

Resurrection and New Creation

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[0 : 00] Well, again, if you haven't been with us on the last Sunday night of the month over the past four months, or if you're a guest or if you're new, we're doing a series called Doctrine for Life.

And in Doctrine for Life, we're talking about theology. We're having a look at Paul's theology specifically from the New Testament. And the way we've defined theology so far in our time together has been very simple.

The theology is knowing God, knowing God. It's knowing more about God, and in light of that, it's loving God more. So if you're a Christian tonight, if you've ever professed faith in Christ, you are a theologian.

That's a fundamental tenet of the way that we've been doing things in Doctrine for Life. You are a theologian. It's not a choice that you make if you're a Christian. It's just what you are.

And so the question is, are you a good one or not? You are a theologian, but are you a good one or not? And all a good theologian does is loves God and loves knowing more about Him.

[1 : 07] And that changes all of life. It changes everything you do. Knowing things about God changes the way you live, hence the title, Doctrine for Life.

And so in looking at Paul's theology, we're coming to our fourth of five themes. We're looking at the major themes in his theology and trying to put together kind of an all-encompassing scope that helps us go back to Paul's letters and read them with clarity to see what he's doing throughout. And the question that we're coming to tonight is this, what's the end game? What's the end game of the Christian religion? What does Paul see as the final goal, the end of Christianity?

What's the point? What's the point? And the answer is resurrection and new creation. Now before we break that down, let's just review for a minute.

The first time that we met together, this is what we said, that Paul teaches that the history of redemption, the history of what God is doing is encompassing all of history.

[2 : 17] All of history is one grand story, one big narrative, one drama of redemption. That big drama, that big narrative, that big history is about God.

It's about what God is doing. And if you look up at those panels, that painting there, this is just an imperfect image that represents exactly what we've said Paul sees as what God is doing in the world.

The first picture represents creation. The second picture represents the fall, the fall and the sin. The third, redemption. And the fourth, new creation.

You can see that the final picture has got more fruit, more animals, things like that, than the first picture. It's a movement from creation to new creation.

That's the two poles of what God is doing in this world. So we could paint it out in a graphic like this. If that middle line, that horizontal line is history, it's all of time from the past to the future, we can see it as this.

[3 : 17] Every story has four good parts. You've got to have four parts to have a story. You have an introduction, which is creation. You have a conflict, which is the fall or sin.

Resolution is redemption in Christ, and the conclusion is new creation. And then in that box right there, you see where it says tension, already new, not yet new, that's where we live.

We live in that box. We live in a time that the resolution has already come. Redemption in Christ has already been realized. Christ has already risen from the dead.

He's already defeated sin, but we're not yet into new creation. There are aspects of this world that are completely still fallen, including our hearts. We still sin every week.

We still experience things like miserable earthquakes. The world is still broken. Yet, the new creation has entered into the present, in the aspect that there's already elements of what is coming

for us in Christ's work now.

[4 : 22] For instance, the gathering of the Christian body on Sunday nights is one of them. This is something that new creation will have lots of.

That was the first thing. The second thing we talked about is this. What is the gospel? What does Paul take to be the gospel? And we've said that, look, you've got to be able to sit down with somebody at Starbucks or wherever you like to get coffee.

And if they ask you, what's the gospel to be able to rattle it off to them in just a moment's notice? And the easiest way to do that is to come to 1 Corinthians 15, 3, and 4. He gives it to us very simply.

I delivered to you as a first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Old Testament Scriptures. That's the Scriptures he's talking about.

That he was buried, that he was raised in accordance with the Scriptures. Notice up there are two things. All the verbs are in the past tense.

[5 : 22] That Christ died, that he was buried, that he was raised. That's the first point. The second point is this. That it was for our sins.

So we could talk about the gospel like this. There's a gospel that's been accomplished in history. Christ died and rose again past tense. The gospel is finished.

But there's also a gospel that's for us. There's two aspects of the gospel. The gospel applied. And we've said in the third talk that we gave that the gospel applied is about Christ, is about the Holy Spirit uniting us, uniting us to Jesus' work in history.

