of sanity now; “sanity,” in this world, being trying to behave yourself and do right things all the time, or *having* to rebel because you want to kick God’s shins or spit in His face for hammering you with commandments. That’s the old creation. That so-called sanity leads to *in*-sanity. Because of this, both religious people and worldly people are insane. Rebellious, worldly people keep thinking of new sins to commit, while stuck-up, religious people keep thinking of new sins avoid. The world sucks the breast of sin, to *do* sin, while the religious people suck the breast of sin to fight it. Either way, the *breast du jour* is sin. This is major suckage.

Religion is king of the old creation. Religion makes a living out of people still writhing and commiserating over their old selves, which to them is their present selves. For this reason, religion embraces the world. *Look at all the people we can change!* This is what they think. (Naturally, they’re oblivious of the new creation.) Religion makes a living try-

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ing to tame the old self. Yet who tames a dead horse? God gave up on taming you a long time ago and decided instead to kill you. Don’t feel bad; He killed his own Son, too. He killed you *along with* His Son. The good news is that when His Son raised from the dead, God considered you to have raised with Him. This is why you still live, but are not being condemned or blamed. God could not justify the old humanity, so He killed it. Now you’re alive and living to God, justified. Paul writes in Galatians 2:20—

With Christ have I been crucified, yet I am living; no longer I, but living in me is Christ. Now that which I am now living in flesh, I am living in faith that is of the Son of God, Who loves me, and gives Himself up for me.

To Paul, the old self no longer lives. But wait, Paul still lives. Ah, but this is the “new creation” Paul that lives, not the old Paul. The new creation Paul lives in the faith that

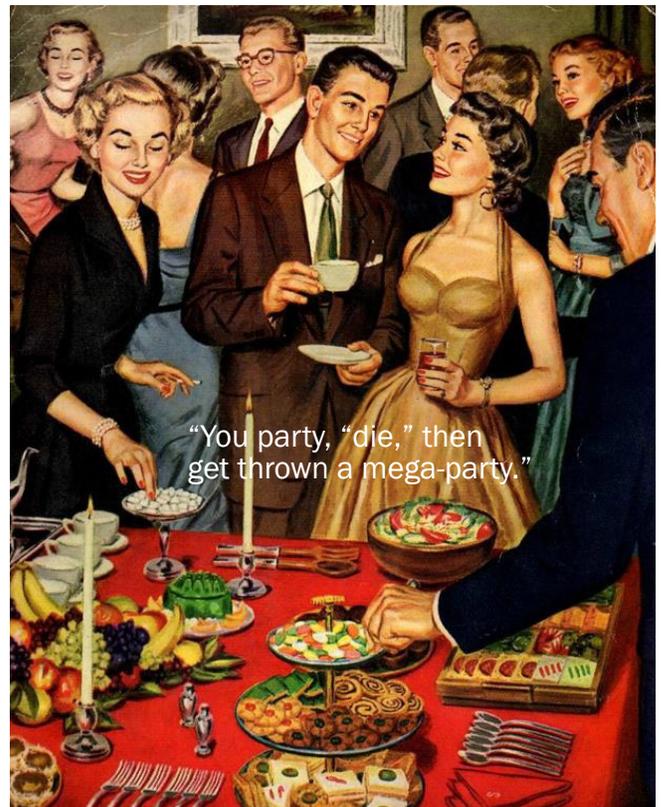
the Son of God loved him and gave Himself up for him. It takes faith to believe this because it's not yet a physical reality. If it were a physical reality, Paul wouldn't have used the word "faith." In this amazing passage, Paul is mentally apprehending the new creation and living as though it were physically real, even while continuing to sin in the flesh (Romans 7:25).

If you're "crazy" like Paul, then you don't have to do right things, and no one expects you to do right things. You're "crazy." This is justification by faith, which paradoxically makes you *want* to do right things. (The difference between law and grace is the difference between "have to" and "want to.") Consider the Prodigal Son. What did this boy do? He took his inheritance and went out and lived riotously. He was happy. In my parachute-jumping example, this corresponds to jumping out of the airplane without a parachute but not yet realizing the critical omission. There is still the thrill of the free-fall. It's the "ignorance is bliss" experience. But then the son runs out of money; he realizes his lack. This corresponds to the second point of my example, the realization that there is no chute and that death is forthcoming. The prodigal returns to his father, and the father says, "For this, my son, was dead and revives; he was lost and was found" (Luke 15:24).

