

What's Gotten Into You...A New Normal!

Ephesians 4:17-24

March 10, 2019

Have you ever been asked the question, *"What's gotten into you?"*

Do you remember what you said or did that prompted a close friend or loved one to ask you, *"What's gotten into you?"*

I know that I have been asked that question quite often in my life.

Usually the question is asked of me after I have said or done something uncharacteristic, out of the ordinary, not the norm for who I normally am.

I may have done some daredevil kind of feat of courage...yeah right!

I may have said or acted in a way that is not "normal" for a pastor.

I may have reacted to a situation in a way that was hilarious!

You know what I am talking about!

I would imagine most of us here have been asked or at least been given the look that asked the question, *"What's gotten into you?"*

This is the question we will be asking ourselves during the season of Lent. Starting today and going all the way to Resurrection Sunday, we will be asking ourselves, and maybe each other, *"What's gotten into you?"*

I am prayerful that each day you will be challenged to ask yourself, *"What's gotten into me?"* The season of Lent is a time of examining our relationship with Jesus. It is a time to repent of that in our lives that is not like Jesus. It is also a time to grow in our likeness of Him.

I hope we will be asking each other, our family and friends, *"What's gotten into you?"*

What a great question to ignite some great discussion about faith and Jesus.

I believe this question, *"What's gotten into me?"* will bring us to Resurrection Sunday with a celebration of a resurrection life that has gotten into us.

I believe if we are faithful and honest in asking ourselves this question we will discover a "new normal" in how we live our lives as Christians.

A new normal!

We have all experienced a "new normal" in our lives.
Childhood to teenager to young adult to adult!
Single...married...parent...empty nest...retirement!

A new normal is life after experiencing a major change or event in our lives.

A new normal is living life after being diagnosed with a disease or experiencing a disability.

A new normal is life without a loved one around anymore.

A new normal is a new job schedule or moving to a new town.

After the recent wildfires in California the Governor called the wildfires a new normal for the citizens of California.

Do we begin to think that random shootings at schools, workplaces and malls the new normal?

Do we allow the loose morals that have crept into our culture to become the new normal for how to live our lives?

Do we accept the rise in suicides and drug overdoses to be the new normal?

Do we adopt social media as the new normal for communication?

Who or what are we giving permission to decide for us what is the "new normal" in our daily lives?

Think about who or what you allow to shape your values, lifestyle and choices in life.

Another challenge is to ask if you are stuck in the "same old... same old" rut of life. You haven't experienced a "new normal" for you in your life for years...including your faith journey with Jesus.

"What's gotten into you...a new normal?"

There is a verse that I want to become our "new normal" Lenten challenge. Let me share it with you and then encourage you to read it each day this week:

"...take on an entirely new way of life---a God-fashioned life, a life renewed from the inside and working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces his character in you." (Ephesians 4:23 Message bible)

How different would our lives be if we allowed this kind of "new normal" to get into us? If you made this your "new normal" would your family and friends be asking you, *"What's gotten into you?"*

Trust me, when you find a new normal in your life, people will ask you about it. Some will celebrate with you on your new normal. Others will question you about this new normal out of confusion or doubt. Others will think you are crazy.

I recently incorporated a new normal for me in my life. For the past few years I have been hiking on local trails. Now and then, when visiting family out of state, I would venture on a new trail. These have all been one day adventures. I have been slowly collecting gear to allow me to spend the night on the trail.

A few weekends ago I ventured out with a seasoned hiker for a two night 3 day hiking and camping adventure. It was my rookie adventure. I learned a lot. I made some rookie mistakes: like getting my bear bag rope hung up on a branch, misplacing my Vitamin I, ibuprofen; thinking I forgot to pack it, only to find it after I completely emptied my backpack when I got home.

Fortunately, there was a nice couple camping nearby who gave this shoulder and neck hurting hiker some vitamin I after a 10 mile hike with close to 40lbs in my backpack.

Some of my family and friends gave the look or comment when they found out what I was doing in having to carry all my food and sleeping gear and water and whatever else needed on my back, *"What's gotten into you?"*

Others were excited for me and couldn't wait to hear about my maiden adventure...bear skat and all!

My point is, if we take on the challenge to a new normal in Jesus we will make some mistakes. We will misplace, what we had with us all along, pain relief of long days of hiking with a heavy pack of life's issues on our backs. We will be with a seasoned One who claims he will make all things new. (Revelation 21:5)

There will be those who have known us before this new normal who will look at us and ask, *"What's gotten into you?"*
There will be others who understand this "new normal" who will be excited to hear all about it...life skat and all.

The question is, "Are you willing to put on this new normal and walk thru life?"

The Apostle Paul challenged the church folks at Ephesus to this new normal.

He called them to find this new normal in their faith, their following and living for Jesus.

He insisted that they no longer go along with the empty-headed, mindless crowd of the culture. He told them that was not the life for them. It was rotten through and through and they were to get rid of it.

This was a call to repentance. Repentance is finding that in our lives which is not of God, and to let it go and not go back after it.

He shared where our new normal is to come from:

"It's in Christ that we find out WHO we are and WHAT we are living for." (Ephesians 1:11 Message bible)

Who are you living for? **What** are you living for?

Jesus calls us to live a new normal!

It is an entirely new way of life.

It is God-fashioned.

It is renewed from the inside out.

It is to work itself out in our conduct, our actions, our day-to-day living.

It is God's character reproduced IN us.

This new normal says hello to **forgiveness** and goodbye to the sins that defined us.

This new normal says hello to a **new life in Jesus** and good bye to our old self. (II Corinthians 5:17)

The new normal says hello to **grace** and goodbye to guilt.

This new normal says hello to **trusting** and goodbye to worrying.

This new normal says hello to **thanking and praising** and good bye to whining and complaining.

This new normal celebrates Jesus strength to see me through the pains and struggles of "10 mile days!"

The new normal celebrates the truth that the story of Jesus doesn't end with Jesus.

The new normal continues the life of Jesus in and through us.

You are never too old not to live a new normal in Jesus!

You are never too young not to live a new normal in Jesus!

You are never too inexperienced to experience the new normal in Jesus!

You are never too bad to experience the new normal in Jesus!

This new normal that gets into us will challenge us to trust and believe that God's Word is the Truth we are to live our lives by.

This new normal calls us to live in community with others who have allowed this new normal to get into them.

This new normal gets us to give ourselves to others to help them discover the new normal of Jesus love in their lives.

"What's gotten into you?"

Has this new normal gotten into you?

Take these next six weeks leading up to Resurrection Sunday to pray and seek the Holy Spirit to be your guide on this new normal adventure.

Find your "new normal" as you seek Jesus in you each new day!