So you see that down there in Ephesians 1. Notice the highlighted portion. Christ would be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ. That's the way Paul expresses our union with Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places even as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.

So in other words, the way God is working out salvation for us is that he's uniting his people to Jesus, to his work. And he started that even before the foundation of the world, Paul says.

[6 : 40] Even before time and history began, he named you if you are a believer in Christ. He chose you in him before the foundation of the world.

He united you to Christ's work. So what is then the last thing we talked about before we get into resurrection and new creation? What is justification and sanctification and where do they fit?

All right, when God created the world and Adam and Eve fell that they sinned, sin brought three great consequences into this world. And they're this.

The first is a legal guilt. If you've ever sinned before, you've got a legal guilt before God. You deserve judicial punishment by him according to his justice.

Secondly, it brought personal and ethical brokenness. Look, you are bent towards doing bad. You're bent towards it.

[7 : 36] No matter how hard you try, you cannot stop. It gets better, but it keeps going. Right? John Calvin called this living in unreality.

A lot of the medieval theologians called this the problem of concupacence. Concupacence means natural bent towards lust or any lust.

By lust they meant lusting for anything, being tempted by any idol. Right? The fall had this concupacence about us. We have a legal guilt. We have a concupacence and ethical brokenness.

And thirdly, we have a material and natural brokenness. Right? The fall didn't just happen to our hearts. It happened to the whole of the cosmos.

Everything is bent the wrong way. Natural disasters, disease, death, some of us in this room will die from cancer. Everything is broken.

[8 : 32] Everything is not the way it should have been. When Christ came into the world and by our union with Christ, He brought solution to all three of those types of problems.

By justification, Paul's use of the word justification, he means legal forgiveness. By sanctification, we mean personal renovation, getting a new heart, doing holiness things.

And by glorification, we mean resurrection and new creation, dealing with the legal, the ethical, and the natural. Jesus came to do all of those things.

So if you look up, this is Paul's idea of salvation in a chart, in compass. It's not everything, but it's a lot of things. It's enough. The gospel accomplished becomes the gospel applied by the work of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Christ's work in history, the gospel accomplished, becomes ours through our union with Christ. And you can see what Jesus' work under that is. Incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection. [9 : 37] And our union with Christ brings justification and sanctification. And then in the second stage of history, the second coming brings glorification, being made new.

All right, now we're going to come to what we're talking about tonight for a few minutes. We're not going to say a ton about it, don't worry.

But if you have a Bible, turn with me to Colossians 1. Colossians 1.

Now look, if in that summary, if you've been coming to these, or even doing court of discipleship maybe some of you, and in that summary that I just gave you were like, oh, I know all this. This is boring.

Then that's awesome. That's exactly what we want. We want that stuff to be so ingrained into our thoughts that we read the Bible with it as just a presupposition. Okay?

[10 : 34] It's boring in some ways because we already know it, and that's perfect. All right, so what we're coming to now is this. Three points we have tonight.

The first point is this, the new creation is about Jesus. It's about first Jesus person. It's about Jesus person. Let's read Colossians 1.

Starting verse 15. He is the image of the invisible God. This is Jesus, the first born over all creation. For by him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities, all things were created by him and for him.

He is before all things and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning and the first born from the dead so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven by making peace through his blood shed on the cross.

[11 : 46] The first thing we want to talk about is this. The study of the end times, which is really what we're talking about tonight, the study of new creation, the study of what God's going to do at the end of history is really a study of Jesus Christ.

Everything is about Jesus Christ in our theology. What's going to happen is a story of what is going to happen to Jesus and what Jesus is going to do.

The first thing is this. In this passage in Colossians 1 we get this picture. Jesus is the mediator of creation. If you look down it says by him and for him all things were created.

John chapter 1, you remember? It coins, John is just reading Genesis chapter 1 when he writes John chapter 1. He says in the beginning was the Word and the Word was God and the Word was with God and by him God created all things.

Jesus, by Jesus God the Father created the entire world. He is the mediator of creation. In the work of the Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Spirit, Jesus has been especially appointed by the Father to be the mediator of creation, redemption and new creation.

