

RENEWED YOU

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Refurbs

Refurbished products are often a great deal! It's a chance to save some cash for an item in like-new condition. But you must know what it is you're getting, because there's usually only a 90-day warranty. (Or you can add an extended warranty from a company like SquareTrade.)

You yourself are damaged goods, corrupted by sin in innumerable ways, both subtle and obvious, from birth and in life. But you have been redeemed (and refurbished)! Jesus Christ has taken your place in death and judgment. A new birth is yours. A clean heart is yours. A new and everlasting life is yours. This is the Good News!

"Damaged" does not mean trash. Martha and I once purchased a used dining room table and chairs. When we went to see it, I asked the owner if it had extra leaves, so it could be extended. She said there were none when she bought it. It was well-constructed table of solid oak, so we took it as it was.

When we got it home I noticed a latch under one end that released the two halves, and when I pulled them apart I was surprised with delight to discover two extra leaves folded up under the table! They looked as if they had never been used, while the rest of the table showed some wear and tear. It needed major refinishing to bring the main table back to the finish of the unused leaves! It was a lot of work, but the result was very rewarding. The set is still in use by one of our sons.

Your damage is what the Bible calls "sin." It demands some obvious, immediate repair. Yet there are unknown treasures also to be discovered (once your heart begins to be healed and your mind renewed). These, of course, will also introduce the need for further renewal. Altogether, this is what is called revival—immediate repair and ongoing renewal.

Even if you are damaged, you are no accident in God's eyes! There is more good in you than bad, because you were created by God. However, that said, you cannot offset or overcome the bad just by behaving well. It's not a paint job you need; your engine needs an overhaul! You need a Savior.

There was a man who owned an old auto that he had lovingly restored with original paint colors and original upholstery design. It was pristine. He kept it in a garage by the house. Every Saturday, he opened the garage door and set to thoroughly washing and waxing the old vehicle.

An intrigued neighbor asked him, “Where did you find it?”

“It was my grandfather’s,” he replied.

“You should take it out for a drive!” the neighbor suggested.

“Nope,” was his only response.

“But that’s a beautiful car and it deserves to be seen.”

“S’pose so,” the man said, without conceding even a little bit.

“You’ve got to take it for a drive!”

“Nope.”

“But why not?”

“The engine’s broke.” He lifted the hood to reveal original hoses, now cracked, their clamps corroded. And the engine itself was encrusted with rust and blackened oil.

The moral of my story: A paint job and new upholstery doth not a new life make! Christianity is not mere religious veneer. If your engine is broken, no amount of social polish or service can make up for that.

The Power of His Cross

It is the supernatural power of the death of Christ on the cross that renews the human “engine.” God “beautifies the meek with salvation,” but it’s an inner beauty—a glow, a charm, a graciousness.

Consider with me today, six significant changes that Jesus’ death accomplishes for those who receive Him in faith.

- **Reconciled with God (Your Friend)**

Romans 5 (NLT)

¹⁰ *For since our friendship with God was **restored by the death of his Son** while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son.* ¹¹ *So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.*

Friendship with Jesus; friendship with God! What an amazing transition. No longer at odds with your Maker, even though you are tempted to resume your old ways and your own control. You are always welcome in His presence. Christ's death has assured that.

Colossians 1 (NLT)

¹⁹ For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, ²⁰ and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth **by means of Christ's blood on the cross.** ²¹ This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. ²² Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and **you are holy and blameless** as you stand before him without a single fault.

The mercies of God are tremendous! This reconciliation has changed the way God regards you—you're His friend, His child, His beloved. And His mercies are "new every morning" (Lamentations 3:23), fresh for the picking, for yesterday is gone and today is the first day of the rest of your life.

- **Passed from Death to Life (No Fear)**

John 5 (NLT)

²⁴ "I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will **never be condemned for their sins**, but they have already passed from death into life.

Apart from the rapture of the Church, we each have a date with physical death, but the death of a Christian is not a dead-end alley, but the threshold to the next world. When you leave friends and family on this side, you will be welcomed by friends and family on the other side.

As a Christian, spiritual death (the lasting kind) is already behind you—Jesus tasted it in your place. Divine judgment is behind you—Jesus bore the stroke on your behalf. As a result, fears are dissipated.

Hebrews 13 (NLT)

God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you."

