**SELF-RENEWAL - 2
Why We Need Renewal**

**INTRODUCTION** –

Last Sunday we asked the question, “Are we at ease in Zion?” noting that we have to guard against becoming complacent in our service to God.  Yet there are many who for numerous reasons are not growing as they ought to.

Today, we want to notice some things we can do about it.  In this series of lessons we want to examine where we stand before God we need to ask, what will it REALLY take to change?

Self-renewal is needed in every aspect of life.  Whether dealing with an organization, a corporation, or even a society, there has to be mechanisms in place to encourage continued growth.    I am firmly convinced that if any entity is to thrive, it has to start with the individuals that make up that entity.  So today we are going to notice what God’s word says about this subject.

Self-Renewal is needed in the Christian’s life.  And it is also true where the Lord’s church is concerned.  The purpose of this lesson is to look at the reasons why we need renewal.

**I.  WHAT IS SELF RENEWAL?**

A.      DEFINED –

a.   Renewal – “to make new again; to restore to freshness, perfection or vigor; to give new life to; to rejuvenate; to reestablish; to recreate, to rebuild”

b.    The Bible uses this word as well
“to renew qualitatively. Therefore, a renewing or a renovation which makes a person different than in the past.” The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament © 1992
“a renewal, renovation, complete change for the better,” Thayer's Greek Lexicon  [#342]

B.       Passages that deal with renewal.

a.   **ROM. 12:2** – be transformed by the renewing of your mind

b**.   2 COR. 4:16** - “Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.”

c.   **COL. 3:10** – “and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him…”

d.    **HEB 6:6** – It is impossible, “If they fall away to renew them to repentance, since they crucify…”

e.    **EPH 4:23** – “and be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (different word meaning to renovate.  Definitions given similar to other word [#365])

C.       Self-Renewal

a.   As we speak of self-renewal, we mean: 1) Personal and inward renewal.  2) It is the ability to put measures in place to ensure that we are perpetually revitalizing ourselves.

b.   Sometimes as individuals we need renewal

1.   Look at your life.  How do you feel about your religion?  Is there a zeal for God in your life? Do you consider worship drudgery?  How easily are you distracted in your service to Him?

2.   Considering where you are now, how does it compare to where you were a year ago?  5 years ago? When you first became a Christian?

3.   Are you continually looking for ways to better serve Him and your fellow brethren?  Is Christ the center of your thoughts?

4.   This week, if you have not done it in a while, go home and take a good look at your life.  Does your Christianity just exist or is it moving along at a slow pace?  Are you in a rut or is it thriving?

c.        Sometimes churches need renewal too

1.   Churches need to examine themselves from time to time as well.  As we study the scriptures we find many churches “in a rut”.

2.   In Revelation 2 & 3 you find many churches that needed to renew their purpose.  Some needed to address sinful practices in their midst while others needed to examine their attitudes.

3.  Sadly there are many churches today that are dying.  Their doors are closing or their membership is dwindling.  They just exist with little or no prospect for the future.  That is not to say they don’t want to grow, but their efforts are weak or directed toward a select few within the congregation.

4.   As a church where are we at?  Are we just “holding our own”?  Are we “in a rut”?  Or are we thriving?

5.   If we are not thriving, we may need renewal.  And we need to develop a self-renewing spirit.

**II.  WHY IS SELF RENEWAL NEEDED?**

A.      Because we are expected to thrive

a.    We have noted that growth is certainly an expectation of every Christian.
**2 PET. 3:18** – we are to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord…
**2 PET. 1:5-8** – the Christian “graces” call for growth
**MATT. 28:19-20** - The concept of discipleship indicates constant growth

b.   But Christian growth when it is mature is not just a little growth.  It is *thriving* which means – to prosper or flourish?