[13 : 09] Everything, all of history. Jesus has been chosen by God the Father to be the mediator of all those things. Now listen, Paul's theology as we have already explored begins before time.

It begins pre-temporally. In Ephesians chapter 1 we get this scene where we're brought up into an episode that's before all of history that God chose us in him when?

Before the foundations of the earth, before creation. Paul's theology then has always been about choosing Christ and choosing his people for new creation.

In other words, creation was always about new creation. It was never the case that God decided to create without deciding this plan.

New creation was the point the whole time. Jesus being the mediator of creation was the decision that Jesus would mediate a new creation.

[14 : 19] What's happening now in history is not plan B. God never messed up. God never lost control. None of that happened. This has always been the plan.

Jesus has always been before the foundation of the earth chosen to be the mediator of creation, redemption, death and resurrection and new creation.

The whole scheme is about him. You see? There has never been a moment where it hasn't been about him. By his suffering, death and resurrection, let me step back.

When Jesus became incarnate, when he became a God man, when he came down to this world, a lot of times when we talk about that, what we say is this, Jesus humiliated himself.

He was the exalted God seated on the throne high and lifted up as the song we just sang. He humiliated himself to become man. He became a pauper.

[15:23] He became absolutely poor. He was born in a manger. He did not have a place to lay his head. He was humiliated. But the Bible talks about and Paul talks about and Hebrews talks about that at the resurrection, God the Father exalted him.

That Jesus by his obedience moved from a position of humiliation in this life to exaltation. He set him at his right hand and made him king over all the world until all his enemies should be subjected underneath his feet.

He exalted him. New creation, the second coming of Christ, what God is doing at the end of history is Jesus Christ's final exaltation.

It is about Jesus becoming the king that he already is. You see, it's about Jesus coming and truly putting all of his enemies under his feet.

And the last enemy to be defeated is death. Okay? It's about Jesus taking his place not only in heaven as king, but on earth as king over all of his enemies.

[16:32] So the study of new creation in theology, the point of new creation, what new creation is, what the final end times are, is Jesus realizing his kingship.

It's all about Christ. It's Christology. It's the study of Jesus himself. That's the study of the end. The second thing we can say on this point is this.

Christ's second coming is the completion of all the comings that have been had before in history. So this is what this means.

How do we know about God? Have you ever thought about that? How do you know about God? You can't see God, can you?

For some of you, that's a barrier to faith. Some of you don't believe yet maybe because of that fact. You can't see God. You've never seen Jesus.

[17:32] It's not possible, right? So how do you know about him? How do you know about a spirit? You can't see spirits. You know about a spirit only because spirits decide you should know about them.

In other words, they reveal themselves. And so when we talk about this Bible, we talk about Scripture, or we talk about what God's done throughout history, what we're talking about is a word called revelation.

God has revealed himself. He's made himself known to us. That's how we know about him. The new creation is the culmination of all revelation.

God has, as Augustine says, God lifts to us when he reveals himself to us. We don't see God as he is. We don't see Christ as he is.

Revelation is in some ways not enough. We can't know God as he is perfectly through this book. We see him in shadows here. We see him in shadows in the way that he works through us in the Holy Spirit.

[18:31] In the new creation, Jesus is coming to bring a final revelation where there's no more shadows. We will see him, Revelation 20, as he is.

The new creation is not only about Jesus' person, but it's about Jesus being the final revelation to us of God. We will finally see God in Christ.

We will literally eat dinner with him, Revelation 19. That's what he's coming to do. Thirdly and finally, on this point, Paul tells us this in Colossians 1.

Jesus is the beginning of the world. He is the foundation of the world. By him, all things were created. He's the goal of the world. He's the foundation of the world and he's the goal of the world.

This is what the Bible means when it talks about Jesus as the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. He's both the foundation of the world and the point of the world.

[19:40] He is what we are getting to, you see. If you're doing the Christian religion for another goal, then it's misguided. Jesus himself is the goal.

He is the one that we're getting to here in new creation. It's him that we want. It's him that is the hole in our heart. It's he that will fulfill it. It's seeing him as he is.

