

The Ultimate Miracle - Regeneration

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[0:00] This morning, the greatest miracle of all.! What is the greatest miracle of all time?! Amos and John 3, you must be born again to see the kingdom of God.

I'm telling you of regeneration. When we trust Christ, we're made brand new. Everything changes. And this is the scripture that I'd like to hinge it on.

2 Corinthians 5, verse 17, it says, Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he's a new creature. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new.

Here is the Christian life. Here is the new birth. It all starts there. The regenerate man has forever ceased to be the man he was.

His old life is over, and a new life has begun. He's a new creature in Christ. Think of it. Whereas a man was dead to God as a new creature, he's alive to God.

[1:25] Whereas a man had no relationship with God, as a new creature, he has relationship with God. Whereas a man was not sure about God, as a new creature, he is absolutely certain.

Whereas a man never fellowshiped and communed with God, now he has that privilege, day by day, of fellowship, of communing with God. Whereas a man was living in sin and immorality, as a new creature now, he has righteousness and holiness.

Whereas a man had to face death, the death of his sin, now those wages have been paid, he has never to die. Because he knows Christ, the resurrection and the life.

Whereas a man was doomed to judgment and eternal loss and damnation, as a new creature, he's destined to heaven's glory, the eternal presence of God forever.

Think of it as a new creature. When we're born again, everything changes. That's conversion.

People try hard these days to get a new body. They've got TV shows about it, don't they?

[2:29] Where you can invest in all kinds of treatments, you can get all kinds of, I don't know what it is, Botox, or different things they can do to your face to kind of give it a new look.

And people try really hard, they work hard for that. They try to get that new look to improve themselves, to get the new you. There's this wanting, this extreme makeover.

Some really, they're very intensely wanting that, to get that new facelift, or whatever it be. But what we really need is not some kind of a doing up job.

It's a new life that we need, isn't it? It's a new life. I know some of you don't need to have a new look, because you already look stunning. But, you know, one day this outwards is going to perish, isn't it?

I know, every time I look in the mirror I notice. But we don't need an extreme makeover, we need a new life, amen? We need a new life, a fresh start. Only God can truly do that, can't he?

[3:27] That new beginning, that fresh start in life, and it's revolutionary. It's a transformation. It tells us about this in Romans 12, for example. Romans 12, verse 2, And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed, transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Notice this word transformed, and then this other scripture, 2 Corinthians 3, verse 18, But we all with an open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

So this word transformed, this word changed, is the same word. In the Greek, the Greek word is where we get our English word metamorphosis from.

Metamorphosis. Here's a dictionary definition of this word. What does the dictionary tell us about metamorphosis? It's a change of the form or nature of a thing or person into a completely different

one.

We could look at, for example, the change of a butterfly. The caterpillar has been transformed into a butterfly, and that caterpillar, what was a caterpillar, will never crawl again.

[4:57] Now it flies. It's a new creature. We could think likewise of, for example, a tadpole into a frog. It's a metamorphosis. It's a complete change from one creature to another.

And that's the picture for us of the new believer, that all transforming power of the gospel. All things are become new. So the Bible tells us about a newness of life, and the word of God tells us of these things.

And when you think about it, behold, all things are become new. What does that mean? You could reckon all kinds of things. For example, a new heart, a new spirit.

God transforms the very heart of the believer. He gives us a new identity, a new mindset, a new way of thinking, a new allegiance, a new desire to please God, a new hope, a new citizenship, a new affection, a new purpose, a new assignment, a new power, a new community, a new family, a new way of living, a new way of walking, a new direction, a new way to walk, a new destiny, a new dimension, a new lifestyle.

It's like we've become a whole brand new person, changed into the same image. The Bible talks about a new name in Revelation 2.17.

[6:18] You hear about Abraham becomes Abraham. Sarai becomes Sarah. Jacob becomes Israel. Simon becomes Peter.

Saul becomes Paul. It's interesting how in some church traditions, a person gets a new name at baptism. So on 1st of September, you get your new name, some of you people.

No, we're not into that tradition, but it's a thought, isn't it? That's a picture of the new name. And the new name is a picture of a new beginning, of the new creation. Now, I've got to tell you this morning, this happened to me.

As a child, I had a different name. You know, I had a criminal father had to change his... No, my father had the idea to change the family surname. All right, he didn't like spelling it because it was a funny name.

So he went to the phone book and he flipped through the pages and he saw, Oh, Craig, that's an easy name. So he said, I will call ourselves Craig. So that's how I got my new name. Yeah, just about, is that true?

