

The New Has Come
2 Corinthians 5:17

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.
 The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

Introduction: Kintsugi is the ancient Japanese art form of repairing broken tea ware by reassembling the ceramic pieces to create a new, more beautiful, and more valuable piece of pottery.

Picture # 1

Kin = gold
 Tsugi = to reconnect

A Kintsugi master mends the broken tea ware with Japanese lacquer and then covers it with gold.

Picture #2

The aim is not just to 'fix' what is broken, but to create a new and more beautiful piece than the original.

Of course, the Christian hope for being made new, and for a new world, all rests in in the resurrection of Jesus. But it doesn't start there. The Fall precedes the resurrection like Genesis is before Matthew and by several thousand years, in which time God has demonstrated what the Bible teaches us

Romans 3:10 – *There is none righteous, no, not one.*

Romans 3:23 – *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*

And so the Gospel begins, not with the resurrection but with a death; the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor 15:3-4).

First: Our Brokenness – "...the old has passed away..."

In the same way, the text promises something new, but it begins with the promise that

"The old has passed away."

It begins with the recognition of our brokenness. The Fall created a schism between God and humanity.

ILL – God illustrates that schism between the old world and the new in the Genesis flood. The old world has passed away.

This is how the gospel begins. The first words from Jesus in the New Testament are:

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matt 4:17).

The hope for something new lays in the acknowledgement that something is broken.

ILL – When people join our church, we ask them to write their testimony using a three-step plan:

- 1 – This is what my life was like before I knew Jesus
- 2 – This is how I came to know Jesus
- 3 – This is what my life has been like since I met Jesus

Why? Everyone needs to know that Jesus has made a difference. It is that difference that demonstrates repentance, which is the first step in Christianity.

Salvation begins with the recognition of our brokenness. The Fall created a schism between God and humanity.

ILL - The evil or wrong that we see in Ukraine is just a larger picture of the sin that rests in us.

In Eden, we collectively through Adam were enticed with the message that we could create a world better than God.

That lie made us believe the tea set was ours to do with as we please and in our rebellion, we clumsily broke it.

ILL - The fact that we can't keep God's promises is easily demonstrated in the reality that we can't even keep the promises that we make. Even our deepest, personal desires are fighting against each other – a war of the mind against our flesh – Paul said (Ro 7:21-25; 8:7; Gal 5:19-20)

Even when we try to do our best it leads to the pride of legalism. There is simply no hope for us.

Like Adam and Eve, there is no running away from our brokenness.

You will never become a Christian, and you will never have the life God intends for you, if you do not embrace and acknowledge your imperfections.

This is what the Bible calls, 'repentance.'

Kintsugi bowls or cups are worth more than their originals. They aren't just useful but beautiful. Their worth surpasses their usefulness. They've been made beautiful by the breaking and the remaking.

This is perhaps, the most outrageous claim of the Bible; that **we do not need to**, that **we cannot** deny our brokenness. In fact, the recognition and confession of our brokenness is a necessary part of our becoming new creatures.

APP: This is the point of this point. Stop denying what you and everyone else knows is true. We are all broken and unable to fix ourselves.

Second: The Resurrection – “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ...”

For our brokenness to have any meaning and hope, Christ must be risen from the grave, and Paul acknowledges this.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:17-19 - *...if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.*

The proofs for the resurrection are innumerable.

- 1 - All the Romans had to do was produce a body. They didn't because they couldn't.
- 2 – There is no 1st century refutation of the resurrection.

For more resurrection proofs, read: <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/historical-evidence-for-the-resurrection>

The crazy thing is that many of you have stepped into the tomb and found it empty. Everyone of us who has walked in it has come out.

This is because the resurrection is not just a 'happy ending.' It's not the end but the beginning of something new.

In Jesus's wounds, a new world and a new world order is born.

Third: The New Creation – “...he is a new creation.... behold, the new has come.”

new creation = kainos

When we think of something new, we think of an upgrade, like a new Iphone or car. But that Greek word is 'neos' from which we get 'neon.' The upgrade is flashier, but it's still an Iphone and a car. God uses a different word for 'new creation.'

This is because Christ did not come to 'fix' us or upgrade us, - he's not giving us new knees or hips - but to make us wholly new creations, a whole new species of people.

ILL – Let's move from Kintsugi to toy soldiers with a quote from C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*.

Did you ever think, when you were a child, what fun it would be if your toys could come to life? Well suppose you could really have brought them to life. Imagine turning a tin soldier into a real little man. It would involve turning the tin into flesh.