He is the Alpha and the Omega. He is the goal. He is the victory. It's always been about him. All right. Secondly, the new creation is not only about Jesus' person, but it's also about Jesus' work. What does it mean now to 1 Thessalonians 4?

1 Thessalonians 4, 13, following. It says this, brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, death, or to grieve like the rest of men who have no hope.

[20 : 45] We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's one word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep, for the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead and Christ will rise first.

After that, we who are still alive and are left with will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore, encourage each other with these words.

All right. So first, Jesus' work, what Jesus is coming to do in new creation is a work of dissension, dissension.

Okay? Christ has descended once when he became God-man, when he became incarnate. He ascended, right? We talk about his ascension in Acts chapter one.

He ascended so that he may descend again, so that he may descend again. The last part of this present age that we live in for Paul will be a dissension.

[22 : 02] Jesus coming down with the clouds. So Paul talks about, to connect all the dots of what we've been doing the past few months, Paul talks about the time we live in right now being the last days, or the last hours.

And what Paul's meaning by that is this, that we live in the last days before the final revelation, the final dissension of God from heaven to earth.

We saw this in the Garden of Eden. Derek talked about this this morning. He read the exact verse, when God comes down and walks in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve, right?

And they hide from him. When ever since that moment, God has been doing that, okay? He's been coming down, descending. You see, he descended to us in the temple to Israel.

He descended to us in the incarnation of Christ. He descended to us in Acts chapter two in the coming of the Holy Spirit, okay?

[23 : 03] But all these dissensions have been pointing towards a full and final dissension. The dissension of the God-man forever with us on this earth.

That's what's been the point of all of these dissensions. This is the fulfillment of the entire Old Testament, you see? This is the fulfillment of the day of the Lord in the prophets.

This is the fulfillment of the point of the temple. All of the things in the Old Testament are about this, the final dissension of Christ to be with his people forever.

This is the end game. All right? The second point is this. Jesus will resurrect. Not Jesus. I should have worded that differently. Jesus will resurrect people, others.

He's already resurrected. Second Corinthians 4:14. We saw it in 1 Thessalonians here. Here's another verse. We know that he who raised the Lord Jesus, God the Father, will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.

[24 : 06] Now the resurrection, as taught by Paul, is for everybody, okay? Not just for Christians. Everyone will rise from the dead at this point in history.

That's very clear throughout Paul. It's very clear throughout Scripture. The resurrection then is for something else, okay? The resurrection with Jesus as king, with him sitting on the throne, with him putting all the enemies under his feet, is about judgment.

It's a judicial act. So what Paul gives us is this, that all people will rise from the dead in this event and all people will be judged by Christ in this event.

So there's a resurrection and there's a judgment. Now we need to deal with something in this text that's kind of difficult. If you look with me at verse 17, after that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

All right. In the previous passage that we read, it said this, that Jesus is coming to make all things new and to unite the things of earth with the things of heaven.

[25 : 24] What are those things, the things of earth and the things of heaven that he's going to unite? What Paul is talking about there is very simple. He's talking about the physical, material world, flesh, bodies, matter, dirt, ground, trees, cosmos, space, time, matter, all of these things.

The physical with the spiritual, with God as spirit, with himself. That's what Jesus is coming to do. Now the rupture of soul and body that occurs at death is a total abnormality.

You see, it's not what God created this world to be like. Adam and Eve were never meant to have their soul ripped from their body at death. And so the thing that we need to clear up is this, the point of Christianity is not to go to heaven.

Heaven is an intermediate state. Heaven is when your soul is taken away from your body at death. But look, that's incomplete. What Paul is teaching is something much bigger and grander than that. And that's this, that the work that Jesus is going to do in new creation with a resurrected body is unite flesh and spirit together again, fully and finally, just like he is.

[26 : 48] You see, in the resurrection, Jesus does not remain a soul and a body. He is a complete person, soul and body, a God man forever. And he's making us like him.

And he's making the cosmos, everything else like that. Body and soul together, not to be ruptured, not to be separated. Now what do we do then with 1 Thessalonians 4:17, which says that when Jesus comes, we'll all be caught up in the air with him.

