

"What's new?" It's one of those questions you often ask out of politeness rather than genuine curiosity. More often than not the reply is: "Nothing." It's a casual conversation beginner - not a heartfelt question and answer. But don't let these seemingly simple words slip past you without considering their depth. They're absolutely true, according to Scripture.

At first glance King Solomon's words in Ecclesiastes 1 might seem like the ignorant comments of an ancient man who couldn't possibly comprehend what the future would look like: **"There is nothing new under the sun."** Nothing new? Well, Solomon couldn't have foreseen the internal combustion engine, the splitting of the atom, the microchip or the Internet, right? I mean, life now is so very different than was life in Solomon's day because of all the things that are new.

But, really, how much different is human life? We eat, we work, we sleep. We have the same human passions that Solomon describes in Ecclesiastes (take a half-hour and read it this week - it certainly doesn't sound 2950 years old!). While the outward trappings of life may be very different, nothing is new in the human heart. People are the same as they were a dozen, a hundred, a thousand years ago.

That is to say, people are naturally selfish. People continually get themselves into the same trouble Solomon did by wasting time and energy on things that really don't matter. There's nothing truly new; we humans just rearrange the elements of this earth into different shapes and forms, and then foolishly ignore God by focusing on these material things.

But where we cannot make or do anything new, God can. And does. God had his prophet Isaiah write in chapter 43 of his book: **"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?"** Because of sin, human beings are doomed to spend their existence stuck in the never-ending cycle of striving after things that cannot bring lasting happiness. Digging themselves into a pit of despair and unfulfilled expectations. Drifting farther and farther away from God. This is the natural path of humans - and it has been this way since the fall into sin. But God has done something new - something truly new: he has sent salvation into this world in the person of his Son.

By Jesus' death you now have life - the promise of eternal life. And he not only frees you from the guilt of your sins but creates inside of you a new person who is free from sin. This person agrees with everything God says and works to serve him out of love, thanks and joy. This person lives alongside your old sinful self, so there is a constant struggle between right and wrong raging inside of you.

But thank God for that struggle! It is proof of the "something new" God has done for you. As you read your Bible God empowers this new person. More and more this new person wins out over your old sinful self. Again and again the Bible refers to this newness inside of you. New life. New hope. Newness that doesn't grow old because God is constantly renewing it inside of you, giving you the power to break free of old sinful habits.

So the next time someone asks you, "What's new?" you can point to yourself. You are new. God has purchased you as his own. The Spirit is working in you. Live today in the newness of life that God has given you.

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, I often feel trapped in a pattern of bad behavior that I cannot break. But where I am powerless, you are all-powerful. Reform my mind according to your Word, that my desires may match your desires. Give me strength as I look at the new life you've already given me. I trust that you will make everything work out for my good. In your name I pray, Amen.

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