

The Essential of Rebirth

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[0 : 0 0] Let's look together this evening at words you'll find in John 3, John chapter 3, particularly verse 7, and the verses related to that immediately around it in the passage.

Do not marvel that I said to you, you must be born again. We're going to do a little series of studies, which would take more than six or seven studies, something like that.

We anticipate, maybe more, maybe less. But studies on what we're going to call the essentials. And by the essentials I mean the things in the Bible that are set before us as indispensable for our proper relation with God, for our possession of salvation, for our being the kind of people practically in the world that we should be, that God requires that we be.

In other words, they're personal essentials, essentials that we need to know personally and have in practice personally if we indeed are going to be God's people in every sense in which the word of God speaks about it.

Tonight we're beginning with one of them, the essential of being born again. Some of these in the Bible, we'll see, have the word must involved in the way the Bible speaks of them, just like here.

[1 : 2 9] You must be born again. Others that we're going to look at, for example, are the necessity or the essential of following Jesus.

The way Jesus himself also says how essential it is that we be ready for his coming. How essential it is that God's people love one another.

How essential it is that in living the Christian life, the people of God must reach out with the gospel, must be of a mind to serve Christ in this world.

These are all essentials. They're not things which the Bible sets before us as optional. They are things which characterize a Christian life or a Christian church.

We're going to not just look at this from an individual perspective, but also in terms of what God's people need to be together, what we should be as a church, what we should be in the world as God has set us in the world.

[2 : 3 2] So we're looking at this one tonight, which is one of the primary essentials in the Bible, that we must be born again. The essential of rebirth.

And so much is it an essential that, in fact, in many ways, it characterizes or marks whether or not we are being true to the gospel. Because if we were to preach the gospel in a way that left out this matter of being born again and the need to be born again and the essential and being born again as an essential, then we would not be true to the gospel.

We would be leaving out one of the really fundamental core emphases of the gospel and something which we all find in our own natural state, till God changes our heart, to be something that we resist.

Because as we see, to be born again means to have a transformation of life, a transformation of mind, of outlook, of practice, so that you become, in effect, what the Bible calls a new creation.

Well, what makes rebirth an essential? What is it in this passage itself that teaches us about why we must consider rebirth to be absolutely essential?

[3 : 54] Why is it placed amongst that category of important elements in the Bible that we're calling essentials? Well, we have to see it in terms of our need.

And one of the great features of this wonderful interview between Jesus and Nicodemus, as it is led by Jesus, as Jesus brings Nicodemus onwards in the conversation, more and more into his need, more and more into seeing what his need is about.

It's there that you find this matter of being born again, and born by the Spirit of God to be sent out by the Lord. So it's essential in the sense that it is something that is connected with our need as sinners, with our need as we are of salvation and acceptance and everything else that we find God providing for us in Christ.

But there are two things in the passage where we can narrow that down and see our need described in terms of these two things. Because, as you see, first of all there in verse 3, Jesus answered him and said, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

It is an essential because without it we cannot see the kingdom of God. We have an inability to see God's kingdom.

[5 : 23] Now, to see here is not something merely physical or even primarily physical. To see, in the sense in which it's used in that verse, really brings us to the whole matter of our spiritual understanding.

To see in a spiritual sense, to see with discernment, to see with an understanding that accepts things, as God describes them. To see in the sense that you're able to perceive, that you're able to actually see with your soul, if you like, things which are above and beyond the physical.

Unless one is born again, says Jesus, he cannot see the kingdom of God. He cannot have an appreciation of the kingdom of God. He cannot actually get to grips with the various parts of the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God being the rule of God, the right of God to rule. The way that God himself is king above all his creation. But when you bring it down to the individual that we all are, as Nicodemus here is facing Jesus.

Yes, Jesus is using the plural, you must be born again. You all must be born again. But you bring it down nevertheless to the individual and you face this great fact.

[6 : 42] That as individuals, that in each person's case, we need to be born again. And our rebirth is essential because without it we cannot see the kingdom of God.

Our inability is part of our fallen condition. Our inability to really see things as they are. This is different to just having a familiarity with them in the gospel as the gospel is proclaimed.