You can translate this many different ways. Some people take this to mean that we will float up into the sky with Christ and we will return to heaven with Christ, the land of the place of spirit.

I don't want to be a bully here to Horatio Spafford. We sang a Horatio Spafford hymn this morning. It's a really good hymn. I like the hymn. It is well with our soul.

But there's one line that Horatio Spafford writes about and it's totally understandable because if you know anything about this hymn, Horatio Spafford lost all four of his daughters in a horrific accident crossing the Atlantic Ocean and wrote this hymn the night he received a telegram from his wife and the telegram said nothing but I survived and I survived alone from his wife.

[28 : 14] He wrote it as well with my soul after that. The line that he puts in there is this, if I can find it in my notes, the sky and not the grave is our goal.

The sky and not the grave is our goal. The rest of the hymn is amazing. The sky is not the goal. He's wrong about that.

The sky is not the end game. The earth is the end game. We are not going to heaven. Jesus is coming to earth. Now what do we do with called up in the sky?

The word that's being used here is used all over the place in first century literature, especially in the context of places like Thessalonica where this letter was written to and the Roman Empire and in the Roman Empire the word was very commonly used to mean something like this.

Let me illustrate it for you. Imagine that the Roman Emperor goes out to battle to conquer some lands somewhere. He takes thousands of soldiers.

[29 : 21] He takes ladies, he takes your husbands. He takes your brothers and your sons. He comes back victorious to Rome and you see the Emperor standing on the precipice of the tallest mountain out on the horizon, right?

What do the women of the city do? What do they do? This is their husbands and their sons, their brothers.

They don't know if they're alive or dead. What do you do? You don't stay in the city, you run. You run straight to them, don't you? You go to see is my husband still alive?

Is my brother still out there? And you go and do what any army would have done in the ancient Near East or in the early centuries of the Roman Empire.

You parade with the army back into the middle of the city. You parade right up to the Emperor's palace where he asserts his dominion and declares victory.

[30 : 28] That's the sense of this word, you see. It's not about us going up and floating into the air to be up in the heavens forever. It's about us including ourselves in the victory march of Jesus Christ as he takes his place as king on this earth, you see.

It's about us parading with Jesus forever. Okay? It's about this world. It's about this place, this earth. All right.

Last thing. The new creation is about recreation. The new creation is about recreation. Come, yeah, let's go back to Colossians 1:16.

We don't have time to look at all these passages, but I just want to point out that one phrase in Colossians.

Start in verse 17 this time. He is before all things and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

[31 : 39] We're talking, we're looking at, that's kingship right there, exactly what we've been talking about. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him and through him, here we go, to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven by making peace through his blood.

You'll see some of the exact same language in 1 Corinthians 7:31 that he has come to unite all things, things in heaven and things on earth.

The first thing that happens in recreation is that Jesus has come to unite all things again, flesh and spirit. So the spiritualism that we just talked about of seeing ourselves as eternal souls, right? You hear that in a lot of popular level Christian media slash books that we are going to be souls forever, that that's eternity. That type of spiritualism is entirely one sided and it's not what the New Testament talks about in terms of new creation.

In Revelation 19 to 21, what happens is that the heavenly Jerusalem, the heavenly city of God comes down to make its dwelling place in the earthly city of man.

[32 : 57] You see? That's the exact same thing Paul is talking about. This place will be God's city. He not only builds it for us in new creation, but he makes it his home as well.

He dwells with us. Secondly, Jesus speaks of the future blessed state in all sorts of corporeal ways. In the Gospels, Jesus talks about our future blessedness as a meal, as eating a meal in Matthew chapter five. Also, look, if you want to know what new creation is going to be like and you should want to know that.

It's a hugely unbelievable thing to think about. Look at Jesus' miracles in the Gospels. That's one of the best places to go.

Think about Jesus' miracles. What's the first miracle Jesus performs? He turns water into wine, an abundance of wine, an abundance of eating and drinking.

[34 : 05] No more poverty, no more hungry people, no more homeless. What else does Jesus do? He reverses all natural disasters in the Gospels.