Lewis isn't talking about *Toy Story* toy soldiers because, even though they were animated, they were still toy soldiers made of plastic with all those limitations.

The Second Person in God, the Son, became human Himself: was born into the world as an actual man—a real man of a particular height, with hair of a particular colour, speaking a particular language, weighing so many stone. The Eternal Being, who knows everything and who created the whole universe, became not only a man but (before that) a baby....

The result of this was that you now had one man who really was what all men were intended to be.... Thus in one instance humanity had, so to speak, arrived: had passed into the life of Christ. And because the whole difficulty for us is that the natural life has to be, in a sense, "killed," He chose an earthly career which involved the killing of His human desires at every turn—poverty, misunderstanding from His own family, betrayal by one of His intimate friends, being jeered at and manhandled by the Police, and execution by torture. And then, after being thus killed—killed every day in a sense—[He] came to life again. The Man in Christ rose again: not only the God. That is the whole point. For the first time we saw a real man. One tin soldier—real tin, just like the rest—had come fully and splendidly alive.

When the Bible says, we are made new, God isn't talking about an upgrade but an entirely new species, something never-before seen in the world – new heart, new mind, new desires, new direction, etc.

IMP: Now this is where the church has failed. We are in more of a hurry than God is. We are not willing to wait through the 'men walking as trees' (Mark 8:24) moments. Instead of letting broken people gather and loving them while Christ transforms them, we do our best to 'fix' them and, of course, our best works no better on others than on us.

APP: This thought of not outrunning the Holy Spirit is one we should apply to our spouses, children, and other loved ones. My problem is that I think that if everyone was just like me, the world would be great. But I must remind myself that I am part of the problem, not the solution. Only Christ is the solution. And the power that raised Jesus from the dead can save anyone.

Romans 6:5-11 - The same way Jesus has been freed from death/the tomb, we are free from sin in Him.

Like the disciples, even if people encounter the cross and initially run away from it, when they return to an empty tomb, they are truly transformed.

John 20:8 - Then the other disciple [John], who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed

Did that belief become practical? Is there evidence that it changed the disciples?

Yes, when Jesus was arrested and taken to Caiaphas house, Peter denied him. At the cross, all the disciples, except John, ran away from him.

But after the resurrection, something happened to them. Each of the reunited with the others and each of them, save John, died the most horrific deaths proclaiming the gospel.

- Thomas who first doubted, joined them.
- Even James, Jesus's half-brother, who was originally a skeptic, becomes a first century believer and leader in the church.
- Of course, the Apostle Paul, a one-time persecutor of the church, who met Jesus after his resurrection, is another example.

They weren't doubters, skeptics, cowards, or persecutors anymore. God did something more than just pick up the shattered remains of their lives. He made them new people.

John 20:24-28 - *Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." ²⁶ Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." ²⁸ Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"*

We are all so captivated by what Thomas did, confessing Jesus as God, that we may fail to see what he didn't do? He didn't touch Jesus. He didn't place his fingers into the marks left by the nails. He didn't need to. Jesus had touched him.

Conclusion:

Picture #3

Kintsugi bowls or cups are worth more than their originals. They aren't just useful but beautiful. Their worth surpasses their usefulness. They've been made beautiful **by** the breaking and the remaking.

And God will do this. He will collect all the broken pieces, sins, joys, sorrows, gains, and losses. He will gather them, look on them, not disregard them, but, in fact, use them to remake you into something altogether new.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.
The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

Community Groups:

- 1 – Read the text.
- 2 – What is kintsugi?
- 3 – How does kintsugi reflect the Gospel?
- 4 – The Gospel begins with the word ‘repent.’ Why?
- 5 – What happens to people who live in the church without ever repenting?
- 6 – Name one personal change that demonstrates the old has passed away.
- 7 – How is what we see in Ukraine just a larger picture of our own hearts?
- 8 – Why is important for salvation and sanctification to be ‘in Christ?’
- 9 – How is the tomb not just a happy ending but the beginning of something entirely new?
- 10 – How is ‘kainos’/new creation different from ‘neos’/upgrade?
- 11 – Can you restate Lewis’s ‘tin man’ analogy?
- 12 – How has the church failed to trust God to change people’s lives?
- 13 – What disciples provide evidence of the life change that Jesus promised?
- 14 – Why did Thomas not need to touch Jesus’s wounds?
- 15 – How does this speak to the life-transforming power of the resurrection/