The result of this metaphoric death is that the father throws his son a mega-party. The son has come out on the other side of "death" to enjoy grace. This corresponds to point three of the example, where death is the end of life as we know it and now we can live happier, freer lives. What fear is there, then, of such a metaphoric death? The sooner one reaches it, the better. I am telling you that we have already reached it. We are already considered to have died with Christ so that we can now (yes, now) live in newness of life. The rest of the world will think we're crazy, but let them. The brother who stayed with his father thought that both his father *and* his brother were nuts. ("*How can sin be rewarded?*" he must have thought.) Who cares? Let the older brother stew in his self-righteous resentment; we've got a fatted calf to eat and wine to drink and dancing to accomplish.

I wish I could have attended the party of the Prodigal Son. This is how life is supposed to be lived. You sin, you "die," and now you party. Pity the prodigal's older brother. That kid did everything right, yet his father never gave him so much as a nickel to spend on his friends. The message is that God rejoices over returned sinners. The parallel is not perfect because we're considering the Circumcision evangel, but let's wring Paul out of this: once you die, you can't really offend anyone any more. The prodigal had

done the craziest things he could think of and not only came back alive, but was even more deeply loved and appreciated by his father. In the evangel of the grace of God, nothing bad we can do can wreck God's opinion of us. In fact, the more we screw up, the better He treats us. (This occurs *after* having "done our own thing" for years and lived blissfully in our ignorance.) It's Romans 5:20, "Where sin increases, grace superexceeds." It is better to have sinned and been saved than never to have sinned at all. Then, after you're rescued from "death," it's all good. You did your worst, in ignorance, and still got saved. So what can you do now to mess it up? Life was fun before, and it's fun after, minus the guilt. What's to lose? You party, "die," then get thrown a mega-party. This teaches us that God's love (in the parable's case, the father's love) is truly unconditional. Who would not want to come out the other end of such a "death"?



"You party, "die," then
get thrown a mega-party."

It's better to party after "death" than before. It's better to be happy after you realize you don't have a parachute, than before. Bliss based on ignorance is immature and temporary. Bliss based on the knowledge that "there is now therefore no condemnation" (Romans 8:1), is mature and permanent. The bliss is the same in essence, but not in truth. It is deepened bliss. This is the



difference between the old and the new creation. The second bliss (the new bliss) is real *and* lasting.

Some people dance because they hate life and dancing is an escape. They do it because it feels good to be “bad.” Other people dance because this is the new life God has given them and all things are now tendered richly to them by Christ to be enjoyed: “Who is tendering us all things richly for our enjoyment” (1 Timothy 6:17). Guilt is now erased from every occasion. New creation people have lost their (old) minds. It’s like you just don’t care anymore. This sounds terrible, to not care anymore (“Frankly, Scarlett, I don’t give a damn”), but this is in fact Scriptural advice and another way to say what Paul said in Philippians 4:6, “Do not worry about anything.” (“Frankly, Scarlett, I don’t worry about anything.”) Jesus said the same thing, telling His disciples, “Don’t worry about tomorrow” (Matthew 6:34).

Justification by faith is like a “get out of jail free” card permanently taped to your forehead. It gets you out of everything. This is justification by faith. It’s that radical. The hard thing is trusting it and realizing that now that you’re in God’s arms, He will keep you safe. Let Him decide what keeps you safe rather than some bogus religion dude (my pet name for a “pastor”) or a family member’s list of rules, or whatever society now deems to be the latest “morality.” Stop condemning yourself for failing

and/or living life. God will keep you. Watch *Him*. But He can’t keep you if you’re trying to keep yourself. If you’re still in religion or law, you’re trying to keep yourself. You’ll go *real* crazy then; not the good kind of crazy I’m writing about. This is what happened to the Pharisees. They went “bad” crazy, inventing new laws on top of the laws God already dished on them. They made everyone miserable, especially themselves. It made them want to kill Christ, so they went ahead and did it. You’re out of that now. Now, let God keep you. He will surprise you with droughts of liberty heretofore unknown, but first you have to trust Him. When You trust Him, He draws lines for you. You tell Him to. He wants to hear that you’re giving Him the line-drawing power. He lives for this. He sent His Son for you to give all of life’s lines back to Him, to be re-drawn by Him. As King David said, “I would rather fall into the hands of God than of man.”

