

The Newness of Life Lesson 1

What Just Happened?

Rom 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

- I. Introduction
 - A. Newness of Life
 1. We are beginning a new series called “Newness of Life.”
 2. This is a discovery series that seeks to uncover from the Bible, those foundational teachings about what God had in mind on the topic of the newness of life.
 3. If you are new, these messages will provide some light to help you advance on the path of a growing relationship with God.
 4. If you have been around many years, it will remind you of, and help strengthen your

- grip on, the anchor points of the faith that you have held onto since your early days.
5. And another benefit of a teaching like this for the long-time Christian, is to help remind you how when you were new in the church how important it was for your new church family to be patient with you as you made these discoveries.
 6. Paul said it this way:
1 Cor 4:20-21
20 For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.
21 What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?
 7. There is authority and power in the Word of God that speaks into areas of our lives that brings about change from an old way of seeing and doing things to a new way.
 8. And Paul asked the church in Corinth, “Do you want me to use this powerful Word to beat you over the head with a rod? Or

would you rather I teach you with the spirit of meekness?”

9. And on this new unfamiliar journey, we might trip and fall. What is the best way to help someone in that place? With patience and meekness:

Gal 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

10. We will teach it in the spirit of meekness and if someone falls, we will help restore them in the spirit of meekness.

11. And God is patient, even delaying His coming while He awaits other to experience a turn-around through repentance

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

12. So may the church be meek and patient, loving and gentle, as we help those who are at the beginning of this newness of life journey.
13. For I assure you, we will be covering some truths in this series where I will be teaching on a scriptural topic that some present in the congregation are not following in their lives yet.
14. If that happens to you, please understand that we present the truth of the Word of God not to make you feel excluded, but as the power of God to bring change.
15. This kingdom message is not just a bunch of words, but power of a new life! If you are not following a teaching that I present, do not take it as we do not want you here. It is completely the opposite. We do want you here.
16. And as we train our children and give them corrective teaching, it is an expression of love to those children, not exclusion.

17. So this morning the message title is “Newness of Life-What Just Happened?” and tonight the message is, “Living in Victory in the Newness of Life.” I encourage you to be here tonight at 6pm to hear this important message.
 - B. One message
 1. Our study this morning will examine the original revival fires from the first century that crossed geographic, racial, and cultural barriers, and the Lord added thousands of souls to His church within a very short period.
 2. **[slide]** The message they preached is called the **Apostle’s Doctrine** in Acts 2, and **the Doctrine of Christ** in Hebrews 6 and **the Gospel** in 1 Corinthians.
 3. But it is all one message—the message of salvation—the New Testament message of new birth.

4. And if it has happened to you, this message is to describe “What Just Happened?”

II. Keys to the kingdom

1. When Jesus sought to spread His newness of life message into the world, He saw in Peter a keen spiritual insight because he was first of the apostles to understand that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, so He gave him a special spiritual authority called the **keys of the kingdom:**

Matt 16:18-19

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

2. In the Book of Acts, we will see that Peter used those keys to loose in earth in **[slide] Key Cities**, or open three important doors of salvation: in **Jerusalem for the Jews**, in **Samaria for the Samaritans**, a biracial group who were a mix of Jews and Gentiles, and finally in **Caesarea for the Gentiles**.

[map]

3. Jesus' final command to the apostles gave a roadmap for Peter to follow to use these keys:

*Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea **[to the Jews]**, and in Samaria **[to the Samaritans]**, and unto the uttermost part of the earth **[to the Gentiles]**.*

4. **Jerusalem** was the city where it all began. Judaea was the region, or Roman province that Jerusalem was in, something like their state.

5. Next was **Samaria**. This was the adjacent province just north of Judaea, but represented a major movement across a significant ethnic boundary.
6. After moving from Samaria, they took the message to both Jews and Gentiles in the uttermost parts of the earth into foreign provinces and continents.
7. As the apostles spread the gospel across their world, the Book of Acts records the history of their travels and how they used the Keys of the Kingdom to spread the message of the newness of life wherever they went.
8. That is why we look at the Book of Acts as our own inspiration for what we want to be and see in our church.

III. Key #1, Jerusalem **[slide]**

A. The Day of Pentecost

1. The Jews were the people of God's covenant made with Abraham, and they

were also the focus of Jesus' earthly ministry and the first people to have the door opened with the keys to the kingdom. And it happened in Jerusalem.

2. Jesus' last words to His apostles instructed them to go to Jerusalem and wait for a promise from heaven. They found an upper room to wait and pray in.
3. This prayer meeting coincided with the celebration of the Feast of Pentecost, an important Jewish holiday. Crowds of thousands of Jewish pilgrims filled Jerusalem to celebrate the holiday.
4. But there in that upper room, Jesus' disciples had gathered for one purpose—to obey Jesus' command to await the promised¹ outpouring of power from on high.

Luke 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the

¹ John the Baptist had foretold in Luke 3:15-18, and Jeremiah in 31:31, and Ezekiel in 36:26.

*city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued
[clothed or filled] with power from on high.*

- B. The Holy Ghost promise
- 1. There were 120 of Jesus' followers gathered together in that upper room.

Acts 1:14-15

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

*15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were **about an hundred and twenty,**)*

- 2. Their intense prayer was interrupted as the Spirit filled all 120 of them. As the Spirit filled them, they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance—or spoke through them.

Acts 2:1-4

1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully

come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance [the ability].

3. This was the starting point of Jesus' church. This Holy Ghost outpouring was noisy enough the neighborhood heard this commotion upstairs.
4. As result, a large crowd gathered outside to inquire. Someone in the crowd even called them drunks because of how people were behaving inside.

