

Seventeenth Church of Christ, Scientist – Chicago
Wednesday, January 6, 2016

Hymns	218	O Life that maketh all things new
	445	I awake each morn to a brand-new day
	66	From these thy children gathered in Thy name

Tonight's readings on the theme of *Mulligans, Do Overs and Fresh Starts* is informed by the famous passage in the Bible, in the book Revelation, where John of Patmos is describing his vision of a new heaven and a new earth – "Behold, I make all things new."

PART ONE OF THREE

SAUL'S OPPORTUNITY OF A FRESH START

From the Bible

King James Version – Acts

And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight,

And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias.

And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus:

Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:

But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

Acts 9:1-21

From Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures by Mary Baker Eddy

Paul was not at first a disciple of Jesus but a persecutor of Jesus' followers. When the truth first appeared to him in Science, Paul was made blind, and his blindness was felt; but spiritual light soon enabled him to follow the example and teachings of Jesus, healing the sick and preaching Christianity throughout Asia Minor, Greece, and even in imperial Rome.

SH 324

Saul of Tarsus beheld the way — the Christ, or Truth — only when his uncertain sense of right yielded to a spiritual sense, which is always right. Then the man was changed. Thought assumed a nobler outlook, and his life became more spiritual. He learned the wrong that he had done in persecuting Christians, whose religion he had not understood, and in humility he took the new name of Paul.

SH 326

PART TWO

From the Gospel of John – The Account of the Adulterous Woman & The Opportunity of A Fresh Start for Her & Her Accusers passages from the King James Version

Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.
John 8

From Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures by Mary Baker Eddy

Progress is born of experience. It is the ripening of mortal man, through which the mortal is dropped for the immortal.

The old man with his deeds must be put off. Nothing sensual or sinful is immortal. The death of a false material sense and of sin, not the death of organic matter, is what reveals man and Life, harmonious, real, and eternal.

SH 296

When understanding changes the standpoints of life and intelligence from a material to a spiritual basis, we shall gain the reality of Life, the control of Soul over sense, and we shall perceive Christianity, or Truth, in its divine Principle.

Man's wisdom finds no satisfaction in sin,

The necromancy of yesterday foreshadowed the mesmerism and hypnotism of to-day. The drunkard thinks he enjoys drunkenness, and you cannot make the inebriate leave his besottedness, until his physical sense of pleasure yields to a higher sense.

The sharp experiences of belief in the supposititious life of matter, as well as our disappointments and ceaseless woes, turn us like tired children to the arms of divine Love. Then we begin to learn Life in divine Science.

The effects of Christian Science are not so much seen as felt. It is the "still, small voice" of Truth uttering itself. We are either turning away from this utterance, or we are listening to it and going up higher. Willingness to become as a little child and to leave the old for the new, renders thought receptive of the advanced idea. Gladness to leave the false landmarks and joy to see them disappear, — this disposition helps to precipitate the ultimate harmony. The purification of sense and self is a proof of progress. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

Unless the harmony and immortality of man are becoming more apparent, we are not gaining the true idea of God; and the body will reflect what governs it, whether it be Truth or error, understanding or belief, Spirit or matter. Therefore "acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace." Be watchful, sober, and vigilant. The way is straight and narrow, which leads to the understanding that God is the only Life.

SH 322-324

Let us feel the divine energy of Spirit, bringing us into newness of life and recognizing no mortal nor material power as able to destroy.

SH 249

PART THREE – IN CONCLUSION

Passages from Colossians – He Is Your Life
from the Message Bible

So if you're serious about living this new resurrection life with Christ, act like it. Pursue the things over which Christ presides. Don't shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up, and be alert to what is going on around Christ—that's where the action is. See things from his perspective.

Your old life is dead. Your new life, which is your real life—even though invisible to spectators—is with Christ in God. He is your life. When Christ (your real life, remember) shows up again on this earth, you'll show up, too—the real you, the glorious you. Meanwhile, be content with obscurity, like Christ.

And that means killing off everything connected with that way of death: sexual promiscuity, impurity, lust, doing whatever you feel like whenever you feel like it, and grabbing whatever attracts your fancy. That's a life shaped by things and feelings instead of by God.

It wasn't long ago that you were doing all that stuff and not knowing any better. But you know better now, so make sure it's all gone for good: bad temper, irritability, meanness, profanity, dirty talk.

Don't lie to one another. You're done with that old life. It's like a filthy set of ill-fitting clothes you've stripped off and put in the fire. Now you're dressed in a new wardrobe. Every item of your new way of life is custom-made by the Creator, with his label on it.

So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.

Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. None of this going off and doing your own thing. And cultivate thankfulness. Let the Word of Christ—the Message—have the run of the house. Give it plenty of room in your lives. Instruct and direct one another using good common sense. And sing, sing your hearts out to God! Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.

Col 3