[7:21] Yeah, there you go. You see my dad about it. I've had a new name, a new name. I'm no longer Andrew David Hoth. How do you spell that? Yeah, that's the problem.

But so the new name has happened to me. I was born with a different surname than what I have now. It was changed by D-Pol. I was also born a citizen of England.

Then I became a citizen of Australia. My citizenship changed. So now I'm a dinky-dye, true blue Aussie. I'm a fair dinkum Aussie because my citizenship changed, all right?

And that's the kind of picture for the believer that that can happen, that dramatic change spiritually can happen. There are changes that happen and it starts the moment that we get saved.

And we have a new enemy as well. Thank God we've got new armour to wear as well. Amen?

We've got some new armour. All things, all things have become new. Biblical conversion means this change, this shift of the heart, the mind, the soul.

[8:23] We have a whole new identity in Christ. And it's pretty revolutionary when you think about it, what the Bible tells us about this regeneration. We see Colossians 3, verse 3, for you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.

So by faith we can die. Die to sin, self and the world, such that the old Andrew Craig is dead and buried. At salvation there's a sense where we die to our old way of life.

By faith we are changed. Our old self, with its sinful nature, it dies. It's like a dead man. Just kick him and he won't even feel it. He's gone.

He's not alive anymore. Now the new man is alive. A change happens with who it is that we identify with. We become more like him. More like our Lord.

Our primary identity is Christ. It's a whole new experience of coming to know God. Of course the practicality is that sometimes we slip and slide a bit, but God helping us will have that life that is hid

with Christ in God, that the old man won't come back to life again.

[9:32] Philippians 3, verse 10, Paul testifies that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings being made conformable unto his death.

Paul testifies that we're in union with Christ, that we have this power, that Christ is in us. We've got this deeper maturity, this fellowship. And it's a fellowship. Now we don't like this one so much, but the fellowship of his sufferings is included.

We can know him in that relationship with God, that our lives can reflect the glory of God. Think of it, brother, sister today, of your new identity in Christ. The Bible tells us we can have a new identity. Now they do that, don't they, when someone's on a witness program or a protection program. They change their identity. They change their name. They change their address. They've got to become a different person from who they used to be.

And think of it spiritually so, that we should be so conformed to him, made alike to him, that we're different from what we used to be.

[10:38] And the old lost sinner that we were is become as dead. And I know some of you testified that to me. Hey, pastor, you don't know what I was like. The old me, you wouldn't want to know.

All right? But I know that person is no longer here. It's a new born again man. Amen. A new born again woman. It's not the same as they used to be. You know, there's a Sunday school song, I'll never be the same again.

Since I found the Lord, I am not the same. I'm not the same anymore. When we get saved, something happens on the inside of us. And we may do life spiritually.

Paul tells us this, Galatians 2.20, So when we get saved, sin no longer defines me.

Jesus does. I'm a new creature. Can you say that? I'm a new creation. I'm a new creation. I'm a brand new man. Like a new ownership for a business happens too.

[11:48] We're under new management. We can put the sign up, under new management. We've got a new boss now. We've got a new owner. And we get a whole new life focus, don't we, when we're saved? A new aim.

The old is gone. Gone. And there's a forgetting of those things. They no longer hold sway over us. We let go of what is behind us. And we stretch forward.

As Paul talks further, Philippians of this running, this race, as we stretch forward to this goal ahead, this all-consuming goal, this prize, Philippians 3.13, Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus.

Paul says, forgetting those things. Paul had a lot of things to forget. He had a lot of things to forget, didn't he? As he stood there, carrying the can, carrying the items for those who were busy stoning Stephen, the deacons of death.

Paul was there, minding things, as the ones who'd left their coats and trappings with him, were picking up stones, and hurling them, to kill Stephen, to take his life.

[13:11] Paul had some things to forget. Forgetting those things.

Forgetting the man I used to be. I'm not that man anymore. And this one thing becomes the be-all and end-all, doesn't it, of our life, to pursue Christ, to have that focus, that determination, to reach forth, to look to that prize, that final line, that finishing line, by faith.

And we have a high calling. Believers, think of it. You have been identified now as citizens of heaven. That's the sense of it here in Philippians 3, verse 20.

For our conversation, you could put it, our citizenship is in heaven. From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. We're identified now as heavenly citizens.

We've got a heavenly identity and focus. All things have become new. A new citizenship. So we're not really Australians anymore. We can have dual citizenship.

