

## **Episode 1: A New Life**

Are you one of those people who were happy to see 2022 come to an end? Many people were ready to say goodbye to last year and welcome in a new, and hopefully better, 2023. But this year, like the past year, has already been filled with changes. For many, these changes have been hard and they are dreading what new challenges will come their way. The economy has had a downturn and many people are suffering financially. As for me, I'm glad to be alive. It's the time God has placed me in and I want to make the most of it! Can you think of any good things that have happened to you? For my wife Pam and me, some of our new friendships have deepened. We've worked in our local Food Closet and been gratified to see many people being helped. We've also witnessed the great and surprising generosity of people who live in our town as they've donated money and food. Finally, both Pam and I had RSV, followed by COVID—and we survived! Today's passage contains even more good news. Let's hear what the Apostle Paul says about change:

Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (2 Cor. 5:17 New Living Translation)

I love this verse. In fact, this is the passage that I shared in my first devotional way back in 1999, when everyone was preparing for Y2K. Back then, Y2K was a part of everyone's conversation. Y2K was the moment when the clock would change from 1999 to the year 2000, and experts feared computer screens would all go blank and airplanes would fall out of the sky, that electric power and communication satellites would fail all over the world. As a result, families stored water and food to survive the possible disaster. The IT department in my company worked around the clock to ensure our computer systems survived that moment of change. At that time, I sensed God wanted me to start writing a morning devotional to encourage and instruct people about the Good News of Jesus. I never dreamed that I would still be doing it 23 years later! Paul tells us in today's passage that if we belong to Christ, we become new people. He says, "The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" Isn't that great? Belonging to Jesus changes us into new people, adopted children of the King of the Universe. With that change, you and I should begin to see the world differently and to see people differently. We can have hope and joy as we face the future, and we can have faith for the present, as well. We can love people who are not like us. We can love people who might even dislike us! All of these things are possible because of the redeeming and transforming Presence of Jesus in our lives. Today I want to encourage you to rejoice and live your life for Jesus. Sing to Him! Give thanks to Him! Worship Him! Praise Him!

Your old life is behind you—your new life lies ahead. And, I hope you agree, that's very Good News!

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