

The Necessity of the New Birth

Sermon delivered on August 17th, 2014

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Text: *John 3:1-7; Ephesians 2:1-10*

Why is Goodness Not Enough?

Here in John chapter three, Jesus Christ insisted that if we are going to see and enter the kingdom of God we must be born again. We must experience the new birth. We must experience a radical change in our being before we can see and enter heaven.

*3: Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.***

*5: Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.***

*7: Marvel not that I said unto thee, **Ye must be born again.***

Why do we need to be born again? Why can't we just join a certain church and be saved? Why can't we just strive to be good and be allowed to enter Heaven? Why can't we be saved by good works? Why doesn't God accept people on the basis of all that they have done? Why isn't good, good enough?

Good and valid questions

But to understand why Jesus insisted that we must be born again, we must first of all understand the nature of our problem. Anyone who seriously question of the necessity of the new birth has no comprehension of the nature of the problem.

To think that the human problem can be remedied with good works and religiosity is to show that we have no comprehension of the nature of the human problem.

I - The Nature of Human Problem

What is wrong with us that we need to be born again? What is the nature of the human problem that we need to be born again? I do not enjoy talking about the nature of human problem but I hope as we talk about this subject, one of two things would be accomplished:

That those who of us who are already born again will have a greater appreciation of our salvation.

That those who are not yet born again may be led by the grace of God to the new birth.

So, what is the nature of the human problem that we need to be born again?

How are we going to answer this question?

We are not going to psychologists, Oprah, KPBS, CNN, National Geographic, but to the Word of God.

When we want to see how we look, we look at the mirror. If we want to see how we are spiritually, we go to the Bible. The Bible is like a mirror and we need to hold it up and may we see ourselves and know ourselves deeply.

The mirror in the bathroom does not tell us everything. It only reveals the outward appearance but the Bible reveals both our inward and the outward condition. The Bible does not lie!

What does the Bible say about the nature of the human problem?

*Ephesians 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were **dead in trespasses and sins**; 2: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the **children of disobedience**: 3: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the **children of wrath**, even as others.*

1. Without the new birth we are dead in trespasses and sins

We need to be born again because we are dead in trespasses and sins. We are not dead physically. We are physically alive but spiritually dead. Though we are physically alive we are dead to spiritual things. We are by nature **alive to sin** but **dead to God**.

Ephesians 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Without the new birth we are alive to this world; alive to things of this world; alive to what this world offers; alive to passions of the flesh, desire of the body and of the mind. Alive to lusts and pleasures; alive to sports, to music, to movies, to cars, houses, vacation trips, Magic Mountain, Roller Coasters, I-pad, I-phone, food, Jamba juice, Yogurt World, etc. Alive to millions of things but dead to spiritual things, dead to God and His kingdom.

To be dead in trespasses and sins means there is no hungering for God and His righteousness. To be dead spiritually is to be resistant to God and His words.

2. Without the new birth we are children of disobedience

*Ephesians 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the **children of disobedience**:* This is the explanation why it is easier for us to disobey than to obey. The humanists and atheists have no explanation for human corruption and rebellion.

Psalms 51:5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

This doesn't mean that he was conceived and born out of wedlock. He is acknowledging that he and every human being were born a sinner.

For I was born a sinner--yes I am sinful at birth, from the moment my mother conceived me.

We did not come into this world good people and then turn bad. We did not start off good, did some bad things and developed a bad nature. No! We were born with a bad corrupt nature - selfish, self-centered and demanding.

Psalm 58:3 The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

Even inside the womb we are strangers to God. From our birth we go astray speaking lies.

Our problem is not first or primarily **what we do** but **who we are**. We are sinners not because we sin but we sin because we are sinners. We are sinners by birth and by choice. **The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart.**

3. Without the new birth we are children of wrath

*Ephesians 2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the **children of wrath**, even as others.*

Even as others – like the rest of mankind, nobody is excluded, there is no difference.

Children of wrath

We are by nature suited, fitted for wrath. We deserve the wrath and judgment of God. That means that if God judges me and cast me into the Lake of fire, He is doing what is perfectly just and appropriate thing. It is only right and just that God pours His wrath upon me because without the new birth, I am a child of wrath, suited for His holy and just anger and judgment.