Who lives this truth of the death of the old humanity? Very few. Rather than leading to moral license, this truth leads to freedom and a better walk. We are allowed to do so much more than religion or society or the old self dictates. We out-worry God on nearly every single front. When we get to heaven, God will say, “Why did you worry so much?” We will be tempted to want to come back and live life over. “If only I knew!” we’ll say. God is not worried at all. He tried to tell us through Paul. God has fixed the

old stupidity of ours by killing it on the cross with Christ. I will keep telling you this until you are sick of me. “For freedom, Christ frees us” (Galatians 5:1). Christ doesn’t free us so that we may now bind ourselves with new and improved forms of bondage. Who dares to live this truth? We do—or at least we are trying. This is the opposite of God’s course with Israel. Israel is to be reformed. They are to be given new hearts so that they can obey God’s law. Not us. We are not reformed, but rather killed. This is far more radical. It is not a new birth, but a new creation. There is a difference. Read my book *The First Idiot in Heaven* for a more detailed description of the difference between being “born again” and being a new creation in Christ. New creation truth is only found in Paul’s letters to the nations. This is why you should read Paul, and not bother too much with Israel’s message. It will only confuse you. Read Romans, chapter 6. Do not read Leviticus chapter whatever.

<http://thefirstidiotinheaven.com/>

THE NEW CREATION

► RELATED TOPIC #2: The New Creation. Here is the passage that “magna cartas” everything I’ve been telling you. 2 Corinthians 14-17—

For the love of Christ is constraining us, judging this, that, if One died for the sake of all, consequently all died. And He died for the sake of all that those who are living should by no means still be living to themselves, but to the One dying and being roused for their sakes. So that we, from now on, are acquainted with no one according to flesh. Yet even if we have known Christ according to flesh, nevertheless now we know Him so no longer. So that, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the primitive passed by. Lo! there has come new!

The new creation is the other side of the coin of the death of the old humanity. If the old humanity has been killed (Romans 6:6), then something must have replaced it to emerge from its ashes when Christ walked from His tomb. Yes. The new creation. “One died for the sake of all, consequently all died.” Jesus Christ took the sins of the world with Him to the cross, then arose from the dead without them. He did this for every single person ever born, but only those who realize this truth, that is, “those who are living” reap the beautiful benefit of no longer “living to themselves, but to the One dying and bring roused for their sakes.”

You may think that this “no longer living to them-

selves” business means that we never do anything self-ish again. You’re missing the point. It means that self-occupation is no longer required of us. Self-occupation comes in many forms, whether it’s an indulgence of the self or a struggle to surrender the self. Christians quack incessantly about “surrendering the self,” little realizing that to do that they must disinter the old humanity. Give them all shovels, then. Dress these Christians in overalls and gardening gloves if they want to visit the cemetery of the old humanity and dig up the corpse. Let them prop up their own corpses on a couch and slap themselves in the faces and call it “putting the old man to death,” if that’s what they want to do. (Somebody ought tell them about the cross.) These grave-robbers struggle and sweat for nothing. They are as ignorant as the shovels they wield.

The word “selfish” should no longer occupy the vocabulary of one occupying the new creation. No longer living to oneself means no longer analyzing oneself. Wasn’t self-analysis the chief occupation of the old creation? The old creation man analyzes his walk to be certain he’s aligned with God’s expectations. *What would Jesus do?* (Yes, *that* old thing.) This is the agony of living to oneself. Since our old self has been crucified, we’re delivered of this burden. Now our sole occupation is attending to and living to the One dying and being roused for our sakes. Since He is the One Who died and was roused for our sakes, then He is the last Person capable of condemning us. Romans 8:34—

Who is the Condemner? Christ Jesus, the One dying, yet rather being roused, Who is also at God’s right hand, Who is pleading also for our sakes?