We've got a new citizenship. We made a citizen of heaven. Think of it, conversion. It's an escape story, isn't it? Where we were loosed from the shackles of our lost condition, made free men.

[14:25] Made free, set free. The Bible tells us how we share in the divine nature. And we reflect his holiness, his godliness. Peter writes,

2 Peter 1, verse 3, According to us, his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.

It says, According to his divine power. His divine power hath given us all things, everything that we really need. It says, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

So it talks about his divine power has given to us his great promises and his divine nature. Think of that, that you can have the divine nature, that your nature can be more like his nature.

By his divine power, his promises, we make partakers of his divine nature. That's astonishing, isn't it, really, that you could actually have the nature of Christ.

Where is your allegiance today? Where will we stand? Will we be like the ones that stood before Joshua, when he says, Choose you this day, whom you will serve? And he says, But as for me and my house, where will serve the Lord?

[15:44] And it's a choice we make, isn't it, to trust him. As Joshua challenged the Israelites to make a definitive choice, who are you going to serve?

The false gods of the land or the true God? The Lord. Moses also called the people to take sides. At Exodus 32, as there was this disquiet, this trouble in the camp, and he says, Look, you're going to have to cross the line.

Who's on the Lord's side? You're going to cross the line, or you're going to stay on that side. Who's on the Lord's side? And they gathered unto him. Who is on the Lord's side?

Take sides. And then another similar thought, in Elijah's time, as the test came, and he says, How long hold ye between two opinions?

How long are you going to sit on the fence for? How long are you going to have a two-way bet? How long are you going to flip and flop? How long are you going to have this wishy-washiness between two opinions?

[16:56] If the Lord be God, then follow him. If Baal, then follow him. Make your mind up. And there's that need to make a decision. The challenge is clear.

Of a decisive commitment. And friends, as we trust Christ, there's a decisive change. We say, You are not your own. It tells us in 1 Corinthians 6.20, For ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

You're bought with a price, the redemption price. Ask yourself, Who am I? What defines me? Once you get saved, your past doesn't have to define your future.

Now, some people, they do get saved, but they're always going back to the baggage of who I used to be, where I used to sit, who I used to hang with, what I used to be like.

That man's gone. You're bought with a price. You're no longer under that domination, under that management. You're under new management. He has secured your purchase price.

[18:00] He has paid for you in full. And your past doesn't define you anymore. That was somebody else. When we get saved, we become a brand new man.

There's the truth of it. And Ephesians 4.24 tells us, Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

People will look at you and say, He's not the same anymore. It's an extreme makeover. He's not the same man anymore. There's something deeper, deeper than an extreme makeover. This is not a superficial change of skin.

This is a whole new life. It's a revival. It's a total rebuild. It's like, you see, at times in real estate, these days, someone buys a house, and the seller might spend a lot of time filling the cracks and putting the paint on and renewing this or that.

But when some people buy a house, the new owner doesn't want to patch up and repaint. They want to get the wrecking ball and the bobcat and build something completely different.

[19:07] That's the picture of salvation, isn't it? It's not. God doesn't work on some of the faults and failings and gives you just a little touch-up job and try to make the best of it.

No, that old life is over and you're a recreation. You're a new creation. He recreates you. I'm not who I used to be. Can you testify that?

Can you say that? I have a testimony. I've been washed by the blood of the Lamb. I've been transformed and renewed in the spirit of my mind. I've put on the new man, which after God is recreated in righteousness and true holiness.

Once I was blind, now I can see. Once I was lost, now I'm found. Every aspect of my life is brand new. That can be your testimony to be radically changed, not who you used to be.

And you can cry out, Jesus changed my life. And I know that I've heard some of you tell me your stories and I know it's true. You're not just saying it. And we can know the reality of being made a new creature.

[20:12] Behold, all things are become new. What a wonder. That's the greatest miracle, isn't it? The greatest miracle. He can change our life forever. And we're not just talking about some kind of hyped up, kind of pretense or some American type of, no offence to any American folk, but that sense where that kind of, that kind of crass type of way that some people can have and Aussies can be just as bad.

The car salesman, or I know there's a few salesmen in our midst here, no offence to any salesmen, but those kind of slick salesman type people or the slick kind of preachers that will make a pretense of it.

Now this is real. This is real. Amen. It's a real change. Behold, he makes all things new. Amen. He changes our lives forever.