Or a familiarity with them as you read the Bible. Everybody who has come to be born again will acknowledge that there is another level altogether in this seeing of the kingdom of God.

Once that change has come about of being reborn, then you are actually seeing in a way that really exceeds anything that you have known before.

Anything on the physical level itself. And you can say that John, in fact, as much as anyone in the Bible's writers, illustrates that point for us so well.

[7 : 49] When you move ahead to chapter 9, for example. And chapter 9 is largely taken up with this man who was blind, who was born blind, and who Jesus healed of his blindness.

And then actually comes to meet with Jesus after that. And is thrown out by the Pharisees and by the rulers because, of course, they don't accept Jesus. They don't want anything that Jesus has done to be acknowledged as an act of God.

And so they throw out this poor man. And Jesus finds him. And it's a wonderful story the way Jesus takes him into this understanding of who Jesus himself is. And actually, the whole thing spiritualized, but spiritually in its meaning, you can say here is somebody whose eyes have been opened physically, but his eyes are opened also spiritually.

Because as Jesus comes to deal with him, the man says that, well, it's amazing to those that are accusing him. One of the great statements there is that the one thing that I do know about this man is that whereas I was blind, now I see.

And he has done it. And as Jesus meets him, the question he puts to him is, do you know the Son of Man? And he answers, well, who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?

[9 : 14] He says, what Jesus said to him was, do you believe in the Son of Man? Verse 35. He answered, who is he, sir, that I may believe in him? And Jesus said to him, you have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.

And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. You see, that's the climax of that whole passage that deals with this blind man. Jesus opens his eyes.

He then faces opposition because Jesus has done this. And because he's prepared to confess openly that this is the Jesus, this Jesus has done this for him. And then as Jesus deals with him, he deals with him in a way that draws him into an understanding.

In other words, he now sees Jesus, not just physically, but he sees Jesus as the Son of Man, as the Savior, as the one that God sent. And he worshipped him.

He has taken him to another level of understanding, of spiritual sight. Why do we need to be born again? Because until we are born again, we cannot see the kingdom of God.

[10 : 21] We don't understand the kingdom of God. We don't appreciate the kingdom of God. We don't want to really belong to the kingdom of God. Not meaningfully. Not in a way that will accept fully the fact of God being king over all of our lives, over our thoughts, over our motives, over all that we actually understand.

Over everything ourselves that we would think best. But we put them aside because the king says otherwise. That only comes through being born again.

And in fact, in this interview with Nicodemus, you find it illustrated there as well. He came, we read there in verse 2, to Jesus by night.

That was true literally. And it may well be that he came because he was a ruler of the Jews. He was one of the Sanhedrin, the ruling party of the Jews.

He belonged to that Jewish council that ruled over all of these spiritual things especially. And he came to Jesus by night. He was convinced there was something about this Jesus that made him different.

[11 : 29] We know, he says, that you are a teacher come from God. For no one can do these things, these signs, these miracles that you do, unless God is with him. He has an interest.

He has his interest and he has his curiosity aroused. He has an interest to pursue who this Jesus is. He doesn't know really who he is other than he is known as Jesus. And he does all of these miracles.

But who is he really? He wants to find out more. And Jesus then confronts him with this great point. You can't know more. You can't get into an appreciation of who I really am unless you are born again.

You cannot see the kingdom of God. And you see, when he came to him by night, that's John's way of telling us something important spiritually. He came in darkness.

It's not just the darkness of the night. It's the darkness of his soul. Because John is the gospel writer who deals so much with light and with darkness as spiritual entities or illustrations of the spiritual world.

- [12 : 34] And in this instance, John is really making a point to us spiritually. Nicodemus came in spiritual darkness. Nicodemus came with the darkness in his mind that could not appreciate the kingdom of God.

The place of Jesus. Who Jesus was. And he's met with this great point. Unless you are born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God. And then you have the words of verse 10 there that accompany that.

That further illustrates the point. Jesus says to him, are you a teacher of Israel? And yet you do not understand these things? Here was a man who taught many people from the Old Testament about its teachings of Israel.

The teachings that it has about God. And the way God dealt with Israel down through the years. The laws that he had given to his people. Here was a man who was well versed in these things.

