



Have You Been Born Again?

Text: John 3: 1-8

Founding Pastor Ken Werlein

1. Pastor Ken opened his sermon by sharing a story of a business woman who struggled with guilt for working on Sunday; she feared that God was disappointed or angry with her for breaking a commandment.
 - a. How often do you identify with this woman?
 - b. What is it that makes you feel like you are disappointing God?
 - c. Where does this mentality of “I better do X, Y, and Z or God will be mad at me,” come from?

2. Read John 3:1-8.
 - a. What images, connotations, or connections does the phrase “born again” bring to mind for you?
 - b. So many of us spend our time trying to save ourselves in various ways, whereas to be born again and truly enter the kingdom of God means surrendering to Jesus’ power to save. What are ways you are most often tempted to pursue your own salvation?
 - c. It is often proud people who have the hardest time accepting the gift of salvation through faith. Why is that so? What evidence of this do you see in your own life?

3. Read Romans 3:21-26.
 - a. What does verse 23 say about the state of humanity?
 - b. How is it that we are rescued from our sin and made righteous before God?
 - c. If we are saved and justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, why do we worry about disappointing God? How can we free ourselves from this fear?

4. In John 3:8, Jesus tells Nicodemus that just like you cannot see the wind but you can feel it and observe its effects, the same is true of someone who has been born again and has the Holy Spirit residing in him/her. Read Galatians 5:16-24. Paul contrasts the life of the person who lives “in the flesh” with the person who lives “by the Spirit.” We could rename those to the person who has not been born again and the person who has been born again by the Spirit.
 - a. What are some of the observable signs that can be seen in the life of the person who has been born again?
 - b. What evidence can you see in your own life? How have you experienced victory, even if yet imperfect, over the marks of the life lived in the flesh?
 - c. How have you seen the fruit of the Spirit manifest in your life?

Challenge: Surrender is a process that must be practiced every single day with the help of the Holy Spirit. As a group, discuss tangible ways that you can practice surrendering your old self; choose at least one

method to put into practice this next week. After everyone chooses a practice of surrender, have the group break off into pairs to pray for one another. Surrender isn't easy, so encourage the pairs to commit to pray for and encourage one another throughout the week.

Prayer: Lord God, thank you for showing us the ultimate example of what surrender truly is, through the gift of Your Son, and through the surrender of His life for our sins. Father, You've called us to surrender our all, and time and time again that is our intention to do so but often we fall in to the desires of the flesh. Help us to have an obedient zealousness even when surrender might have a measurable cost. Father give us peace in Your sovereignty as we move towards submitting all to you. We believe in the name of the One who surrendered all, Amen.

STUDY DEEPER

Does the Holy Spirit Live in You?

The Holy Spirit is not an "it." The Holy Spirit is a Person. The Bible says that He is not something, He is Someone. He is God. There are three Persons in the Trinity—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is all-powerful. We read in Micah 3:8, "I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord." The Bible says that God is present everywhere. No matter where we go, He is there. "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?" (Psalm 139:7). The Holy Spirit can be in both your heart and my heart, even though we may live a thousand miles apart.

The Holy Spirit has all knowledge. The Bible says, "The Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10). It is the Holy Spirit who teaches us and takes us deeper and deeper into God's truth as we go along in our Christian life. We are to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ, but we can grow only by the help of the Holy Spirit.

The moment that we receive Christ as Savior, the Holy Spirit comes to live in our hearts. Our body becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit helps us live the Christian life. There is not a person anywhere who can be a Christian without the Holy Spirit. There is not a person who can follow Christ without the help of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit sees everything that goes on. He knows what goes on in our hearts. He knows what goes on in our minds. Nothing is hidden from Him. And in Hebrews 9:14 the Bible says that the Holy Spirit is eternal.

The Spirit is called holy. The Bible says, "Be holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16). And one of the Holy Spirit's ministries is to help make us holy. We ought to be more holy today than we were

yesterday. We should always be conforming more to the image of Jesus Christ, and it is the Holy Spirit who helps us in this growing process.

Conviction of Sin

First, the work of the Holy Spirit is to convict us of our sin. Jesus said, “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8). The Holy Spirit uses a mother’s prayers, a tragic experience, a pastor’s sermon or some other experience to convict us of sin and of our need to turn our lives over to Jesus Christ. He points to us and says, “You are a sinner. You need to repent.” We don’t like to hear that, but that is the work of the Holy Spirit. Without that work we could never have our sins forgiven. We could never be saved. We could never go to Heaven.

New Life

Second, the Holy Spirit gives new life. The Bible says that we are dead in sins and trespasses. Our spirit within us, made in the image of God, is dead toward God. Mankind needs life. All have sinned. Therefore, all are dead toward God. The Holy Spirit gives us new life in Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). You must be born again. And the Holy Spirit is the One who does the work of making you a born-again person. It is a supernatural act.

Paul said to Titus, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5). Our good works and all the good things that we have done are not going to save us. We are saved by the mercy of God, by the grace of God. It is something I didn’t earn, something I didn’t work for. It is the gift of God, the gift of salvation.

Indwelling Spirit

Third, the Holy Spirit indwells us. Many of you are spiritually dead and are completely immersed in our hedonistic culture. God says, “I will put my Spirit in you. I will come to live in you.” Your body becomes the temple where God dwells by His Holy Spirit.

That is the reason we should never take anything unclean into our bodies. That is the reason we should discipline our bodies. God loves your body. He doesn’t want it polluted by fleshly lusts and the things to which you give yourself. The Bible says, “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16).

Power to Serve Christ

Fourth, the Holy Spirit gives you power to serve Christ. “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me” (Acts 1:8). I couldn’t do the work I am doing without the power of the Holy Spirit. I am a communicator of God’s message. He called me and gave me that gift. What counts is the message that—according to Scripture—Christ died for

our sins, He rose again, He is coming back again and He is ready to come into your heart by the Holy Spirit and make you a new person. That is the Gospel.

The Holy Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit, which is “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23). There are people whom you may not be able to love easily. But the Holy Spirit will give you the power to love them. Love is the greatest evidence that you know Christ. The Holy Spirit can love through you.

There are times I feel that I don’t have joy, and I get on my knees and say, “Lord, where is the fruit of joy in my life?” I find that the joy is there, down deep. It is a deep river. Whatever the circumstances, there is a river of joy.

The peace that passes understanding comes from the Holy Spirit. Whatever the circumstances, I have peace in my heart. I know where I am going, I know where I have been. And I know why I am here—by the Holy Spirit.

Do you know Christ? The Holy Spirit comes to magnify, to glorify and to exalt the Son. Jesus said the Holy Spirit shall not speak of Himself. He comes to magnify the Lord Jesus Christ. He comes to glorify Jesus Christ (John 16:13-14). And the Holy Spirit is pleased when you glorify Christ in your life.

It is the Holy Spirit who draws you to Christ. It is the Holy Spirit who convicts you of your need of Christ. There is only one way of salvation, and that is Christ. It is a dangerous thing to resist the Spirit. “Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?” (Hebrews 10:28–29).

I am asking you to give in to the call of the Holy Spirit. I am asking you to say, “I want Christ in my life, to be my Lord and my Savior.” I know thousands of churchgoers who need to come to Christ, led by the Holy Spirit. You need to say, “I want Christ in my heart.” Say, “I want to know I am going to Heaven. I want my sins forgiven. I want to start a new life.”

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