                                       i. **JN. 10:10** – Jesus came so that we might have life, more abundantly

                                      ii. **2 PET. 1:8-** As we implement the “graces” we are neither barren nor unfruitful in His knowledge.  The very idea of producing fruit show abundance.
In the Parable of the Sower some produced fruit “a hundred fold”, while others produced lesser amounts.  BUT all good seed produced – **MATT. 13:8**
Vs. 11 – points to our abundant reward

c.    Consider godly examples in the Bible.  What is it that set them apart from others?  It was the abundance of godliness in their lives.  It is the fact that they lived their righteousness before God.

d.   **2 COR. 4:16** – the inward man is being renewed *day by day*.  It is not just an occasional process, but a daily thing.  Brethren that is thriving!  The point being that true Christianity is not something we turn on and off.  It is a way of life and it affects everything we do and everywhere we go.

e.    **COL. 3:16** – let the word of Christ dwell in you *richly*…

f.    **TITUS 2:14** - Consider the word zeal – we are to a people zealous for good works

B.       The dangers of not progressing – Why is self-renewal needed?

a.   **HEB. 5:12-14** - A failure to grow is rebuked.  A failure to grow in this life, while it may lead to mediocrity, is not always devastating.  There are many who are content to stay where they are at and see little or no reason to move ahead. And there is nothing wrong with that provided you are doing your best where you are at.  In fact society is geared to accept and even accommodate those with little or no drive.  But such will not always lead to a rich and full life.
**JOHN 15:2** - BUT, spiritually – a failure to progress can have eternal consequences.

b.       You might grow indifferent –

                                    i. Indifference is a big concern in Christianity.  There are other words used to describe it – complacency, apathy

                                   ii. Indifference and apathy are always a great concern within society.   They move beyond mediocrity to a level where a failure to act results in negative consequences.  When an employee is apathetic, they will not fully accomplish their job.  When society is apathetic sometimes there are serious consequences.  Sometimes people die

                                 iii.  **ZECH. 7:11** - Spiritually, Apathy is condemned – Zechariah the prophet reminded Israel why they had been carried away into captivity.  After listing some of their sins he said, “﻿*But they refused to heed, ﻿ ﻿shrugged ﻿﻿their shoulders, and ﻿ ﻿stopped ﻿their ears so that they could not hear. ﻿ Yes, they made their ﻿hearts like flint, ﻿﻿refusing to hear the law and the words which the Lord of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets. ﻿ ﻿Thus great wrath came from the Lord of hosts*.”[[1]](http://www.roseavenue.org/self-renewal1.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn1%22%20%5Co%20%22)  In other words, they were indifferent.

                                 iv. **MATT. 22:1-14** - records the parable of a marriage feast in which those who were invited “*made light of it*” (5) and in some cases they rebelled.  This caused the master to take extreme measures and invite others to the feast in their place.

                                  v.   **HEB. 2:3** – How shall we escape if we *neglect* so great a salvation? (same word as iii)

c.        Lost opportunities – Why is self-renewal needed?

                                    i. As Christians, hopefully we realize the value of a soul.  In fact, if you don’t - you need to seriously examine your life.   Every person has a soul that will die and spend eternity in one of two places – heaven or hell.

                                   ii. Sadly most will be lost?  Some who are extremely wicked and evil, but others (probably most) because of apathy and indifference.

                                 iii. ACTS 24:25 - The question is WHO’S APATHY?  Will they be lost like Felix who told Paul, “*Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.*”
1 COR. 9:6 - OR will it be because of OUR apathy – “*woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!*”

C.  Time is running out - in our lesson last week (At ease in Zion – AMOS 6:1) we noted that we only have a limited amount of time.   When we fail to see the importance of progressing, we are wasting time and precious opportunities.
How many of us say, “I am going to start doing better” and then we put THAT off for a more convenient season like Felix?
**2 COR. 5:11** - Is there a certain anxiety in our lives because we know we only have so much time?

**JUDE 23** - This anxiety can be good if it causes us to take measures NOW to “snatch them out of the fire”
BUT there is another anxiety, that is probably more common – and that is an uncomfortable feeling BECAUSE WE KNOW WE ARE NOT READY!  We know we have not done our best.

D.      So if you don’t use what you have - eventually you wither away.

a.      **JN. 15:6** - Let it be clearly understood.  These things we have been discussing will have eternal spiritual consequences. – The branch that does not produce fruit will be cast into the fire and be burned.

b.      **MATT. 25:14-30** - The unproductive servant was “cast into outer darkness.  There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

c.     **HEB. 10:36-39** - “For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:  "For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.  Now the just shall live by faith; *But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him*." But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.”

**CONCLUSION** –

The Bible is clear there is the need for renewal, indeed self-renewal in our lives as Christians.

God does not want us to merely exist as Christians but rather desires that we thrive in Him.

Do you need to renew your life to the Lord in order to be everything God intends for us to be?