

Children's Address: "I'm a New Creation in Christ"

Intro: Read the story of the very hungry caterpillar

Just like the hungry caterpillar changed into a beautiful butterfly, God wants to change us. He wants to give us a new heart- not the organ that pumps blood round our bodies. When the bible uses the word heart it means the real us. When the bible says that God wants to give us new hearts, it means he wants to really change us. God wants to change us completely so that we start to think good stuff instead of bad, he wants to change our desires so that we want to be good and not be naughty. Being changed like this is called becoming a new creation in Jesus. When we are sorry for our sins and when we ask Jesus to forgive us and be our friend, God does a miracle in our lives. He changes us completely into a new boy or girl so that we no longer want to do what we think is best but we want to do what God says is best.

What's more, not only does God give us new thoughts and new desires He also gives us a very important gift to help us live and think the way he wants. That gift is His Holy Spirit.

When you say sorry to God and mean it and ask Jesus to be your friend, God sends His Holy Spirit to come and live within you.

You don't need to be afraid of God the Holy Spirit coming to live in You. He wants to be your friend. He will always with you wherever you go. He knows how to help you to live to be more like Jesus. He will help you to know and do what pleases God.

Have you asked God to forgive you? Have you thanked Jesus for dying on the cross for your sin? Have you asked Jesus to be your friend and give you His Spirit? I hope that if you haven't that soon you will. Then you will be a new creation in Christ. Someone wants and can live a life that is beautiful for God.

My Jesus, my Saviour.

My Jesus, my Saviour,
Lord there is none like you
All of my days, I want to praise
The wonders of your mighty love
My comfort, my shelter
Tower of refuge and strength
Let every breath, all that I am
Never cease to worship you

Shout to the Lord all the earth let us sing
Power and majesty praise to the King
Mountains bow down and the seas will roar
At the sound of your name
I'll sing for joy at the work of your hands
Forever I'll love you, forever I'll stand
Nothing compares to the promise I have in you.

Over all the earth

Over all the earth You reign on high
Every mountain stream, every sunset sky
But my one request, Lord my only aim
Is that You'd reign in me again

*Lord reign in me, reign in your power
Over all my dreams, in my darkest hour
You are the Lord of all I am
So won't You reign in me again*

Over every thought, over every word
May my life reflect the beauty of the Lord
Cause You mean more to me than any earthly thing
So won't You reign in me again

*Lord reign in me, reign in your power
Over all my dreams, in my darkest hour
You are the Lord of all I am
So won't You reign in me again*

King of Kings, Majesty

King of Kings, Majesty
Lord of heaven, living in me
Gentle Saviour, closest friend
Strong deliverer beginning and end
All within me falls at your throne

Your majesty I can but bow
I lay my all before you now
In royal robes I don't deserve
I live to serve your majesty

Earth and heaven worship You
Love eternal, faithful and true
Who bought the nations, ransomed souls
Brought this sinner near to your throne
All within me cries out in praise

Your majesty I can but bow
I lay my all before you now
In royal robes I don't deserve
I live to serve your majesty

Intro:

'I'm afraid you'll have to get a new tyre.' 'But that one's only a week old' I protested. 'It doesn't matter,' came the reply. 'The slice is through the side-wall and legally you'll have to get a new one.' Reluctantly I coughed up and resigned myself to it being one of those expensive accidents that could happen to anyone. A week later when I discovered three more tyres with slices in their side-walls I was not a happy camper. Surely the man had assured me these tyres were of good quality, the man himself had been recommended to me, was it the potholes on the roads between Saintfield and Carryduff, was someone deliberately slicing my tyres?

The mystery continued for months until I showed them to my brother in law. 'Oh that's Peggy' he said, 'she's done the same to my tyres!' I couldn't believe my ears! All this time I had been wondering how the damage was occurring, knowing that I couldn't afford to keep replacing them and hoping that the slices that were appearing didn't become holes or tears. I'd blamed it on everything from the DOE to an unknown enemy. I never once stopped to think that my enemy was the family dog!!

It was such a relief to know my enemy...not that Peggy is really my enemy. She's just a playful sheepdog who likes to round up your car when you're leaving for home. Yet now that I know the source of the problem I can devise a strategy to minimise the damage...Getting someone to hold her or a loud shuu! is usually all that's needed as you drive out the gate.

Even more serious however is the damage that indwelling sin can have on our Christian lives and on other people if it is left unchecked.

Knowing our enemy in this case is essential if we are to wage a successful warfare against indwelling sin.

