



By way of DCS

Pictures left to right : (1) Frs. David Goodwin, Mike Spieth, and Tim Kline with newly confirmed members, Christ the Redeemer, Owensboro, Kentucky, 9/14/2025; (2) Reception of new members, Christ the Redeemer, 9/14/2025; (3) Frs. Josiah Jones, Bill Barto, and DSS Shelley Fleming with newly confirmed members, Holy Trinity, Chantilly, Virginia, 9/28/2025.

Sermon Excerpt: Fifteenth Trinity 2025

...Regarding the advance of the Gospel (which is indeed advancing in our diocese and parishes, by the way!), it is always difficult to witness the skepticism, resistance, and outright hostility towards Christian Faith and practice, especially of late towards our beliefs related to personhood, sexuality, gender, and marriage. That hostility was tragically evidenced in the murder of Charlie Kirk several weeks ago. **Man's twisted way of bringing renewal and salvation has always been to "eliminate/kill the bad guy"**...you know, *the bad guy*...the white, the black, the Christian, the Jew, the Arab, the immigrant, the "bad guy" who says and believes something different from what I say and believe and interferes with my agenda.

"The only good Injun is a dead Injun"...the only good white, black, Jew, Arab, etc., is a dead white, black, Jew, Arab, etc. Man in his twisted way is ever endeavoring to bring salvation, renewal, and peace by eliminating the bad guy...by killing the bad guys among them. The problem is...**we are all bad guys**—a people conceived in sin and hopelessly attached to a fallen, bickering, hostile, and ever-violent race. Hate comes too easy for us.

King David's words, "Do I not hate those who hate Thee?" must be tempered and restrained by **Jesus' words** admonishing His followers to turn the other cheek, go the second mile, give the person trying to take our shirt our coat as well, and, most radically of all—to love our enemies and pray for our persecutors. Hate comes too easy for us, far too quickly morphing into wicked desires, plans and efforts to **comfortably, and with studied justification and imagined impunity, eliminate/kill the bad guy.**

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? (Jer. 17:9). We're all bad guys, and do you know where we eliminate the bad guys? The Baptismal font...that's where we eliminate the bad guys! **There's no Plan B:** Baptismal font, then leading the Baptized/reborn from that holy place to this Salvation Table where former bad guys learn to live as the New Creation—as the new good guys they have become in Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

There's no Plan B! Amidst the darkness and hatred of our times, preaching and living the Gospel is our plan. Jesus' instruction and example is our Great Commission: baptizing, teaching the ways of Jesus and His Kingdom—with Jesus promising to be present with us and helping us all along the way.

Related to all this, St. Paul wrote in our epistle lesson this morning: *As for me, God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. Circumcision, you see, is nothing; neither is uncircumcision!* **What matters is...new creation.**

At the time, St. Paul was having troubles with the Judaizers: those Jews **confessing Jesus as the Messiah** but contradicting Paul and trying to convince St. Paul's Gentile converts to be circumcised and follow the Jewish Law system. *These pretenders are missing the point*, St. Paul insisted. *Circumcision is nothing...and for that matter, uncircumcision is nothing either! Those types of things are NOT what being the Chosen People of God is all about...these Judaizers are leading you, Gentle believers, down the wrong path...misleading you, actually, regarding what it means to be the chosen people of God.*

While the Judaizers boasted in their "Jewishness," their bloodline, their circumcision, St. Paul (circumcised the 8th day, stock of Israel, tribe of Benjamin, Hebrew of Hebrew, Pharisee of Pharisees) took an entirely different approach and wrote, "As for me, God forbid that I should boast—except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world."

For St. Paul there was no Plan B either! The Cross had come to mean a new beginning for him **and for the entire world.** The Cross is not merely a piece of jewelry to be worn

around our necks, a piece of wood to be hung on our walls, or the symbol of just another historic event that has come and gone. In St. Paul's understanding, the Cross of our Lord Jesus changed the world for all time because on that cross: (1) God's Messiah Jesus was **crucified**, (2) St. Paul and all other Christian believers were **crucified** with Him, and (3) the world itself was **crucified** with Him as well. The entirety of the world was executed on that Roman cross! For St. Paul, Jesus' **death** upon the cross embraced and overcame the death all around—swallowed it up and opened the way for Jesus' Resurrection life to pour out into the world with Creation itself even following Jesus and His disciples out of the grave to new life as well. **“What matters is new creation,”**...what matters is Jesus' followers **being** the people of God and self-consciously living as new creatures within that new creation, St. Paul insisted.

