

God's New Creation Removes All Frustrations

Isaiah 65:17-25 • November 17, 2019 • Saints Triumphant Sunday



It's funny how quickly a small child can get over something? All it takes is someone to knock over a toy block tower and they burst into tears. Nothing matters except that someone knocked over their tower. Nothing matters, that is, until you tell them it's time for a story, time for cake, or something else fun. Then the tears instantly stop, they forget about what made them cry, and they are happy once again.

Don't you ever wish you could just move past life's biggest problems that way? There are some frustrations and pains that seem like they will never go away. They are caused by real and painful events. Years ago I saw an older man crying like a two-year-old. But he wasn't crying over a broken toy tower. His heart ached. He couldn't get out of his mind the helplessness his wife faced as she died. It was years afterwards, but he still wept over it. I saw another older man lamenting for decades "if only" as he thought about his daughter's death by suicide. He lived in remorse, wishing he had done something to prevent it. I've witnessed a man who lost everything and despaired of life. He had worked for years and it all slipped through his hands. His family was left with nothing. He was left with pain and regret. I've seen more than one man or woman totally devastated by the affair that destroyed their marriage. I've seen far too many with incurable ailments that bring hurt to bodies and minds. Maybe you've experienced something that you just can't get over or forget and it hurts. We may be struck with an incurable disease. That disease seems to always overshadow the things we enjoy in life. We may lose a loved one. From that point on, things seem like they will never be quite as happy again. What does it take to recover from all those types of sorrow and loss? We read today about what our God provides to remove all our frustrations and pains. He promises of life in place of death, and joy and satisfaction in place of our sorrows and frustrations. It will be so wonderful that we will forget all bad things, and nothing will ever interrupt the good. How is it possible? Today we look at Isaiah 65 and see how God's new creation removes all frustrations.

Frustration hit the ancient Israelites hard in Isaiah's day. God had foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. You can imagine how frustrating this news would have been for those who trusted in the Lord. Sure, they knew they didn't deserve any relief. In fact, this remnant of believers acknowledged their sin. We read from the prayer found in the previous chapter, "*All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.*" (Isaiah 64:6) And yet they held tightly to God's promises of forgiveness. The most beautiful portion of Isaiah records how the holy one, Jesus, would suffer all in place of his people. He would willingly suffer and die for their sins and set them free from all suffering and pain. He would bring them forgiveness and joy.

But it seemed as if they were still left to suffer pain and loss. You can imagine their frustration. "God says he has forgiven our sins, **but** why does it feel like we are still being punished?" The faithful remnant of believers cried out in their loss and pain, "*Do not be angry beyond measure, O Lord; do not remember our sins forever. Oh, look upon us, we pray, for we are all your people.*" (Isaiah 64:9) We could easily join this prayer. When we reflect on God's forgiveness for us, we might look on our lives and wonder why we just don't see it yet. "God you have removed all my guilt in Christ. My sins are taken away by Christ. But I am still plagued by sorrow and frustration from the effects of sin. I still live with it's painful curse."

God answers by basically responding, "I have I removed the guilt of sin. And I will forever remove the pains it brings." God turns to the faithful remnant of believers and says: "*Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth.*" This new creation will be so wonderful, that our current physical sorrow and suffering will be forgotten! "*The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.*" We'll be so overwhelmed by joy that the things which trouble us no will no longer be of any concern to us. Our current troubles will not be worth contemplating. The apostle Paul speaks of this new creation when he says, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." (Romans 8:18) Can you imagine something so good it makes all the bad cease? It seems unthinkable to speak of today's sorrows and tragedy in such light! But in the end even the worst thing you've faced in your life will be remembered less than that tower of blocks someone might have knocked over when you were two.

God's new creation will be so wonderful and cause us to forget our sorrows because it will be filled with joy and delight! *But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. ¹⁹ I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people.* He himself will delight and take joy in us! Notice that even though Israel was suffering God still calls them "my people." It is the same for you and me. God calls us his own. All who trust in him will receive every blessing promised to God's people. It doesn't matter what bloodline you come from, as long as you have been washed in the Savior's blood. In baptism, you are made God's own. Through faith in him as Savior you belong to him.

God says his people will be free from all the things which cause frustration. "*The sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.*" He tells us, "rejoice forever." It will be an eternal rejoicing in God's enduring new creation, not just a thousand-year reign as some mistakenly suppose, but for all eternity. No more sorrow. No more weeping. Forever. These verses speak of the final establishment of God's kingdom. This will ultimately happen after Christ returns on Judgment Day. That is when tears sorrow will fully come to end. We look forward to the church in glory, the church triumphant. That means eternal rejoicing!