Ha, ha; it’s supposed to be a joke. The only one Who has the power to condemn us is the One Who died for our sakes and Who is standing for us at God’s right hand. It’s like walking into a courtroom and having the judge wink at you. The judge is your father. You’re golden. Nothing is going to happen to you. You’ll skate. You’re off Scot-free. Don’t worry about it. As long as you’re at it, don’t worry about anything (Philippians 4:6).

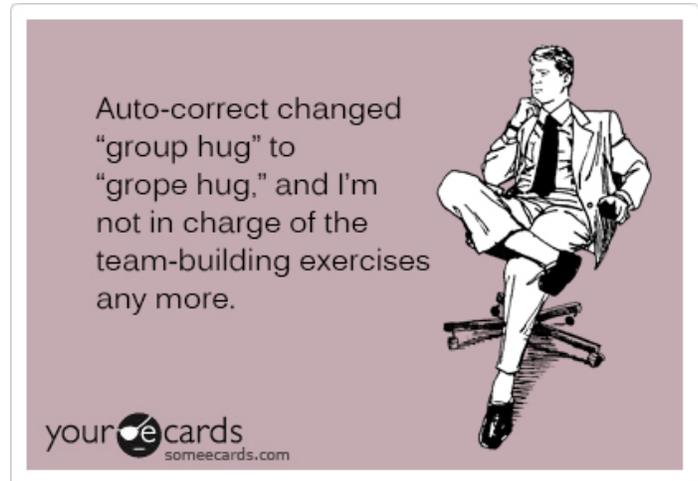
“So that we, from now on, are acquainted with no one according to flesh” (2 Corinthians 5:16).

This is radicalness on steroids. Who teaches this today? Who believes Paul? Who grasps the death of the old humanity, on which this marvel is based? The new

creation does not consider flesh. It's all we did in religion, though: consider flesh. We considered *our* flesh, his flesh, her flesh. It was all about what people did, how they acted, how they looked, where they lived, who they knew, where they were going, if they attended church, and which church. These considerations are dead, or should be. It takes a shovel and a misguided shoveler to disinter them.

Paul told the disciples to “greet one another with a holy kiss” (Romans 16:6). Of course women were still women and men were still men, as they are now. Still, sexual distinction is old creation truth. Old creation worries about things like this. An old creation man can't kiss an old creation woman without flesh creeping in. This is what we are to dis-acquaint ourselves from. Sure, we all still go into separate restrooms, but what about this kissing thing? When Clyde Pilkington greets me after a long absence, he kisses me on the neck. Hard. That's new creation Clyde. Believing men and women ought to be able to kiss and hug one another—hard—without excessive fleshly overtones. What's the worry? New creation truth keeps cool. Heaven is cool. Much as the New York traveler in Sydney still stupidly referencing his New York watch, this truth is abusable. It's not the fault of Sydney. Neither is it the fault of Christ or Paul if anyone abuses new creation truth. Having said that, neither is it the fault of Christ or Paul if believers refuse to walk boldly into the new truth. They'll only stand at the dais saying, “Why didn't we step more boldly into truth? Why didn't we hug and kiss more people? Why were we so uptight?”

I look forward to the days when separate restrooms exist only in history books. Among the celestials—one potty. In the new creation, there is neither male nor female (Galatians 3:28). We are to live in anticipation of



this grand erasure. I revel as equally in female saints as in male; I will grab and kiss them both. Being still in the old creation as to my body, I still notice and appreciate that which distinguishes females from males, and vice-versa. Female hair still smells much better to me; female breasts are prettier to me than the male counterpart; I hope to never see Clyde Pilkington in lipstick—and so forth. Having said that, the differences between males and females (which are many and considerable) do not bother me or inflame me as once they did. This has nothing to do with age or hormones, but with new creation truth. Lines get blurred. This sounds bad, but it's good. It's good only on this side of “death.” (It's the new and better “crazy.”) The trick is for other saints to consider themselves and others similarly. New creation truth is high truth; walking it is even higher. Never glancing back at the “old watch” is terribly difficult for some. For me, it's getting easier. Thus, the depression. (And so we have come full circle.)