And, twenty-first century Believers, that new world/new creation with its new life, as St. Paul described it, is present with us and has been growing ever since...and **growing** especially through the lives of each generation of Born-again, Spirit-filled children of God in the earth. The life which faithful Believers live is even now leading mankind to that perfect day when Christ shall be all in all, and God's good Creation will be finally and fully set free from sin and death to share in the freedom of the children of God. *Circumcision, you see, is nothing; neither is uncircumcision! **What matters is New Creation.***

Unlike the Judaizers and unlike any others determined to **ignore** or **diminish** Jesus/the Cross/and His New Creation...**the goal of every Christian's life is seeking the Kingdom of God and living as new creatures within God's New Creation.**

St. Paul continues, “Peace and mercy on everyone who lines up by that standard—yes, peace on **God's Israel.**” In other words: *Contrary to what these Judaizers are telling you, they are NOT God's Israel! They are boasting in their flesh, in their bloodline, in their circumcision, when what matters is new creation! Peace and mercy on everyone who lines up by **that** standard.*

Which group do you want to be a part of, new Gentile believers? Narrow, shallow, self-preserving, self-seekers...ashamed of Jesus and the Gospel, pursuing their own brand of “holiness” and keeping “undesirable, uncircumcised Gentiles” out or of God's New Creation: the wide, welcoming, compassionate, Spirit-filled people of God...recipients of God's mercy and messengers of the same...Followers of Jesus...born again, following Him out of the grave, living unselfish, sacrificial lives, spreading out among the nations and inviting people of every sort to share in what Jesus and His Cross have accomplished for men and for the world? There's no comparison.

And then from our Gospel lesson: *No one can serve two masters. Otherwise, they will either hate the first and love the second, or be devoted to the first and despise the second. You can't serve God and mammon.* With His teachings, Jesus was **absolutely not** telling us to tolerate this present life by not worrying much about the here and now while dreamily looking for the life to come. Neither was He simply attacking materialism. Jesus had some things much deeper in view. **What matters is serving God and following His agenda...**new creatures within His New Creation. What matters is God's Israel serving God our heavenly Father who cares for each of us...the People of God, not trying to escape the world but rather following **Jesus, the new standard-bearer for the world...**His Lordship, His Kingdom the overarching reality and context for how we live our lives.

In spite of the dark times Jesus had already encountered and which still lay ahead, the peaceful, joyful and humbly confident life which Jesus lived shines out in these assuring, faith-building Gospel verses. **Jesus' will was to do His Father's will...**He unquestionably did not serve two masters...and the life He lived flowed from a deep and abiding communion with His heavenly Father and confident trust in His care which are at the heart of the new creation we are considering. Despite the dark times (and Jesus certainly had them) and despite the inevitable shaking and hostile even violent reactions Jesus and His Kingdom continue to provoke, God's people are to live as Jesus lived...enjoying God's world as his children, confident and at peace under His care and determined to steward the gifts He has entrusted to us.

What matters is new creation and the new way of being God's people Jesus has taught, exemplified, and enabled us to live. Look how emphatically Jesus is in assuring us that we will not be disappointed in placing the full weight of our lives upon Him...determined to ever serve Him alone. May our confidence in our Lord Jesus and gratefulness regarding our heavenly Father's care never waiver as we endeavor to be the people of God and to do His will, new creatures within His New Creation. Amen.

+*Peter*

Photo Gallery

(Thank you, faithful DCS Clergy and wives!)

9/14/2025: Christ the Redeemer



9/28/2025: Holy Trinity



We rejoice in our ever increasing clergy, deaconesses and postulants. Please continue to pray
For the Increase of the Ministry.



DSS Shelley Fleming and Postulant Kevin Gottlieb, Holy Trinity, Chantilly, Virginia



Presenter DSS Teresa Johnson pictured with the attendees of the September 2025 Christ the Redeemer Women's Retreat.