



Lesson 36

WALKING IN NEWNESS OF LIFE

Reading: Romans 6

A new beginning

When we are baptized, we begin a new life. We are *“buried with him (Christ) by baptism into death”* when we are immersed in the water at our baptism. The life we have lived up to that time comes to an end—it is a thing of the past. Then, as *“Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father”*, we too have to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4).

Such a change is only possible through the grace of God. Being children of our Father in heaven, we can come to Him through Jesus. We shall fail often as we try to please Him, but when we ask for forgiveness, He will hear us for Jesus' sake.

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

Feeding on God's Word

A baby needs food, and he makes his need known in no uncertain way! Food is essential for growth. And those who are born to a new life by baptism can only grow in Christ if the new life is fed and nourished by God's Word. So the apostle Peter says,

“As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Peter 2:2).

God has given us the Bible for our guide-book. It will help us to live as He would have us live, and grow up into that 'new man' in Christ. We read in 2 Timothy 3:16, 17:

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

Looking forward to the Kingdom

The apostle Peter tells us that God is *“not willing that any should perish”* (2 Peter 3:9), and in John 3:16 we read that God sent Jesus, His only begotten Son, so that *“whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”*.

God *wants* to give us eternal life in His Kingdom. And so He is preparing us now for that life. He wants us to be there, and He will help us in every possible way.

He has given Jesus to help us, and through Jesus we can come to Him in prayer.

Help from Jesus

Jesus once said to his disciples:

“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

Jesus once offered a wonderful prayer to God for those who believe in him. You can read it in John 17. Notice the words of verse 24:

“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.”

Jesus also wants us to be in his Kingdom. So he will help us on the way. We will never be left to struggle alone. Jesus is not only the Saviour through whom our sins are forgiven; he is also our guide through life. He will share our life, with all its ups and downs and joys and sorrows, and help to fit us to live with him in God's Kingdom. So the apostle Peter, who knew Jesus so well when he was on earth, says:

“Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

Belonging to a world-wide family

“As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:27-28).

It does not matter who you are, or where you are; if you have become a Christadelphian by being baptized into Christ, all other Christadelphians are your brothers and sisters. (Remember the name ‘Christadelphian’ *means* ‘brethren in Christ’.) It is a great joy to belong to such a family, who are to be found throughout the world.

Jesus said to his disciples before his death—and he still says it to us today:

“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you” (John 15:12).

He loved us so much, that he suffered death for us. He laid down his life for us, so, says the apostle John, “*we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*” (1 John 3:16).

We know how we *should* behave to each other, but in practice, it is very hard. Our old self takes a long time to die! Some of us are quick-tempered; some are moody and easily irritated; all of us have our faults.

These are things we have to fight against, as we try to show to our brothers and sisters in Christ the love that Jesus has shown to us. There is a picture of that love in 1 Corinthians 13. Read it for yourself. ‘Charity’ is an old-fashioned word for ‘love’. Here are verses 4-7 of the chapter in a modern version:

“Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (Revised Standard Version).

Loving our neighbour

A lawyer once came to Jesus, and asked him which was the greatest commandment. Jesus said to him:

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:37-39).

Read the story Jesus told about a good neighbour in Luke 10:30-37. If anyone is in need, we are to help him. We are not to stop and think whether we like him or not, or whether he really deserves our help.

The greatest thing we can do for others is to pass on to them the good news of the Kingdom of God, which we ourselves have come to believe. As God has invited us to keep His ways and to share the joys of His Kingdom, so we will want to invite others to share these things.

Praying and worshipping

When we are baptized into Christ, we become God’s children, and we can come to Him in prayer, to worship Him and to ask for His help in our lives.

Yet we must never forget how great God is. His glory and His majesty are beyond our understanding. We read in Isaiah 57:15:

“For thus saith the high and lofty One that Inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

James tells us that God “*resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble*” (James 4:6). Even the Lord Jesus, God’s Son, spoke of himself as being “*meeek, and lowly in heart*” (Matthew 11:29).

So when we come to God in prayer, we need to remember the words of the apostle, who says we should “*serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear*” (Hebrews 11:28). If we come in this spirit, He will certainly hear us.

“Blessed are the meek”

In this world we are constantly told to fight for our rights. Those who stand up for themselves are admired. The great question in everyone’s mind is, “What can I get out of life?”

This is not the way of the Christian. Paul says to the saints at Philippi: “In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Philippians 2:3). That is a hard thing to do; we all like to think we are a little better than the next man! But we are told, “By love serve one another” (Galatians 5:13), and in this, as in all things, Jesus is our example. Not long before his death, when he was sharing a last meal with his disciples,

“(Jesus) laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that, he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciple’s feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded” (John 13:4,5).

The washing of feet was a slave’s work. Yet that is what Jesus did, and afterwards he said,

“I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you” (John 13:15).

He served his disciples with love and lowliness, and we must serve each other. Then we shall be the kind of people that God wants in His Kingdom.

“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5).

Remembering Jesus

We set out, when we are baptized, on the straight and narrow way that leads to God’s Kingdom. But we are still very human, and we can easily forget how much Jesus did for us when he died on the cross.

Jesus knew how easily his disciples would forget; so he told them to do something to remind them. Turn to the Gospel of Luke, and read Chapter 22:14-20. This happened at that last meal we have just spoken about, when Jesus washed his disciples feet.

See how the bread and the wine were to remind his disciples of how Jesus gave his ‘life for them. He said to them,

“This do in remembrance of me”.

Now read 1 Corinthians 11:23-28. The early Christians met on the first day of each week to remember Jesus in the way he had commanded them.

True disciples of the Lord Jesus will meet together, as the first disciples did (and usually Sunday is the most convenient day for such meetings), to break bread and to drink wine, remembering how Jesus’ body was given and his blood was shed for them.

As we grow up in Christ, remembering Jesus in this way will become more and more important to us, helping us to realise that he is with us all the time.

Walking in newness of life means

1. reading God’s Word every day:

“The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple” (Psalm 119:130).

2. praying to God and praising Him at all times:

“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Philippians 4:6).

3. loving our brethren and sisters:

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; ~and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God” (1 John 4:7).

4. being considerate to other people, and helping them whenever we can:

“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them” (Matthew 7:12).

5. not taking part in the ungodly activities of the world:

“Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Corinthians 6:17,18).

6. above all else, loving God with all our being:

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (Deuteronomy 6:5).

Chapters to read:

1 Corinthians 13; Luke 10:30-37; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-28

A verse to learn:

2 Corinthians 5:17:

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.”