

A New Normal

by

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This past Lord's Day (4/26/2020) Sean Sullivan preached a great lesson about taking things for granted. He discussed how much current things have changed so suddenly due to the pandemic fears. What was once normal has been dramatically altered in a very short time. Nevertheless, we have managed to adjust to these changes and here we are. We are experiencing a new normal and, I am sure, a large number of folks have been dragged into it kicking and screaming all the way.

A great amount of the issue is what the new normal has created - - change. That is one thing that a startling number of folks simply do not like and will strenuously resist and probably resent. I, for one, remember the old normal and wish it were still that way. Then reality kicks in and I must accept what is now and that it may never completely return to what it once was.

Now let us shift our focus and think of this in the spiritual realm. When one is converted there should be dramatic change. Paul, when before Agrippa, gave an explanation of his conversion and commission by Jesus. Paul said that Jesus told him to go to the Gentiles in order to "...open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me" (Acts 26:18). Paul proceeds to say that he had steadfastly done this in order to cause the Gentiles "...to repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance" (Acts 26:20b).

Paul's preaching to the Gentiles would bring about a new normal for them. He mentions the new normal he now lives, "the life that I now live" (Gal. 2:20). Likewise, new converts from that time to this are expected to live a new normal. This is part and parcel of repentance wherein a change of mind, actions, and life are to take place. The old man and his deeds are no more that the new man may thrive (Rom. 6:3-8; Col. 3:5-17; Eph. 4:22-24).

Thus, these, and a host of other similar teachings, call for a new normal.

Furthermore, we find this in 2 Corinthians 5:17, ‘Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is anew creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.’

Let us close by considering what Jesus said. He met a man named Nicodemus who came to Him by night. They had a conversation during which Jesus said, “...You must be born again” (Jn. 3:7). The American Standard Version (1901) has “anew” instead of “again.” What Paul wrote about the old man/new man concurs with this. In addition, the new man is born again by the word of God (1 Peter 1:23). That same word provides “instruction (training) in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:17) which provides needed guidelines for living in the new normal. We are not left adrift to “make it up as we go along.” God has given us ample instruction on how to “...live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age” (Titus 2:12).