Not only are fleshly distinctions to be dimmed and blurred in and toward others, but also in and toward ourselves. Thus, we should not even be acquainted with ourselves according to flesh. I'll be speaking more on this in Part 3 of “Death of the Old Humanity” in the Romans Series. Self-analysis is a debilitating enterprise lifted from our shoulders by new creation truth.

“Yet even if we have known Christ according to flesh, nevertheless now we know Him so no longer” (2 Corinthians 5:16).

When Jesus Christ appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus, He was no longer wearing His Israel suit. Some to whom Paul wrote may very well have known Jesus according to flesh, having literally seen Him in His Israel suit. Today, Christians know Him *only* in His Israel suit. He's the handsome Nazarene on all their church posters—

the happy hunk getting all the kiddies into Vacation Bible School. On a much higher plane, He is the Messiah of Israel, of the tribe of Judah. This is still not our Christ. We are no longer to consider Him according to His earthly walk, but rather as the glorified Son of God seated at His right hand in celestial majesty. This is key to understanding and walking in the truth of the new creation. Unless we consider the glorified Son of God as He now is, we may inadvertently pilfer Israel's treasures as we follow the humiliated Nazarene along Galilee's shore. Here, He uttered red-lettered words not intended for us, but for Israel (Matthew 15:24, Romans 15:8). This is Israel's priest-king, Jesus. To us, however, He is Christ, the Reconciler of heaven and earth (Colossians 1:16-20). These words, printed in black, are no less Christ's counsels than the Sermon on the Mount. They are simply higher revelations. The Sermon on the Mount was for Israel; Colossians 1:16-20 is for us.

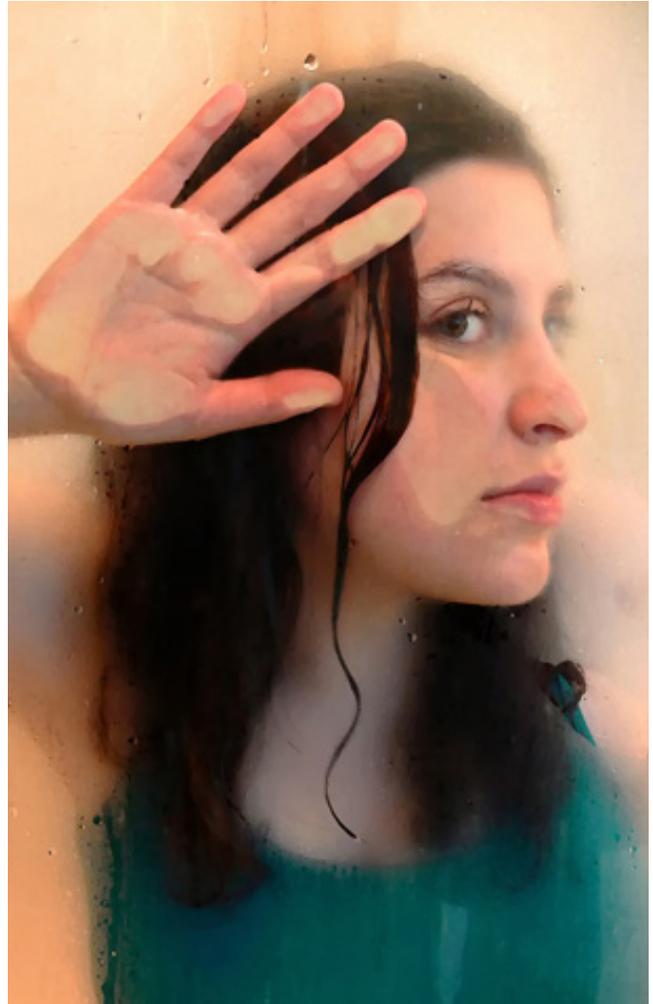
So that, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the primitive passed by. Lo! there has come new!" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Here is where the new figure of speech *prolepsis* comes in—the figure I hinted at last week—needed to describe such a startling reality as the new creation. I don't know how new the figure is, but it's new to us and essential for grasping this vital topic.

