

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this meditation and memorisation series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Two teachers will meditate on the meaning of a Bible verse about one characteristic of a disciple of Jesus Christ and then memorise it together. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. In this second series God teaches that there are 5 things that characterize the life of a new Christian: Christ, the Bible, prayer, fellowship with other Christians and witnessing. The topic of today's meditation and memorisation is: A DISCIPLE HAS CHRIST IN THE CENTRE OF HIS LIFE.

(S) **POINT 1. MEDITATION OF THE NEW BIBLE VERSE**

The new Bible verse that we will meditate and memorise is 2 Corinthians 5:17. We will ask one another questions in order to help us to meditate on the truths written in the Bible. Let me read 2 Corinthians 5:17.

The memorisation verse is: Christ, 2 Corinthians 5:17. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" 2 Corinthians 5:17.

(Question). Why does the verse begin with "therefore"?

(T) The word "therefore" refers to what is said before in verse 14-16, "For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer."

(S) (Question) What does it mean that "Christ died for all, and therefore all died"?

(T) First. "Christ died for all". Paul does not teach that Christ effectively died for all people that have ever lived in the world. He speaks of the once-for-all time death of Christ on the cross for all those people who come into a personal relationship with him. When Adam sinned, it had worldwide consequences. Everyone, who is physically bound to Adam, has fallen into sin and will surely die eternal death. But when Christ died and was resurrected, it also had worldwide consequences. Everyone, who is spiritually bound to Jesus Christ, has become a new creation and will surely live the eternal life (cf. Romans 5:17-19).

Second. "Christ died for me". Christ does not simply die *for* me, but he dies *instead* of me! Christ's death is a substitutionary death, that is, a death in my place! Christ's death for me takes away God's righteous anger against my sin. So God forgives me all my sins, declares me "righteous" and accepts me into his family! Conclusion: Christ's death instead of me means my *justification*.

Third. "I died with Christ." When Christ died, my *old self* died. And when Christ was resurrected, my *new self* was created! And this results in a new way of living. I no longer live for myself, but I live for Christ. When Christ was nailed to the cross, my old sinful nature and my selfish life-style was also nailed to the cross. When Christ was resurrected from the dead, I too was resurrected to the new life. I became *born-again*. I was *recreated*. The old life has gone. The new life has come! Conclusion: My death with Christ means my *sanctification*.

Fourth. To what does Christ's love compel Paul? It was not Paul's love for Christ, but Christ's love for Paul, which compelled Paul to commit his life to Christ. God is always first. God's love gripped him, won him to God's side and caused him to live the new life.

(Question) What old things have gone and what new things have come?

(S) The Christian no longer lives for himself, but for Jesus Christ, who died for him (5:15). Therefore, his relationship to himself has changed. The Christian no longer regards Jesus Christ from merely a worldly point of view (5:16). Therefore, his relationship to Jesus Christ has changed. The Christian no longer regards other people from a worldly point of view (5:16). Therefore, his relationship to other people has changed.

(Question) How did Paul's relationship to Christ change?

(T) Before Paul's conversion, he was a fanatic Pharisee and a contemporary of Jesus Christ. It is therefore very possible that Paul had many opportunities to see Jesus in Jerusalem and hear his teachings. It is even possible that Paul was a witness of the crucifixion of Jesus.

Paul says that before his conversion his knowledge of Jesus Christ was purely "according to the flesh". He regarded Jesus Christ from a worldly point of view, in accordance with the external and wrong standards of the world. The world judges people according to their outward appearance, not according to what they really are in their inward heart. Because Jesus was a carpenter, they rejected him as a teacher. Because he was not educated in one of the rabbinical schools, they rejected his wisdom. Because he was a friend of sinners and tax collectors, they regarded him as a sinner too. That is exactly what Jesus Christ said to the Pharisees, "You have no idea where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards" (John 8:14-15). Before his conversion, Paul also regarded Jesus Christ from this worldly point of view. It is well known how Paul persecuted Christians. But after his conversion when he met Jesus Christ face to face on the road to Damascus, he radically changed. He no longer regarded Jesus Christ in that way. Then he really knew who Jesus Christ was (Acts 26:12-18).

Some people, who called themselves ‘apostles’, came to Corinth (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:1-16). They were also Jews, who, in the time of Jesus, were part of the crowd that had followed him. They too only knew about Jesus according to the flesh, that is, according to his outward life on earth. They knew nothing of the new life in Jesus Christ. They never understood the gospel. Their message was that you should keep the Old Testament Law, like circumcision, food rules and good works in order to be ‘saved’ (to be declared ‘righteous’ in God’s eyes). These people came to Corinth and challenged Paul’s apostolic authority on the ground that Paul had not followed Jesus Christ like they did while he was on earth. They thought that, because they had followed Jesus Christ during his earthly ministry, they had the right to a superior status in the Christian Church. They gloried in the fact that they had known Jesus Christ “according to the flesh”. But Paul says, what really mattered was not having *seen or heard* Jesus Christ or *knowing about* him. What really mattered was to be born-again or recreated and to submit to Jesus Christ!

Also Thomas had to learn that it was not having *seen* the resurrected Jesus Christ and *feeling* the holes in his hands and side that mattered. What was important was believing in Jesus Christ. That is why Jesus said, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:29). And Peter had to learn that it was not having *followed* Jesus for 3½ years as his disciple that mattered. What was important was loving Jesus Christ (John 21:17).

(Question) How did Paul’s relationship to people change?