He stops storms. He walks on water. He has total power over the natural world and natural law. He reverses natural disaster.

What else does he do? He reverses natural disease. You remember, I've said this a few times, but it's worth saying again, I think it's Luke 13 off the top of my head.

The leper comes up to Christ and he says, Lord, touch me and I will be healed. What do the disciples say? I'll touch him.

Jesus, why? Because in the Levitical Law Code, if a man touches a leper, he's got to be cast outside of the city. He becomes unclean.

[35 : 07] And what does Jesus do? He says, I will touch you. Be clean. Jesus reverses the disease that makes us unclean before God.

He is coming to recreate, to reverse diseases, to stop cancer, to stop Crohn's disease, to stop chronic back pain, to stop the type of stuff that gets created from you guys that sit at desk all day, to stop all of that.

It's all-encompassing. It's all-encompassing. What else does he do? He reverses death. Lazarus cannot be held down.

Jesus Christ cannot be held down. No more tears, no more pain, no more death. The substance of this new creation, the city of God, is the reversal of all things that are wrong with this natural order. That's what new recreation is doing. Now the last thing we'll say is this. Recreation is just what we're saying it is. Recreation.

[36 : 14] It's not destruction of this present world. It's a recreation of this world in a very continuous way. A very continuous way. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 speaks about every part, every aspect of this world, including our bodies, being sown unto death and being reaped.

But it is still our bodies that are reaped in the harvest. How do we know that? Well, one of the things that we know that from is that Revelation talks about the diversity of the resurrected body.

There will still be tribes, tongues, and nations in this city of God. It will be diverse.

People who have a certain type of skin color will probably still have that type of skin color. I don't know for sure, but it seems to suggest that. There's a continuity between this earth and the next. You want to know what new creation is going to be like? Think about this world without all those things I just listed, without sin, without death, without natural disease, without natural disaster.

[37 : 20] That's the substance of the new creation. Winter becomes spring. Look, it's all before our faces even now. You can't walk outside at this time of year without knowing that caterpillars become butterflies, that dead flowers become new blooms, that wheat that died in the ground becomes wheat that some of us will eat at our dinner table.

Winter into spring is God telling you this is what's going to happen in the future. New creation is embedded into the very nature of the cosmos.

It's all around us. When Christ was crucified, many people were seen. People were seen walking around the city of Jerusalem that had been known to be previously dead people.

A small microcosm of what's going to happen. All right, we're done with exposition. How then should we live? Very briefly, five minutes, tops.

Actually, forget the slide. I'm just going to do something more briefly here. Look, how then should we live in light of these points that Paul's giving us?

[38 : 32] If our idea of Christianity is this, forgiveness of sins and inner peace with God, and that's it, then we've got low expectations.

You've got low expectations for the Christian religion if forgiveness of sins is all you're in it for. It's all encompassing. There's so much more than that.

The forgiveness of sins is a judiciary mean to a bigger end of new creation. Have higher hopes for Jesus than that.

C.S. Lewis, if you know his works, talks about it as having that as your final hope, not seeing new creation, the union of material and physical, being with Jesus in the flesh as the final goal, is like going in the backyard and making mud pies when your mom offers you apple.

You could have had a home baked apple pie and you went in the backyard and you made a pie out of mud and ate it. You've got to have bigger expectations than that. Christianity is all encompassing.

[39 : 51] It includes everything. It is about your back pain. It's not just about the spiritual. It is about the physical. It is about the material order of this world.

Here's an illustration. Look, this is something from my own life, but I'm going to upgrade it because it's not nearly as cool as the way I can upgrade it.

Imagine that you take on a project of building a house. Let's put this house because I just watched a show on Netflix recently about this in the Florida Keys.

You're on the beach. You're building this unbelievable cabin. It's going to have a monstrous front porch. Let's make it wrap around. Wrap arounds are the best.

I don't think you guys have them here, but they're all over Mississippi where I'm from. It's got a wrap around front porch that goes all the way around, rocking chairs. It's 85 all year and you're right on the beach.