Prolepsis is defined as, “the representation of a thing as existing before it actually does or did so, as in *he was a dead man when he entered.*” It comes from the Greek prefix *pro* (“before”) and *lambanein* (“take”). Thus, prolepsis is literally to “before-take,” that is, to take something as true before it happens. God actually uses the pages of His own Scripture to define this figure, writing through Paul in Romans 4:17-18—

According as it is written that, ‘A father of many nations have I appointed you’—facing which, [Abraham] believes it of the God Who is vivifying the dead and calling what is not as if it were—who, being beyond expectation, believes in expectation.

Abraham had not fathered a single son, let alone many nations. Yet God said he had. So Abraham simply believed it of the God “Who is vivifying the dead and calling what is not as if it were.” It was so sure to happen for Abraham that God spoke of it as though it had already happened. How do you feel when you give a co-worker an assignment and that co-worker says, “Done!” Is it really done? No. It's the figure of speech prolepsis, that is, representing



Prolepsis puts us smack up against truth, calling what is not as though it were to heighten our anticipation of a guaranteed result.

a thing as existing before it actually does, that is, calling what is not as though it were. It fills you with confidence to hear your co-worker put it that way. It's better than hearing, “I'll try to get to it later this afternoon.” With prolepsis, God puts us smack up against truths that are so sure, so reliable, so near, and so “done” in His mind, that He speaks of them *as done*.

Are you in Christ? Then “there is a new creation; the primitive passed by. Lo! There has come new!” My God. Paul speaks of the new creation as though it were here, and the primitive world—the world in which we walk with its males and females and Greeks and Jews



and believers and unbelievers and worries and droughts and earthquakes and television shows and newscasts and death—as having already gone away. God! This world is so *sure* to pass away, that God speaks of it as though it already has. Our new life with Christ among the celestials is so *guaranteed* to come that God speaks of it as though it already has (Ephesians 2:6). What does this do for us? Immeasurably wonderful things. It helps push us into the reality of our coming life, at the same time whisking us mercifully away from *this* death-doomed, distinction-laden existence. If people boarding the Titanic had been told, “This ship is sinking,” do you think any would have boarded? They may have looked at the ship in dock (not appreciating the figure of speech, prolepsis), and said, “*This* ship isn’t sinking.” Misinterpreting the figure would have robbed them of life-saving truth.

We’re not that stupid. We’ve been told that not only is this primitive world passing by, but that it *has* passed by. To God, it’s as good as gone. To us, it also ought to be as good as gone. This will change not only the way we look at everything, but the way we behave. Prolepsis is a marvelous “trick” employed by our Father to shove us—even now—out of this world and into the next.

PAUL

I wanted to write to you in this edition about how Paul came to the revelation of the new creation. It happened when he was stoned in Lystra (with rocks, not marijuana); Paul temporarily left this world and went to another one. He returned to this world to report on the new creation; the man was never the same. When we learn to appreciate his report, *we* will never be the same. Next week, I will lead with this. I also wanted to show you in this edition how the parachute example applies to our past life in the world, our realization of sin and death, and our walking into new creation truth. I’ll do this next week. I must stop writing for now, otherwise I will be no good for anything else in this life. The bulk of next Sunday’s edition will center around Related Topic #3: “The Era is Limited,” the title of this series that has launched us onto other glorious and related truths. For now, know that the brief time we have left on this earth is further incentive for us (besides the figure of speech prolepsis), gifted us by Paul, to begin living the truths of 2 Corinthians chapter 5. Just how does one *live* new creation truth? Paul details just this in the section of Scripture unveiling the limited era. Next week, we will unlock those secrets. In the meantime, I hope that you will be back here with me next week.

I hope I will be here, too. I guess. —MZ