1 Sin adopts guerrilla tactics:

The first thing to realise about the enemy of sin is that when we become a Christian it does not go away, but adopts guerrilla tactics. Paul writes in **Romans 7 v 21**... "*So I find this law at work within me, when I want to do good, evil is right there with me.*" An illustration from warfare can help us understand how this works.

In a particular country two competing factions were fighting for control. Eventually with the help of an outside army, one faction wins the war and takes control of the country's government. However, the losing side does not stop fighting, instead they simply change their strategy to more hidden and deceptive guerrilla tactics. These tactics are so successful that the country supplying the outside help is unable to withdraw their troops.

So it is with the Christian. Satan has been defeated and the reign of sin overthrown. But our sinful natures resort to a sort of guerrilla warfare to lead us into sin. This results in the struggle between the Spirit and our sinful natures which Paul wrote

about in **Galatians 5 v17**: *“For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.”* If you and I are to wage a successful war against this enemy within it is important that we know something of its nature and tactics.

2 The seat of sin is the heart:

The first thing we need to remember about the enemy of sin is that it lies hidden and undetected in our hearts. So in **Mark 7 v21-23** Jesus is recorded as saying: *“For from within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man unclean.”* Everywhere we go, it goes with us, ready at any moment to ambush and lead us astray. The bible describes our hearts as the nerve centre of all our emotions, our will, our thoughts and our desires. What is more, the undergrowth of our hearts is too dense for us to penetrate on our own- The bible describes our hearts as unsearchable and deceitful. Jeremiah 17 v 9-10 says: *“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”* Paul says that even as believers we do not know our own hearts when in **1 Corinthians 4 v 5** he writes, *“Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men’s hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.”* Therefore, like a soldier on patrol in enemy territory, we need to be extremely wary and constantly vigilant for any stirrings of this enemy from within. Only God can expose our sin and so we need to daily ask God to search our hearts. As we ask God to search our hearts, we need to be careful to avoid three commonly used tripwires of the enemy. The first is morbid introspection. This is where we are constantly putting our souls on a plate and dissecting them. It happens when we constantly look for sin within and forget to praise and thank God and think about his great mercy and forgiveness in Christ. Satan uses this to discourage us and even force us to give up in our battle for holiness. It is a temptation that those of us who have a sensitive or introverted nature are particularly prone to. One good piece of advice to combat this pitfall is to allow God’s word to search us and expose the sin in our hearts as we read it, rather than scraping our own insides.

The second tripwire to avoid is missing the real issues in our lives. Sometimes we can be so concerned about one particular sin that we become blind to other sins, which may have greater significance because they are harming others as well as ourselves. To avoid this tripwire, we need to ask the Holy Spirit to show us those particular sins that we need to turn from as we read the bible.

The third tripwire is that of vagueness and false guilt. Satan will try to keep us self-focused with a vague feeling of general guilt which simply discourages us. This is different from the Holy Spirit’s conviction. When the Holy Spirit convicts us about sin, it will be specific and we will be able to do something specific to repent. When Satan accuses it will be vague and there will seem no way out. Distinguishing in this way between the Spirit’s conviction and Satan’s accusation is a third tripwire to avoid as we ask God to expose the enemy of sin within our hearts.

3 **The strength of sin is our desires:**

The fact that sin lies within us, often undetected, means that it is subtly able to influence the very desires of our heart. This is sin's strength, that it has such easy access to our desires. Temptation does not simply come from without; it comes primarily from within, even though it may be stimulated by something in the environment around us. James writes in **chapter 1 v 14**, "*Each of us is tempted when by our own evil desire we are dragged away and enticed.*" Consider the sins that you are particularly vulnerable to. Now think about how often you search for ways to satisfy these sins. This illustrates that the strength of sin is in our desires. This doesn't mean of course that all desires are wrong but it does mean that we need to be careful to place an importance on bible-guided reason before emotional desire. We need to be guided by the principles of God's Word rather than simply by our internal desires. We also need to be careful to try and direct our desires towards pleasing and glorifying God in all that we do rather than simply pleasing ourselves or other people. Again knowing the principles in God's Word will help us to know what to set our affections on in order to please him.

4 **The Strategy of sin is to deceive our understanding and reason.**

The strength of sin influencing our desires, gives us a clue as to sin's ultimate strategy. The ultimate strategy of sin is to deceive our bible-guided reasoning by influencing our desires. So Satan tries to draw us away from obedience to God's word through our desires. This manifests itself, when we become proud and think, 'I would never do or say that!' In **1 Corinthians 10 v 12**, Paul reminds us that those of us who think that we stand should take heed lest we fall and in **Galatians 6 v1**, he even tells us to be careful when lovingly trying to bring someone else back on track that we don't fall with them into the same temptation.

