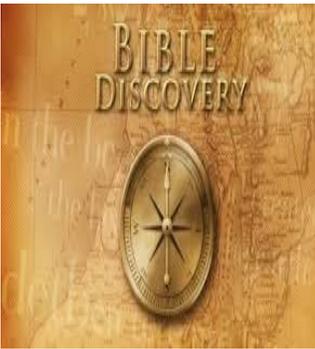


## *New Life in Christ*



It's so easy to hit the snooze button on Sunday morning when the alarm sounds at 7, to simply roll over & go back to sleep. Maybe you've had every intention of going to church,...even had your clothes laid out, but your sleepy side wins and you satisfy your conscience with the thought, "Next Sunday." Congratulations! *This* Sunday, you've made it. **Welcome!**

Why invite you to church this morning? I mean, you attend school to get an education, so you can have a career, so you can make money, so you can buy those things necessary for you & your family to survive, & hopefully enjoy life along the way - **right?** You go to the gym for exercise & better health. You go to the mall to shop for clothes & the grocery store to buy food – all in pursuit of that better life.

**But what of church?** Some think of church as an unnecessary burden, avoided by all means—a perfectly good hour wasted. Others see it as punching a spiritual time-clock with their Maker (*just in case*). But to those who've met Jesus & accepted the new life He alone can give, church can be the most spiritually fulfilling, inspiring, exciting, enjoyable thing you do all week. I often refer to Sunday mornings with fellow believers as the highlight of my week!

All of us need a place to belong. All of us need to be a part of something bigger than ourselves. All of us need to experience family and fellowship. Yet in our modern world where everything is in constant turmoil; where if you don't like the way things are – wait a minute, they'll have changed; where in a world where we fear letting our children out of sight, where we worry about our jobs and realize that on average we go through 3-4 different careers compared to our parents who worked in the same place their entire working years; where we worry about taxes and our children's tuition – *university costs are again on the rise* – and whether our children will have meaningful work; whether they will ever afford to buy a home; we need desperately to belong to something that brings us sustenance and hope and joy. Did you ever consider the church gives us that place to belong? Rather than being filled with dread for all that confronts us, I invite you to look to the Lord and discover a **New Life in Christ?** The Apostle Paul tells us how we can find

that new life - "*faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ!*" [Romans 10:17]

**Briefly, what is this new life in Christ?** When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour it is like being reunited with members of a long lost family. Becoming a Christian requires first confessing you have been going your own way. The Bible has the story of the prodigal son who grows tired of living under his father's rules, having to get up to work each morning, having to behave with respectability, having to be under the shadow of his father; so he takes his inheritance to spend on his "*friends*" living life up – drinking and partying, having a great time, but ends up eating with pigs with no friends left – all his inheritance is gone! Only then does he consider returning home where his father is waiting – in fact running with the skirts of his robe raised, unashamed to welcome him back. That's what happens when we come home to God. And the way back to God is through Jesus Christ, enjoying a personal relationship, which is the only way to be reunited into the family of God. This new life in Christ cannot be earned – there's nothing you can do to receive it. Have you ever received a wonderful gift you didn't earn? Were you surprised? Uncomfortable? Filled with joy? God's grace is given to you as a gift to bridge the separation of sinful people from God.

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Though a new life in Christ cannot be earned, it's certainly not free. Our Saviour, God's own Son, Jesus died on the cross to provide us with eternal life. Jesus restores our relationship with God even as He was restored to life through the resurrection. Jesus Himself proclaims, "*I am the resurrection and the life*". To help us live life each day, when we ask Jesus to be our personal Saviour, he gives us the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives within each of us who are believers, giving power to live a Christ life, and providing strength to withstand trials and temptations.

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Are you a Christian who's accepted Christ but you've been going it alone? Have you gotten tired of "churchese" & politics, turned off by the "Sadducees" of the modern church? There are many analogies for a Christian disconnected from a church: a football player without a team; a soldier without a platoon; a tuba player without an orchestra; *a sheep without a flock*. But the most understandable is that of a child without a family. That family is the church. God does not want his children growing up in isolation from each other, so He created a spiritual family on earth for us. A Christian without a church family is an orphan. God is seeking that all should be saved – as writer Jeff Olson says, "*The good news of God's grace and new life through Jesus is for everyone. It's for you, your family, your next-door neighbor, that rude co-worker, the person waiting on your table at the restaurant, the child who's yet to be born, and for those living on the other side of the world.*"

If you're concerned this morning about what church is all about, look again at Paul's words read by Garrison a few moments ago where he says, "*all this is from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation – reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.*" [vs. 18-19] Belonging to the family of God means that reconciliation is a primary result of your relationship with each other because of your reconciliation to God in Christ. In accounting, reconciliation refers to the process of ensuring that two sets of records are in agreement. Jesus is the measure through which we are therefore reconciled to God and subsequently with each other. We are made to balance together. It's not through our outward appearance, our external behaviour, it's in our *internal integrity*; it's that our mind is *now* controlled by our knowledge of Christ's love demonstrated by his death for us. The death of Christ means those who live - live not for themselves but for the one who died for them. That's why at *Mt Brydges Baptist Church* we've a slogan which says, "***Where Christ is cherished, family is loved, and everyone is family!***"

This fall when you see geese heading south for the winter, flying along in V formation, consider that when a goose gets sick or wounded and falls out of formation, two other geese follow him to help and protect him. They stay with him until he's either able to fly, or until he dies, then they launch out to catch up with their group. Jesus gave us the church so that we could do the same for one another: support each other and stand by each other when we're down and out.

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The truth is church isn't just something you attend; it isn't an organization you join, it isn't a club to make you feel good on Saturday nights, it's *an organism* – a living thing – the body of Christ - it's something you are. When you understand what it means to not just go to church, but to be the church, to become a part of God's work as Christ's ambassador, you find what has been missing, that hole in your heart is filled (*that "God space"*) and you discover your life's true

purpose—you were made to be a member of his family, to magnify his glory, to thank God for the gift of His Son, and to serve others – through Jesus who has given you ***a new life in Christ!***

May we, like the Apostle Paul who wrote this message first to the Corinthians, feel compelled because we're convinced that Christ died for ***us*** and that therefore, we who are alive in Him should live for and in Him rather than to ourselves. If this life is drawing at your heartstrings this, take the step and make that wonderful decision to come to Christ. If you have said yes to Christ, if you've renewed your life in Him, then give us a call at 1-519-317-8659 or contact by email at [office.mbbc@xplornet.com](mailto:office.mbbc@xplornet.com) today. We would love to pray with you.

Blessings,  
Pastor Dave