

# The Justified Sinner

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There is another great principle that guides the life of a servant, which reveals to him all the vistas of Christian service in their complete length and width, and grants him a bold and undisturbed conscience. This principle separates his current life from his past life, especially if his past was full of sin and errors. This principle is simply that the former servant of the flesh has now become a new creation in Christ.

We may broaden our understanding of this notion extensively if we consult the practical and faith-inspired theology of St. Paul, which he gleaned by experiencing it firsthand. He says that due to Christ's work, in God's sight we are no longer what we used to be: "Old things have passed away" (2 Cor 5:17). For Christ, by His heroic love and His divine body, has fused His people corporately into His Person, as well as into His resurrected life: "The love of Christ compels us" (2 Cor 5:14). We died with Christ when He died for us, we rose with Him, and we are now risen in Him: "If One died for all, then all died" (2 Cor 5:14). Now we no longer live for ourselves or according to our old selves, "that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again" (2 Cor 5:15). Our first selves died, and in Christ we have now become new selves: "Behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor 5:17). Our initial traits are no longer reckoned, our initial sins are no longer counted, "not putting their trespasses to them" (2 Cor 5:19).

Therefore, since we are servants no longer defined by our old traits, and since we do not stand before God in our former fleshly clothing, it is essential that we come to fully know about this new appearance that has been created in us by the Spirit and in the grace and truth that are in Christ: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Cor 5:17). We are now also deemed through Christ to be justified by our heavenly Father: "We [are] the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor 5:21). For we are His handiwork, His redeemed, and the fruit of His cross. Furthermore, since we have been spiritually clothed in Him, our old selves are hidden from God's sight, and the life we now live, we no longer live for ourselves or for the sake of the flesh, but Christ Himself lives in us by the Spirit. The most important goal of our life now is not to serve ourselves but rather to serve Him who died for us and rose again by the Spirit and for this living faith.

By virtue of this life-giving truth, the Christian servant can lift his eyes from what was his previous focal point (himself) and resolutely fix his eyes, heart, and mind on Christ's face. He need never look back until he is transformed by the Spirit into a new man, with a new image, into the likeness of Christ Himself, from glory to glory! Here is the essential point: the Christian servant serves Christ, not himself; therefore, he should not drag behind him the weight of his sins and his past life, nor the weight of his present weakness. Rather, he serves by Christ's righteousness; he speaks by Christ's

righteousness; and he counsels and exhorts by Christ's righteousness. "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor 5:21).