SERMON – Jan 01 2021 (8th Day of Christmas, Circumcision of The Christ).

**Behold I am making all things new!** (Rev 21:5)

Saint Paul writes similar words in his second letter to the Corinthians, chapter 5:17, ‘Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.’ (ESV)

The old is gone; the new is come!

Doesn’t that sound wonderful? Everything made new again.

After the trauma and drama of 2020, isn’t it nice to think that we can have a new start!

If you read the study book by Dr Noel Due and Pastor Steen Olsen, ‘Spirit Filled; *Normal Christian Living*’, you might remember in the last chapter that Steen Olsen is said to want someone to use this passage from Revelation as the text for his funeral sermon.

The authors of the study book write, *“…[God] renews us to make us like Jesus. That renewal will only be complete in heaven, so if you are preaching at Steen’s funeral, feel free to make the point that all the bad things about him, all the things that made him hard to live and work with, are now gone. That should lead to considerable thanksgiving to God, which is appropriate at a Christian funeral.”*

Well, I’ve never used this text at a funeral (although I might consider it for future reference), but I have used this text several times at weddings. Each occasion was at a second marriage for the couple – after divorce. I wanted them to know that even though God planned marriage to be for life, the reality is that we live in a broken world and marriages are never perfect. Sometime the pain and the problems in marriage are beyond reconciliation, no matter how much counselling might ensue – particularly if violence or abuse is involved, and both parties are no longer willing to make amends and work to improve or change the situation. Under such circumstances I would never counsel a couple to remain in a toxic and destructive relationship. Sometimes divorce if is the healthier option for the wellbeing of each person involved, in this sin filled world.

And later if the opportunity for a new and healthy relationship presents itself, then at the wedding the couple need to be reminded that in Christ we can experience newness and start over again. In Christ, the guilt and pain and trouble of the previous life is done. The forgiveness that Christ beings into our broken human lives is powerful and wonderful and healing. ‘Behold I am making all things new’, says Christ.

In Christ, our relationship with others is renewed. Our relationship and attitude to ourselves is renew. And our relationship with God is made new again.

This is all possible because Christ came to earth as a human being; like one of us. Saint Paul tells us, “He was born of a woman under the law, to redeem us who are under the burden and judgment of the law.” (Gal 4:4ff). Through Christ we have received adoption into God’s family and are considered his children, his perfect sons and daughters. And we know this to be true, because God’s Spirit now lives in us, and teaches our hearts to cry out to God as our ‘papa’, our ‘abba’, our Father!

Christ’s work of redeeming us, began from the moment he entered into this world as a baby. In accordance with the Old Testament law, Jesus’ earthly parents took him to the temple on the 8th day, to be circumcised. (Leviticus 12:3). This first shedding of blood was done for us. So that in his perfect life of obedience to the law, we might be set free from our disobedience and sin.

I am making all things new!…

What in your life needs to be made new?

What do you recognise as being broken, or in need of repair?

What healing would you like brought into your relationships, your physical wellbeing, your appearance?

What about yourself are you not liking and would sooner have removed or changed or improved.

We constantly see in ourselves the same old problems; and 2020 didn’t help. Our troubles intensified; our frustrations multiplied; our weaknesses magnified. 2020 made us realise that we need renewal; we need rest; we need rejuvenation.

And here is the good news.

In Christ, newness has already come!

You don’t have to wait for your funeral to be made new. This newness is ours in Christ each and every day.

Just as we were washed and cleansed and joined to Jesus in our baptism, we are reminded to come to God in Christ every day and renew our baptismal covenant. The newness that God gave you on your baptismal day was not a once off event. It’s an ongoing daily occurrence, as you seek his love and forgiveness and strength and energy to start afresh again and again.

That’s the joy of knowing Christ, and being in Christ, and feeding on Christ.

Christ is continually making us new.

And we need this, because we continually keep messing things up.

Life is messy and we’re the ones who make it messy.

But Christ makes us new again.

He comes to us and cleans us; he picks us up and forgives us; he blesses us with newness and sends us out to shine for him.

This is your hope and your joy and your strength for 2021.

Go out, into this world, and know that in Christ, you are being made new, today, and every day of your life.

Amen.