[40 : 51] You're building it. If you're building it, you're going to spend a whole lot of time in the basement. The basement in a lot of American houses at least is the place where you're going to do all the plumbing.

You're going to put in all the electrical wiring. The basement has no windows. The basement is dark. The basement is dingy.

The basement is not a pleasant place. If you stay in the basement day in and day out while you're building this house, which is an experience I've had, you will hate what you're doing.

You will hate it. You will constantly be putting the plumbing together and this will be misery in your life and you will think, I never should have built a house.

It will take you years and years to get it done on your own and you will hate every second of it. What do you have to do to get out of that mundanity?

[41 : 54] What do you got to do? You go upstairs at sunset. You sit on the back porch with a glass of wine in your rocking chair and you look at the sunset.

You take in the panorama of what you're doing, the point of the end game of all that's before you, all that's out there in front of you and you know what, tomorrow, you know what happens the next day? You gladly go back down to the basement and keep working on that plumbing, right? Because you know that the end game is that you're going to sit on that porch day in and day out and drink wine or whatever you like to drink and enjoy the sunset.

What we have to do then in the Christian life is recognize two truths. The Christian life is hard and it's mundane.

It's mundane. Christians have to get up earlier than everybody else to read their Bibles. That's not fun. Okay? Let's be honest. That's not fun.

[42 : 57] Christians have to self-deny themselves all the time. Christians cannot go and commit the sexual immorality that people want to, that we see all around us.

Christians cannot go and do half of the things that people do in this world, that we long to do, that the concupiscence of our heart still causes us desire.

It's hard and it's mundane. Day in and day out, we have to sacrifice all of those things to a better reality. We have to commit ourselves to putting in the plumbing day in and day out, to sitting there and getting up early or doing whatever you like to do of prayer, of Bible reading, of meditation, of re-preaching the gospel to yourself every day.

The only way that it's going to keep going and survive in your life is to go outside, sit on the porch and look at the panorama. The panorama is new creation.

The panorama is that Jesus is making all things new, that all the pains and problems, the cancer, the death, when a child dies, how do you get through that?

[44 : 12] New creation has got to be it. What Jesus is doing, seeing Jesus himself sitting on that porch, that's the only way. That's the only way.

Last thing I'll say is this. One of the ways we do this as well in this life is to re-envision an ethic for our lives that includes new creation in the now.

New creation is not yet here, but as a Christian who has a new heart, you can actually live in such a way that there are glimpses of it. It includes witnessing, it includes evangelism, it includes all of these things, but let me just talk about vocation for a second.

It's more than that. Look, Jesus is coming back to end the problems that we have in the medical field. That's not going to exist anymore.

Hospitals. Lawyers, if you're a lawyer, if you're in any part of the government or judicial system, none of those things are going to exist in the new creation. Jesus is coming to cure the problems that those entities exist for.

[45 : 25] The government exists because we have a problem with unrighteousness. Lawyers exist because people can't stop sinning. Medical doctors, nurses, administrative assistants in hospitals exist because we get diseases.

Jesus is coming to heal all that. One of the ways you can rethink about the Christian ethic in a new way, a fresh way, is to say, look, whatever field you're in, it has some final tell us, some final end game in the new creation.

If you're a nurse, you know, I'm looking at Georgia, I'm looking at a couple other people that are nurses, if you're a nurse, the very fact that you go into work every day and do your job well is an aspect of participation in new creation.

Look, you're doing what Jesus is going to do someday. He's going to cut out disease. You're helping people heal. Because your vocations participate in aspects of new creation, only a Christian with a renewed heart can see it that way.

And so one of the ways we live according to the new creation is to pursue an ethic that does your job really well, right?

[46 : 36] And people will see that. And it will create a culture where you can talk to people about the gospel. All right, I need to stop. We could talk about this all day. But we're going to stop there.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the doctrine of new creation. We long to be face to face with you. We long to sit down with you at a meal.

We long to do what Peter got to do and sit with you at breakfast on the beach. We long to be people who get to work in a new world, who till the ground and garden like you hasten the day, come Lord Jesus, and give us hope in that fact until it comes.

And we ask for this in Jesus' name. Amen.