*John 3:35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. 36: He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but **the wrath of God abideth on him.***

*Psalm 7:11 God judgeth the righteous, and **God is angry with the wicked every day.***

That is our condition. The question is how can I escape the just wrath of God? How can a sinner escape from the hands of an angry God?

4. Without the new birth we love darkness and hate the light

*John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and **men loved darkness rather than light**, because their deeds were evil. 20: For **every one that doeth evil hateth the light**, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.*

We are not neutral. We embrace darkness and resist spiritual light. We are very alive in all the wrong ways.

"Light is good, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun."

*John 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5: **And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.** 6: There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7: The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him*

might believe. 8: He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9: **That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.** 10: He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and **the world knew him not.** 11: He came unto his own, and **his own received him not.**

But people prefer to live in darkness, to live in caves of superstition and sin.

5. Without the new birth we cannot please God

Romans 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8: So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9: But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Paul is describing the mind apart from the Holy Spirit that is the mind of the flesh, the natural mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot. We cannot submit and we cannot please God.

You and I must be born again. **We are so resistant to God's authority that we will not and therefore cannot.** If we cannot submit to Him then we cannot please Him.

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

6. Without the new birth we are blind to the glorious Gospel

1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The problem is not the Gospel is hard to understand, the problem is that his heart hates them so much that he considers the gospel foolishness.

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

1 Corinthians 1:23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24: But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Our blindness is not blameworthy. It is a deliberate blindness.

7. Without the new birth we are blind to the glory of God

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Without the new birth we are blind to the glory of God, blind to the beauty of Christ, blind to the preciousness of Christ. Apart from the new birth there is no seeking and hungering for God.

Oh people seek God for many different reasons. Most people seek God because of what they can get from God, just like those who sought Christ after He fed them with fish and bread.

John 6:26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

II - Conclusion

I hope we see now the necessity of the new birth. I hope we see now why Jesus Christ insisted that unless a man or a woman experiences the new birth he or she cannot go to Heaven.

The Bible constantly describes the spiritual condition of human race as dead, a captivity in the darkness of death, children of disobedience, children of wrath, love darkness rather than light, blind to the glorious Gospel, and blind to the glory of God.

What is the bottom line?

The bottom line is **our problem as human beings is not just a headache**; our problem is that **we are dead**.

So when we ask, why can't we be saved by good works? Why aren't good works and our own righteousness, good enough for God? It is like asking, why isn't Tylenol enough to raise the dead? Why can't Tylenol bring the dead back to life. The human condition and problem is so serious that any spiritual Tylenol will not help. **Tylenol may cure common headache but it can never bring a dead person back to life.** Our problem as human beings is so bad that it needs a radical solution called the new birth.

C.H. Spurgeon

"When men talk of a little hell, it is because they think they have only a little sin, and believe in a little Saviour; it is all little together. But when you get a great sense of sin, you want a great Saviour, and feel that, if you do not have Him, you will fall into a great destruction, and suffer a great punishment at the hands of the great God."

I don't want to end with a negative note. I want to conclude this morning's message with a positive note.

Our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus was mainly of redemption and regeneration, and was therefore bright and hopeful. In His faithfulness and truthfulness our Lord did not hide from Nicodemus the nature of his problem, that flesh only produces flesh.

John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Flesh gives birth to flesh. Being born into this world, we all have the privations and deprivations, evil tendencies and passions of a fallen humanity.

John 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

The flesh accomplishes nothing. It does not help at all.

But here is **the hope and the only hope ...**

Ephesians 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

Some of us were dead just like the rest of the world but praise God something happened inside us that we are no longer the same. We have experienced the new birth.

Alive to the beauty of Christ, alive to the preciousness of Christ, alive to glory in the cross, alive to the wonders of heaven, alive to the preciousness of salvation, alive to the seriousness of sin, alive to the horrors of hell, alive to the glories of heaven.

*Mercy there was great, and grace was free;
Pardon there was multiplied to me;
There my burdened soul found liberty at Calvary.*

If you came this morning and enter the door of RRES MPR spiritually dead you could leave this doors spiritually alive.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9: Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10: For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Call upon Christ today and be saved!