We can have a character like his. And one day we're going to awake with his likeness. Think of that. And friends, his likeness can be formed in you. His intent is that we'll be conformed to his image. It's amazing. There's so many scriptures that tell us of such a change. It tells us Romans 8, 29 of the saved. He did foreknow. He also did predestine us to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

[21:33] God can change you is the point. And as we said before, at the cross, he knew, he foreknew those that would trust him. God can change you. If you're a sinner, God can change you.

If you have sinful habits, God can change you. If you're dishonest, God can change you. If you're a liar, God can change you. If you're a drunkard, God can change you. If you're filled with hate, God can change you.

If you're filled with bitterness, God can change you. If you're filled with jealousy and envy, God can change you. If you cannot forgive someone, God can change you. If you're addicted in any way, God can change you.

Be willing to change. Trust God to change you from the inside out. Set your heart, your mind to trust him, to do his work. that miracle in you that you can change and it says you place your trust in christ and that changing might take some time to happen it can be a process but there's a change that happens there's a change that happens that the old is gone and the new has come as you trust in the life-changing lord he changes your life amen and paul's life think of it was completely changed he says old things are passed away i'm not that man that i was that that man that was trusting in the works of the lord that was hateful to christ and the people of god and the church of god as he dragged people to their death and suffering he says the old things are passed away from me behold all things i'll become new and if you've trusted christ then by faith you are a brand new person now with a brand new identity it doesn't matter that what you were in the past think of it you could have been a failure a drunkard a waster a whoremonger a fornicator an adulterer a thief a drug addict but now you're in christ you're in christ and you're a saint of god it's wonderful to think of what god can do with the most faulty of his creations that there's no one outside of the scope of his hand 1 corinthians 6 verse 9 here's the bad news know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of god be not deceived neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor effeminate nor abusers of themselves with mankind nor thieves nor covetous nor drunkards nor revilers nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of god that's the bad news if you're unrighteous you shall not inherit the kingdom of god but here's the good news and such were some of you such were some of you amen some of me some of us some of you but you are washed but you are sanctified but you are justified in the name of the lord jesus and by the spirit of our god such were some of you but now you've been washed you've been made holy you've been set free you've been declared saved

forgiven by the name of jesus by the spirit of our god and it tells us that of course it's in the context telling of israel he says i will be their god and they shall be my people they shall all know me saith the lord for i will forgive their iniquity and i'll remember their sin no more isn't that wonderful to think that god would determine to no longer remember your sin god would so forgive you that it's all gone he doesn't have some record book where he says oh i know what this man used to get up to what this woman used to get up to yeah i know their history i know their track record and it's dismal it's pathetic and they should deserve nothing but the fires of hell yeah but no he's forgiven and he's forgotten he's not remembering our sin any longer i'm not who i used to be is that your testimony today that i'm not who i used to be and i know some of you told me that i'm looking forward on this one of our number wants to do a testimony video and not glorifying the man that he was but to to show in contrast of who he was and now who he is to tell the story of the man that he was as a hell-bound sinner with a hopeless future and god transformed him into a new creature a new creation i'm looking forward to hearing that story more fully and you can say i'm not who i used to be now i'm the salt of the earth now i'm heaven bound now i'm a light shining in the darkness now i'm a vessel filled with his spirit now i'm a witness of his testimony in my life i'm a servant to his righteousness i'm a temple and the dwelling place of god i'm one of god's living stones being built up a spiritual house i'm a member of a chosen race a royal priesthood i'm a new person i'm a new man my past is forgiven and that's not to say hey i've turned over a new leaf there's cults out there there's religions out there that would say yeah you turn over a new leaf confess this creed join this church stop your drinking stop your smoking stop this stop that reform yourself turn over a new leaf and try really hard to be good that's not what we're talking about this morning that's not any effort of your own god helping you you'll make changes that are good for you but it's not any changing of yourself it's his changing of you it's his work in you it's his spirit's work it's his recreation it's not some patch-up job that you do for yourself otherwise we know better than the cults or any other false religions but when jesus changes you my past is forgiven and i'm not who i used to be i've been changed what used to be true of me there's many scriptures that tell of such a thing that i'm a sinner i'm no good i'm evil i'm wicked i'm clothed in filthy rags i'm ungodly i'm lost i'm without hope without god i'm a child of the devil i'm god's enemy i'm under god's wrath i'm consigned to hell for eternity but now and this is this can be true for you if it's if it's not true already i'm a born again man i'm i'm a blood washed regenerated man i'm a sanctified man i'm a child of god i've received him and so i've become a child of god i'm a friend of god i'm his possession i know peace with god that can be your testimony i know that i have i know that i am his i'm saved forever saved i've been changed i've got a new identity think of it friends that can be true for you you don't have to stay on this side lost you can be on this side saved and it's just that looking unto him it's trusting him it's that repensing that mind change that mind shift that turning away from who we were to who we can be in christ to be his saved his blood saved people forgiven for eternity made new creations and there's lots of questions we can ask this one preacher that kind of made a list that is a helpful list to think of how we can be more minded this way to be more minded questions you can ask yourself each day of how's that walk going how's that relationship going with god and it's called self-examination questions for spiritual people this is some missionary john fletcher self-examination questions for spiritual people and he put it out there as some questions we could ask ourselves every day did i awake spiritual and was i watchful in keeping my mind from wandering this morning have i this day got nearer to god in times of prayer or have i given way to a lazy idle spirit has my faith been weakened by unwatchfulness or quickened made alive by diligence this day have i this day walked by faith have i denied myself unkind words and thoughts have i delighted