It also shows itself in the abuse of grace. This is when we focus on the mercy and love of God at the exclusion of his holiness and judgement. So we are tempted to say, 'sure I can sin just this once and then ask for forgiveness later!'

The strategy of sin to use our desires to overcome our reason is ultimately to get us to doubt God's word. As it was with Eve in the garden Satan tempts us through our desires to ask, 'Does God really say we should do this or not do that?'

Conclusion:

Praise God that in Christ Satan has been defeated and the reign of sin has been overthrown in our lives.

Yet remember that sin has not gone away, it has simply developed guerrilla tactics.

The seat of sin is in the unsearchable recesses of our hearts, therefore we must ask God daily to search our hearts and reveal our sins to us.

As we do this, we must be careful to allow God's Spirit to direct us through God's Word and to remember that true conviction is specific and will highlight something that we can do or change.

The strength of sin is in influencing our desires, therefore we must try to align our desires to God's Word.

The Strategy of sin is to influence our desires so that we choose to disobey our understanding of God's Word. Therefore we must show no mercy to the enemy of sin that dwells within and constantly be on guard knowing that our fight will only end when we get to heaven.

Call:

“The Lord reigns...He sits enthroned...Great is the Lord in Zion He is exalted over all the nations. Let them praise your great and awesome name- He is Holy. The Lord is mighty..Exalt the Lord our God and worship at His footstool. He is Holy.” (Ps 99: 1-5)

Adoration and Invitation:

Lord we want to say that we love you. You are beautiful beyond description. Too marvellous for words. Too wonderful for comprehension. There is no one like you. You alone are totally faithful and trustworthy, patient and kind, gracious and merciful, loving and good. So it's right that we come each week sing your praise, listen to your word and offer you our prayers. We simply ask that in mercy you will presence yourself among us and minister to each of us according to our needs. And may the words of our lips and the meditations of our hearts bring you great joy O Lord, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

Thanks and Confession:

Father, we take some time now in silence. Search me and know my heart, test me and know my anxious thoughts, see if there be offensive way in me and lead me in your ways everlasting...

Now hear the words of our Lord, Go in peace your sins are forgiven. Thank you Father that in Christ we have been Justified. Thank you that you have adopted us into your family. Thank you that you have given us new hearts with new desires and new motivations. Thank you for giving us so many ways by which we can stay close to you and be the people you want us to be. Thank you for putting your Spirit within us. Thank you for prayer. Thank you for the bible. Thank you for the freedom to meet together like this every Sunday. Thank you for the support we can be to each other.

Please help us never to take these things for granted but to use them all to live a life of gratitude for what you've done for us in Christ. For it's in His name that we pray. Amen.

Intercession:

We pray for all who are suffering in body, mind or in spirit. We take a few moments in silence to remember one or two individuals known to us...SILENCE. Please bring them your peace in their pain, your strength in their weakness and your comfort in their sadness.

We thank you for the great resources of healing that are available to us in Ireland. We thank you for the people in this church whom you have gifted to work in a wide variety of health care professions and in so doing bring your love to others. We lift them to you and ask that you would give them the wisdom of your Spirit to know how best to treat each individual and the physical and emotional strength to continue this work on a daily basis. Grant that through their efforts the lives of many people will be made better.

We pray for everyone whose hard-earned businesses are in danger of having to stop. We ask that you will provide new opportunities of work, and that outstanding debts may be repaid. We remember all who are facing redundancy. Give them help for each day as it comes. Enable them to keep that sense of worth that comes from knowing that they matter to you and to those who love them most.

We remember all who are having to leave these shores to find work elsewhere. Father go with them, guide them and provide for them new opportunities. Comfort their families who are reluctant to let them go and who fear for their future.

We continue to pray for our government and local counsellors. Give them wisdom to know how to generate new areas of employment in the near future. Create in many people courage and an entrepreneurial Spirit so that with fresh ideas and vision there may be a better future for everyone.

We pray for all who have been affected by the collapse of financial institutions. We remember especially all those who have invested money in the Presbyterian Mutual Society and who now face a very uncertain future.

Above all, we pray that in the midst of the global financial difficulties that people will find in you and in the support of each other the courage and resources to live in hope and even to start again.

We pray for Dun Laoighre Presbyterian Church as they interview candidates and seek your will on choosing a new minister. Guide them clearly to the person of your choice.

We pray for president Obama and his wife and daughters. Lord give them strength and courage, wisdom and understanding. Deliver them from evil and guard them from false advisors. We ask that the policies that this new government adopts will have a positive impact globally, so that in our world there may be greater justice, greater alleviation of suffering and greater peace.

Lord's Prayer...**Offering:**