

Week 12: December 1, 2009
EDU 603
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**New Creation—Baptism/Eucharist—Holy Spirit—Grace—Divine Adoption—
Law—Obedience/Freedom—Faith/Purpose--suffering--Holiness--sharing in the
mission of the Church to witness Christ**

XXV. Background and Overarching Message of Paul. Paul, formerly Saul (conversion on the road to Damascus), was a persecutor of the Christian faith, a faith that he would ultimately turn over to God. God uses Paul because of his widespread reputation as the prize pupil of the great San Hedrin president Rabbi Gamaliel (Acts 5). Rabbi Gamaliel was known as the “glory of the Torah.” It was said that when he died the purity of the Torah went with him. So now, let us consider Paul’s core message.

- A. 2 Cor.5:17: *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.”* Paul’s principle theme is that we are made into a new creation in Christ, so that we might participate in his divine likeness (2 Peter 1:4) through a divine adoption (Rom.8:14-27).
1. Baptism transfers us from the bondage of slavery and sin to blessings and divine adoption, from the old covenant to the new covenant. Thus, man being made new establishes a new order in history where there are entirely new beginnings. The transformation of our souls is to reach into every corner of the world.
 - a. Col.2:11-12...Christ accomplishes in Baptism only what circumcision could signify in ancient Israel—spiritual rebirth!
 - b. Col.3:10: *“And have put on the new man, who is being renewed in the knowledge after the image of the creator.”*
 - i. A challenge to live out our baptismal commitments. Paul compares this with the daily routine of changing clothes.
 2. The Christian life is lived in the Spirit and is destined for the glory of God (Rom.8:1-39).
 - a. Rom.8.1-13...the Christian life is empowered by the spirit. Through the power of the Spirit, the divine principle of new life, the uprightness that the law demanded is finally obtained. Spirit enables one to surmount the flesh and obtain the perfection of the law--righteousness through God in relationship. Christ becomes flesh to divinize the flesh. Christ teaches u show to be more human.
 - i. All Christian vitality is understood solely through the spirit. This is called the spirit of sonship. The debt we owe to Christ is to make use of the spirit received!!!
 - b. Rom.8.14-30...Through the Spirit the Christian becomes a child of God, destined for glory.
 - i. Rom.8:14-17 is a summary of what Christ came to establish and what we have in the new law. The Spirit animates the Christian and in so doing gives impetus to Christianity becoming a kingdom of children in which all Christians in the sacramental life becomes heirs to the throne room of grace and God in heaven.
 - a. Suffering, again, becomes the true barometer and stature of the Christian walk. By the grace (cf. Word of the Week on **Grace**) of God, if we accept suffering in our Christian journey it ultimately becomes the occasion of leaving footprints of the righteousness of God.
 - b. We are called to reproduce ourselves each and everyday in the image and likeness of God. In this manner, the process of salvation is unleashed upon mankind through mankind.

3. The virtue of obedience in faith and the gift of freedom are paramount in understanding the call to live in divine sonship. We see this in Paul's letter to the Romans. Here, see word of the week on **Justification**.
- a. Rom.1.1-5... "*Grace...and obedience of faith.*" Faith and obedience are so strong for Paul that he opens his address to Rome with "the obedience of faith" and closes with "the obedience of faith" (cf.16.26)—they are his bookends.
 - b. The better translation for "obedience of faith" is "obedience that springs from faith". We are called to pray unceasingly (Rom.1:9); 1Thess.5:17) and listen to God (Obedience in the L. means "to listen")...since we do ask for his wisdom (Cf. word of the week on **Faith**).
 - i. Paul develops a theme where we are called to understand God's appearance as the sign of obedience to fulfill the will of the Father. It is in this mode of living that we can see becoming a new creation in Christ demands our attention to live in his divine sonship by outwardly expressing that interior transformation...remember James, "*faith without works is dead*"—James 2:17
 - ii. Eph.4:22... "*And put on the new man, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*"
 - a. We are to strip the ways of vice and put on the new garment of virtue. The virtue that sets us apart—holiness.
 - c. Rom.6.1-23... Freedom from self through union with Jesus Christ. Through Baptism, there is a reshaping of humanity as man is identified with Christ's death and resurrection. Freedom is rooted in the law of the father. All families of order are bound to the principle of obedience to law. When love is at the heart of law, you not only have a family of order, but a family that is set apart!
 - i. Rom.6.1-11...when we die to sin we have nothing more to give, but only are able to receive Christ. Paul is concerned with introducing a human being, through Baptism, into the union with Christ's dying and suffering. This is not just an informal act, but much deeper, it is the act of uniting oneself to Christ.
 - a. This incorporation into the body of Christ, via the Holy Spirit, leads us into the deeper question: what kind of role do we have in the body of Christ? We need to see the kind of role that we play in how we are to offer up who we are before God and how we are called to offer up our suffering.
 - ii. Here, See Word of the Week on **Freedom**.
 - iii. Rom.2:1-11...If we are to achieve this ministry of participating in salvation we must enter the school of patience.
 - a. The word patience, in its Latin origin, is a word that means, "to endure suffering." We are called to be patient in our well doing /work.
4. Rom.12:1-13 The Christian life must be worship in the Spirit paid to God. The unity of the Christian community demands that individuals strive to overcome evil with good. The common pursuit of the good is expected of those who are members of the body of Christ and whose lives are to be a sacrifice offered to God.
- a. Rom.12.1-2...Christians who strive to do what is right gives a cultic sense to their lives. Cult, in its most appropriate sense speaks to worship, and as Christians, our lives are to be ordered to the one True cult of the Liturgy.
 - i. Guided by the logos, the word of God, sacrifice has new meaning and it is through this sacrifice that our sacrifice receives meaning in this world as it is given away in anticipation to the next. In turn, our own lives now have sacramental significance.
 - b. Rom.12.3-13...The cult paid to God should manifest itself concretely in a life in society based on humility and charity.
 - i. The different gifts of grace that Christians receive from the Spirit, as

a result of faith, are destined for the community's benefit. Each member of the body of Christ is called to see how they are a gift to society and the community at large.

5. The dimension of the Church. The call to become a new creation is all a call to share in the mission of the Church. This we call the ecclesial dimension of the Church, and is a rich theme to Paul's theology.

a. The Greek term *ekklesia*, first penned by Paul, just not only speaks to the local churches, but also of the "Church of God"—the Church as a whole overseeing the smaller communities. The local churches make up one Church of God. As PBXVI states: 'All together they are the 'church of God' which precedes the individual local churches and is expressed or brought into being in them.

i. Paul's presentation of the Church includes the reality that we are called as a community of believers by God.

b. The Church as the Body of Christ has two meanings in which they are to be understood in light of each other: The sociological and anthropological

i. Sociological: image of a body working together

ii. The flesh of Christ in the Eucharist.

c. The Church as a building

i. The sacred building applied to a community: the visible image where the invisible shapes our reality.

ii. 1 Tim.3:15: Familial dimension