[30:14] myself in seeing others preferred before me have i made the most of my precious time as far as i had light strength and opportunity have i kept the issues of my heart so as to profit what have i done this day for the souls of god's people have i laid out anything to please myself when i might have saved the money for the cause of god have i governed my tongue this day remembering that in a multitude of words they wanteth no sin in how many instances have i denied myself does my life and my conversation adorn the gospel of jesus christ now we could all think and question ourselves how that self-examination how's my walk paul talks about dying daily that would seem to reflect that the old man was still a problem that he had to die daily it's almost yeah we we're born again we

made a new creature but there is still that shadow of the old self that we've got to keep dying daily crucify the flesh but thank god we can know a daily revival a daily refreshing just a couple of scriptures to close 2 corinthians 4 16 paul talks about how he says we faint not but though our outward man perish yet the inward man is renewed day by day so the outward man as i said before there's that reality that we're all getting older grayer frailer weaker weaker the outward man is perishing but thank god the inward man the inward man is going to be renewed day by day by day so your faith man the faith that your heart your soul your spirit the inward man that spiritual man that is the real you can know a freshness a renewing day by day by day and then it tells us a last one isaiah 40 31 tells us but they that wait upon the lord shall renew renew their strength they shall mount up with wings as eagles they shall run and not be weary and they shall walk and not faint the sense of renewing their strength that this revival on the inside of you this new man this new creation can be being renewed can be being renewed and you'll keep that freshness that that fresh walk with god that fresh relationship with god that day by day you'll know i'm a child of god his grace is sufficient and when we slip and fail and falter and there's some stumbling here and there you shall renew your strength you shall renew your strength as you wait upon the lord you shall mount up with wings above all those circumstances above all your failings and your human inclinations that you can have a strength to run that race to walk and not faint to know that you're more than a conqueror because the reality is we're still living in a fallen planet and there's still that battle that struggle paul talks about in romans 7 the flesh and the spirit there's still that striving and we can all say hey pray for me i've got this weakness this fault this lack we all have those battles that's the reality while we're still in this vessel of flesh but god helping you you can wait upon the lord you can renew your strength you can have that faith that's refreshing that's being renewed the inward man is being renewed day by day god will help you to fight those battles he'll help you to wear that armor it tells us that if any man be in christ is a new creature old things are passed away behold all things all things have become new let us pray lord we pray that each one might have that grace that you would so bless us that we can see your work for us at the cross lord that each one can know that at the cross our sin was paid lord if we can but

receive it that gift of your salvation we pray that each one might have that trust today and lord help us to walk in that we ask lord that we would not only have that new birth to be born again people to be those new creatures by faith in christ but that we'll renew that faith that faith will be refreshed we'll keep that fresh walk with you day by day we'll know that fresh oil that fresh anointing that fresh relationship and where we falter will refresh it lord you'll help us to as it were put the oil in the lamp again when we've missed something lord that you'll help us to keep that fresh walk with you help us lord to be vessels of honor we pray lord that each one here today might know what it is to say i'm not that person i used to be anymore i've been converted and lord not by any credit of our own not by any boasting of our own that we can make but entirely of your precious grace that we can have like precious faith as the heroes of the faith lord god help us pray if there's any here present and they might say preacher i'm not sure that i'm saved that you that that person out to another christian this morning whether to me or someone else and say i want to know for sure that i'm born again and they can simply trust you to be their savior today lord for that eternal change to happen on the inside of them that they can be that brand new man that brand new woman by faith we thank you lord for all these things in jesus name