(S) Before his conversion, Paul judged people according to their outward appearance. He looked at people’s race, social status, wealth, education, titles, age and outward behaviour. These outward things determined whether he showed respect to people or whether he disdained them. But after his conversion, Paul no longer judged people according to these outward and wrong standards. Paul regarded people as all Christians should regard people and that is from a heavenly point of view (cf. Psalm 73).

(Question) What does it mean to be “in Christ”?

(T) The expression “in Christ” occurs many times in the New Testament. From the point of view in heaven there are only two kinds of people: those who are “in Christ” and those who are “in the world”. The big question is “Are you in Christ?” This means, “Are you born again?” “Do you have the Holy Spirit?” “Are you a new creation?” “Have the old things passed away?” “Have the new things come?” That is what verse 17 is speaking about! The way “to come in Christ” is to believe in Jesus Christ and his death and resurrection for you! The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are not only the two greatest historical events in the history of the world, but also the greatest historical events in the believer’s life. Through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, a person becomes united to Jesus Christ. From the moment a person believes in Jesus Christ, he is “in Christ”.

The expression “in Christ” is the shortest description of your salvation, when you believe in Jesus Christ. It is a short summary of the inexhaustible richness of your salvation. *Whatever Jesus Christ has done and whoever Jesus Christ is, has the greatest consequences for who you are to become.* Let me give some examples. Because Jesus Christ died, you died. Because Jesus Christ took the punishment for your sins on himself, you are forgiven, declared righteous and will never be condemned! Because Jesus Christ was resurrected, your spirit has been resurrected, born-again or recreated and your body will be resurrected at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Because Jesus Christ is the only one in whom God is well pleased, God now also accepts you and God is pleased with you. Because Jesus Christ bound the devil, you are able to resist the devil and together with Jesus Christ snatch people out of his kingdom of darkness and bring them into Christ’s kingdom of light. Because Jesus Christ is the Truth, you now know the truth about God, the truth about yourself, the truth about the world and the truth about the future. Because Jesus Christ is the heir, you will share in the inheritance of Jesus Christ, the new heaven and new earth. Because Jesus Christ is the King of God’s kingdom, you will reign with Jesus Christ.

(Question) How can anyone come “in Christ” if he wants to?

(S) Ephesians 1:13 says, “You also were included *in Christ* when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.” Thus, anyone can come *in Christ* when he believes in the gospel and receives the Holy Spirit into his heart.

(Question) What characterises the new creation?

(T) In Galatians 6:14-15 Paul says that through the death of Christ, the world has been crucified to him and he to the world. What counts in spiritual life is no more the former distinctions brought about by the Ceremonial Law, such as circumcision and uncircumcision, but only a new creation.

In Ephesians 4:24 Paul says, “Put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” The new creation is a renewal of your spirit, mind, will and behaviour. The new creation is living a righteous life in relationship to people and living a holy life in relationship to God.

In Ephesians 2:10 Paul says, “We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” The new creation is living your life according to God’s plan that is executed in the good works, which he assigns to you.

The new creation is characterised as “the old has gone”. This is written in a tense that expresses that the *old things have passed away at a definite event*, namely, at the experience of the new birth. The old things that passed away are the old distinctions, prejudices, misconceptions and enslavements of the former unregenerate way of life.

The new creation is also characterised as “the new has come!” This is written in a tense that expresses that *the old things became new and continue to be new in the present and forever*. The newness of God’s new creation is not like new things we buy that grow old and outmoded in the course of time. The new creation never fades, spoils or perishes (cf. 1 Peter 1:3-4). It is a newness that remains new forever! How wonderful is the new life in Jesus Christ! Praise the Lord!

(S) POINT 2. MEMORISATION OF THE NEW BIBLE VERSE

The method of memorising a new Bible verse has four steps:

Step 1. Meditate and understand the Bible verse before you memorise it.

Step 2. Write the Bible verse on a card or in a notebook. Write topic at the top. The topic today is “Christ”. Beneath that, write the Bible reference of the verse. The Bible reference today is 2 Corinthians 5:17. And beneath that, write the whole verse.

Step 3. Memorise the verse in the right way. Always start with the name of the topic, the Bible reference and the first line of the verse. It is a good practice to learn the Bible reference twice, first at the beginning of the verse and then at the end of the verse.

Step 4. Review the new Bible verses every day for five weeks. And review the old Bible verses at least once every three weeks.

(T) Let us memorise the Bible verse together. Then let us take turns to say that part of the verse alone without looking at the Bible or notebook.

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(S) Why is it important to memorise Bible verses without one mistake?

(T) Because it is very hard to unlearn mistakes that you have memorised. Moreover, it is much easier to memorise and review, to recall and use Bible verses when you have memorised them without one mistake.

(S) POINT 3. REVIEW OF THE LAST BIBLE VERSES YOU HAVE MEMORISED

Let us review the last 5 Bible verses that we have memorised without looking at our notebooks.

The series “Christian assurances”, verses 1-5.

(T) Assurance of salvation. 1 John 5:11-13. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. 1 John 5:11-13.

(S) Assurance of answered prayer. John 16:24. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. John 16:24.

(T) Assurance of victory. 1 Corinthians 10:13. No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. 1 Corinthians 10:13.

(S) Assurance of forgiveness. 1 John 1:9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9.

(T) Assurance of God’s guidance. Proverbs 3:5-6. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6.

(S) POINT 4. ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Daily review the last five memorised Bible verses once every day for 5 weeks.

Second. See the workbooks “Go and make disciples” and Internet on www etc.

Third. Listen on short wave radio every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to “Discipleship training on the air”.