

As I was walking back to my office from running errands downtown, I found myself in an oddly unfamiliar but familiar territory. I know that does not make a whole lot of sense but hang with me for a moment. It is mid-May and things are changing and feeling **new**. Confirmation and Sunday school at Bethlehem are done until the fall. OneGod Network (1G) is also done for the season. The school year is wrapping up in a couple weeks with graduation now behind us. And with all of this, my routine is now changing. It is becoming new. Along with that, fields are being planted, trees are green, and flowers are blooming. We are enjoying spring rains and warm temperatures. And I have experienced this many times in my fifty-two years of life, but this year it feels **new**, again, and I love it.

At first, I was thinking that this “new” feeling was due to the long winter we just had, but that was not it. And so, I reflected some more as I stared out my large, corner office windows. Now, as I sat in my office chair, I felt hugged by nature. The now filled-in trees seemed to hem me in, and I liked it, as the whiteness of winter felt so desolate and lonely. But this still did not answer the question of why this Minnesota-born and raised boy was feeling like a kid in a toy store, here in the Midwest, in familiar yet new territory.

But the more I thought about “newness” the more I was drawn to 2 Corinthians 5:17-19, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new** creation. The old has passed away; behold, the **new** has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.”* You see, our God is a God of **newness** and thus He gives us reminders of **newness** all the time. He does this seasonally through the **newness** of Spring. He does this through life transitions. He does this through birth and death. God does all of this, so we do not forget. You see, through Jesus Christ you are made brand **new**. Your old sinful self is buried in the grave, and up from the cleansing waters is a **new** person, freed from the curse of death. Through Jesus Christ you are given a **new** hope, hope of the resurrection to eternal life. Through the gift-given Holy Spirit, you have a **new** life, one that death cannot keep.

And so, the “**new**” I was experiencing was not necessarily **new** but God proclaiming **newness** to me in a way that was **new** and exciting. It was indeed familiar territory, but the **newness** today was a gift so I may not forget. And so,

I say to you, turn to Jesus and know the **newness** of life eternal, each and every day. To God be all glory, now and forever, Amen.