5. So Peter, now full of the Holy Ghost, pulled out the keys of the kingdom and preached **the gospel message** to the crowd.
6. With that first key, Peter loosed in earth, and opened the door of salvation to the Jews. He told the crowd that this outpouring of the Holy Ghost was foretold in Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-29).
7. He reminded them of recent events regarding the life of Jesus Christ, including His crucifixion at their hands, and His resurrection from death as mentioned in the Book of Psalms.
8. Many in the crowd were very familiar with those recent events, they believed the gospel message, and were pierced to the heart (felt conviction) and wanted to know **how to respond to the gospel message:**
Acts 2:37-39
37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and

*brethren, **what shall we do?** [1st time question asked after 1st preaching of gospel in the 1st church]*

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

9. What we just read is a very important foundational truth that is called “**the Apostles’ Doctrine**” in verse 42. A doctrine that they “filled Jerusalem with” (Acts 5:28).
10. Because the people in the crowd believed the gospel, their faith led them to obey the gospel, to: (1) repent of their sins, (2) be baptized in Jesus’ name for the remission of sins, and (3) be filled with the Holy Ghost that was accompanied by the evidence of speaking in tongues.

11. 3000 souls in that crowd heard, believed, and obeyed the gospel that day.
*Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about **three thousand souls**.*
12. Peter, empowered by Jesus, had used the first key in Jerusalem to open the door to the Jews to a new relationship with Jesus, not just God with them, but now God in them by the power of the Holy Ghost.

IV. Key #2 Samaria [slide]

- A. Who are the Samaritans?
 1. Next, we move to Samaria, where Peter used the 2nd key of the kingdom.
 2. There had been division between Jews and Samaritans going back to 2 Kings 17 when the Assyrian conquered Israel, brought foreigners into the land and intermarried with the Israelites.

3. These were the group identified as Samaritans and interactions between Jews and Samaritans were a constant source of ethnic tensions.
 4. But Jesus stepped over ethnic barriers when he reached out to the Samaritans, first when He met the woman at the well in John 4.
 5. But Jesus was not just a Jew, but He was God in flesh paving the way for all to hear the gospel message, and for the second key to be used.
- B. Persecution of the Jerusalem Church
1. A disciple named Philip (later called “the evangelist” Acts 21:8), fled from Jerusalem because of persecution that came against the new believers, so he traveled north to Samaria. There he began to preach Christ.
 2. As he preached to the crowds, the people responded joyously to the Word.

Acts 8:5-8

5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

8 And there was great joy in that city.

3. Just as it happened in Jerusalem, preaching Christ led to a demonstration of God's power. This is a message not just in word but in power!
4. Fulfilling the great commission that Jesus gave to the disciples, Philip baptized the Samaritans.
5. Acts 8:16 reveals that Philip baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 8:16 (For as yet he was fallen upon

*none of them: only they were **baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.**)*

6. Philip preached the same message in Samaria that Peter had preached in Jerusalem and many Samaritans believed the gospel message and were also baptized.
7. But was concerning, although the Samaritans were now baptized believers, they had still not yet received the Holy Ghost. Like me in 1976.
8. But that was because the man with keys needed to show up to fully open the door to the Samaritans:

Acts 8:14-17

14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of

them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) [it was important to duplicate Acts 2]

17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

9. The message of salvation included both baptism in Jesus' name and receiving the Holy Ghost—it was the same message for Jews and Samaritans because Peter used the same keys of the kingdom!

v. **Key #3, Gentiles [slide]**

A. Caesarea

1. And now finally, it was time for the Gentiles to benefit from the keys of the kingdom. In the biblical picture, you and I are included in this group.
2. Although the first outpouring was exclusively on Jews, and the second was on the Samaritans, God's ultimate plan was for the gospel to be preached unto the world of the Gentiles as well.

3. Persecution was spreading the church and the gospel to distant places. Samaria was 40 miles north of Jerusalem, and now, the gospel arrived 65 miles north to Caesarea Maritima, the Roman capital of Judea where there was a major military base.
- B. Peter and Cornelius
1. And once again, God specifically called Peter, the man with the keys, to this Roman city to open the door of salvation to the Gentiles.
 2. Just as unlikely it was for a Jew to bring the gospel to the Samaritans, a Jew also brought the message to Gentiles.
 3. Jews didn't have social dealings with Gentiles either, so God started working behind the scenes to make this happen.
 4. A Gentile man, a Roman centurion named Cornelius, had a vision in which an angel told him to call for Peter. He sent servants to bring Peter.

5. Peter also had a vision of an angel who convinced him to go with the Gentiles, and Peter did. He went to the home of this military man and preached the same gospel message about Jesus to Cornelius' whole household.
6. Then it happened:
Acts 10:44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.
7. The entire household of Cornelius received the precious gift of the Holy Ghost just like the Jews and the Samaritans!
Acts 10:45-46
45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.
46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. ...

8. Speaking in tongues was the common sign that demonstrated to all that the new believers had received the Holy Ghost.
9. But now it was time for a baptism just like with the Jews and Samaritans:

47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.

- vi. The Newness of Life message
 1. Three keys were used but it was just one message.
 2. Once we believe that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and He rose again, we express our faith by obeying the gospel.
 3. **Faith leads us to repent.** That is where we turn from or **die** to our sin. We choose to forsake our sin and ask Jesus for forgiveness.

4. **Faith also leads us to be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. This is where we are **buried** with Jesus.
5. **Then by faith, we receive the Holy Ghost.** Like the resurrection of Jesus, when we are **raised** to walk in newness of life by the Spirit in us.
6. This explains what just happened to those who have been baptized and filled with the Spirit. But it can also happen right now!
7. That will be our subject tonight—the New Life.
8. Do you want to experience the New Testament new birth experience? It is still available today.