But what about our life right now? The following verses do speak to us right now. They speak about the beginnings of God's new creation. We are already part of that new creation. We *now* have life instead of death. God tells us that in his new creation, *"Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days. Never again will there be or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed."* There are few things sadder than the death of the young. They are just starting out, with so much potential and growth. No parent wishes to outlive his or her own child. And there always seems to be incurable sadness when a newborn or small child dies. But in God's new creation death ceases. *"Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days."* Those who are born again by baptism are free from death. The baptized believing child may die, but they are alive in Christ. That child is God's own and lives with him in glory. And the child's dead body will be transformed to be a glorious perfect body at the final new creation. Jesus promises "Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies." (John 11:25) Our life is now unending! When you think of one who is a Christian and advanced in years, that person hasn't yet begun to live out his or her life! Such a new creation will not live out years just as he or she is on earth, but for all eternity in the glory of God's new creation. And the believer's dead body will be transformed to be a glorious perfect body when Christ comes a second time to bring his church into eternal glory. We know that even if we die as one of the oldest on earth, we have yet just begun our living. "God so loved the world that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16) **This is because** God no longer punishes the believer for sin. All punishment is placed on Christ. The punishment that brought us peace was upon him. **We have life instead of death.**

And we will enjoy that life forever because we have been set free from all things that cause frustration. We will be forever satisfied in the new creation. *"They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands."* You don't have to look far to see the effects of sin destroying our enjoyment of things in life. But the peace that comes with God's new creation will not be taken away from us. If our treasure is in heaven, that cannot be taken away from us. There is no enemy that can remove or separate us from the love of Christ. "Not angels or demons, not death, not persecution or sword." (Romans 8) We have the satisfaction of uninterrupted peace. We will live forever, enjoying the glorious home of heaven. The bliss that Adam and Eve once enjoyed as they worked in the garden of Eden will be enjoyed once more by God's people.

They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune. When we have children in this life, we do not have to bring them into an empty way of life. We have to opportunity to give them new birth through baptism. With God's promise, they are his new creation, no matter what may happen to them. Instead of the frustration of bearing children only to have them born slaves to sin, we have the joy of knowing Christ has set them free. We have this satisfaction because we have God's Word and Sacraments to share. Our children are not only then our physical descendants, but spiritual descendants of Abraham with us. This is because of God's promise. Those who are born again, are co-heirs with us in the inheritance of eternal life. Christ as adopted us as his. *For they will be a people blessed by the Lord, they and their descendants with them.*

And we never need feel the frustration of being separated from God by sin. We are able boldly approach God in prayer, because Jesus Christ has granted us access. *Before they call, I will answer; God says, while they are still speaking, I will hear.* No longer do we have to feel the frustration of wondering if God hears our prayers. We now have the full satisfaction of knowing he promises to hear us. And we can only imagine how great this connection will be in the final fulfillment of glory in heaven.

Finally we will have satisfaction instead of frustration, not only in our connection with God, but with all believers as well. *The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox.* This is a seemingly impossible peace. Yet it is what God has already accomplished through the gospel. People around the world from every tribe and nation can now live in peace with their fellow Christian as we call each other "brother" and "sister" in Christ. God has destroyed the dividing wall of hostility between the two and made them one in Christ. One Lord. One Faith. Just as Christ rose victorious and glorious after his death, you and I will rise to no more sorrow or pain, but only laughter and joy.

That older man who was crying like a child at the helpless loss he faced will rejoice as Christ undoes the sting of death. He will be a delight and take delight in the new heaven and earth. Nothing will rob him of his joy. That other man who regrets the pains caused by sin will not live forever in regret and "if only" but forever in joy unimaginable. That person who struggled with loss of all he had will forever hold onto what he has in Jesus. Those who suffer from illness or chronic pain will never face it again in the new creation. All those who long for freedom from frustration will find it in the Lord who makes all things new. God promises this for his people, for you, and for all who trust in him.

We may now experience grief. We may now feel the effects of sin. We may feel the effects of the curse of sin on this present world. No doubt you have all felt frustration and sorrow. But this sorrow, this frustration cannot last. God has promised that it will end. "Behold" he tells us. This is something you could not expect. "Behold my new creation. I will make you a joy. Rejoice forever. Life in place of Death. Satisfaction in place of frustration. I will answer your prayers and give peace that surpasses all understanding." Those who are a new creation through faith in Christ are born anew. No more sorrow. No more weeping. Forever. God's new creation removes all our frustrations. Delight in it now and forever.