⁶ So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper, so **I will have no fear**. What can mere people do to me?"

Your trust in God's promises is a shield against the threats of people and circumstance.

1 John 4 (NLT)

¹⁷ And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the

day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

¹⁸ *Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that **we have not fully experienced his perfect love.***

If death and judgment scare us, it is only because we have not yet fully embraced with confidence the love that God has shown us in Christ Jesus. The more you experience God's complete love through Christ, the less traction fear can find in your heart and mind. You will rest in His love.

- **Purified Your Conscience (No Guilt)**

Hebrews 9 (NLT)

¹⁴ *Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God.*

A clear conscience is a precious thing. It admits no troubling self-doubts, no paranoid suspicions. When real guilt has been covered by the shed blood of Jesus, feelings of guilt are more easily disposed of, and joy results. When there is joy, there also is worship, for worship is joy's highest expression.

If worship is difficult for you, your conscience is still cluttered. Let the sacrifice of Jesus clear your conscience (receive His forgiveness) and worship will arise.

- **Re-oriented Your Heart (Service First)**

We are selfish creatures—self-interested, self-seeking, self-protective. Unless and until Jesus comes into our hearts, that will not change significantly. But the power of His cross breaks that bondage, and sets our moral compass to “true north”—the heart of our Redeemer.

Mark 10 (NLT)

⁴⁵ *For even the Son of Man came not to be served but **to serve others** and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

Ephesians 5 (CEV)

²¹ *Honor Christ and **put others first.***

1 Peter 4 (NLT)

¹⁰ *God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to **serve one another.***

Galatians 5 (NLT)

¹³ *Don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to **serve one another in love.***

The heart that is full of the Spirit of Christ is a heart of compassion. This is more than a sympathetic feeling; compassion is the motivation to do something for someone, to meet a need. Jesus was “moved with compassion” and you will be, too. Follow that impulse, for it comes from the Holy Spirit.

- **Renewed Your Identity (In Christ)**

1 Corinthians 1 (NLT)

³⁰ *God has **united you** with Christ Jesus.*

You belong to Jesus Christ! You are wedded to Him for eternity. You are His and He is yours. His Spirit lives within you.

Ephesians 1 (NLT)

¹³ *When you believed in Christ, **he identified you as his own** by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago.*

The Spirit has come to stay, and He has come with gifts—all that you could ever need to do what God has made you for. Focus on this new identity and protect this supernatural union. He will be all that you need if you will purpose to do all that He asks.

- **Sanctified Your Personality (Imago Dei)**

You are no accident! See how God has planned your days:

Psalms 139 (ESV)

¹³ *For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.*

¹⁴ *I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.*

¹⁵ *My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.*

¹⁶ *Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, **every one of them, the days that were formed for me**, when as yet there was none of them.*

Your days were formed for you, every one of them. Nothing you have been through, nothing you had to go through, has been wasted. Christ redeemed all of your days. What the enemy meant for evil (intending to harm you), God meant for good (purposing to bless you).

He has been shaping and molding your character through the things you have suffered and the things you have lost. If you yield to the mighty hand of God and refuse to distrust Him and become bitter, He will turn your trials into blessings and strength, and drive back your enemies eventually.

No one can tear you from His hand, nothing can separate you from His love. He has formed your days in order to form His Son in you.

Mission is on God's heart.

Jesus was the first missionary to cross an open sea and enter a foreign culture with a message of hope.

2 Corinthians 5 (NET)

*¹⁸ And all these things are from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and who has given us the ministry of reconciliation. ¹⁹ In other words, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting people's trespasses against them, and **he has given us the message of reconciliation.** ²⁰ Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making His plea through us.*

Because you received Christ's message, you now have a message to share. It may be shared with words, it may be shared without words. It is a message that comes through you—who you are and whom God has shaped you to be.

You have a mission for your life. It is to be discovered as you get to know the heart of God, who made you. Even your personality is part of His plan, and part of your equipment.

Your mission is *your* mission. It is not someone else's, and no one else can accomplish it. There is no point in trying to be like someone else, because someone else is not whom God wants.

God made *you*. God chose *you*. God redeemed *you*. God gave His Spirit to *you*.

The world—unconverted, backslidden, confused, and caught in sin—is waiting for you. Waiting for you to show them a unique glimpse of Jesus Christ, the only Savior of the world.

Give them Christ!