But he couldn't see the kingdom of God. And Jesus is highlighting the fact, are you a teacher of Israel? Do you really instruct others?

- [13 : 39] Yes, of course he means that he does. But what he's saying is, is it really true that you are teaching others? Yet you do not understand these things.

These things that I'm telling you about. These things especially of the kingdom. And indeed, verse 4 makes it very plain.

That Nicodemus is floundering when it comes to spiritual insight. How can a man be born when he is old?

Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born? You see, he can't get into the spiritual side of things at all. He's simply looking at it on a natural, ordinary level.

He's thinking about birth in the ordinary sense. Whereas Jesus is talking about something spiritual. And this man just can't appreciate it. He can't get into that. He doesn't have access to these things.

- [14 : 39] He doesn't know in his soul and his mind the reality of these things for themselves. Because he's not born again. Because his inner part has not been changed.

And that's something that the Apostle Paul made very clear also when he was writing his first letter to the Corinthians.

And talking there about the difference between the way that God gives his people insight and understanding compared to the ordinary human understanding.

Even through such great learning as Greek philosophy. Well, he says in verse 14 of chapter 2. He says in verse 12, where he says, We have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit who is from God.

That we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom, but by the spirit. Interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

- [15 : 44] The natural person. That's the person who's not born again. The natural person does not accept the things of the spirit of God. For they are foolishness to him. And he's not able to understand them because they are spiritually deserved.

The spiritual person. That's the person who is born again. The spiritual person judges all things. He's able to understand and appreciate these spiritual realities.

Now you see, that's why tonight you and I have to put this to ourselves. I've been preaching the gospel all of these years.

Does that mean of itself that I'm able to see the kingdom of God? No, it doesn't. Even if I could work miracles, would that of itself mean that I'm born again?

No, it doesn't. Judas Iscariot was able to work miracles, it seems, because the other disciples, when they were sent out and given the ability to work miracles, they didn't see anything different about Judas Iscariot.

[16 : 51] But he was never born again. We know the truth of the gospel. We read it. We hear it preached to us. We know what it's like to belong to the church outwardly.

We have an appreciation for that. We wouldn't want to be without that. We wouldn't want to detach ourselves from that. Does that mean we're born again? No, it doesn't. We take communion.

Some of us have taken communion for many years. Does that itself mean that we're born again? No, it doesn't. Being born again is not dependent on any of these things.

Being born again doesn't flow from doing any of these things. In fact, it doesn't flow from anything you do at all in yourself. As we'll see in a minute, it is something that's brought about by the Spirit of God.

We have an inability to see the kingdom, to understand things spiritually as we should. And that inability means we must be born again in order to see.

[17 : 54] It is unessential because of that inability. It's unessential too because the second thing that he tells Nicodemus is truly, truly in verse 5, unless one is born of water and of the Spirit.

Water, I think, means the Old Testament ritual of using water to symbolize cleansing of sin. And here, of the Spirit as well accompanying that.

The work of the Spirit in cleansing of sin and so on. But it's the Spirit of God. He means it's a capital S there. The Holy Spirit. Unless one is born of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Now, the word again, in the first instance there, in verse 3, born again, it can actually have the meaning of from above.

Sometimes you'll find that in your margin, perhaps, that this is an alternative rendering of the word that's used in the Greek text of the New Testament there. And that it's perfectly acceptable to translate it, except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

[19 : 02] And so John is really packing all of these words with spiritual meaning, so that you can say at one and the same time, it means to be born again, to be born anew in a spiritual sense, but it means to be born from above.

Born by a higher power than ourselves. Born by the Spirit or from the Spirit. And unless we are born of the Spirit, we cannot, and now he uses another word, enter the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is something that we must enter into. Because our relationship with God and our security for eternity is not outside the kingdom of God, but inside.

Inside the reign of God. Inside God being the king of our lives. It's inside that you have the security. And to get inside, you must be born again.

It's an essential because without it, you're outside of the kingdom of God. You've seen, I'm sure, on television programs, of certain groups in the police service.

[20 : 15] Sometimes they have to break into houses. Maybe they're drug dealers or some people that are involved in crime or whatever. So they get a squad together and they come at a time when they're going to surprise them, they hope.

The door is firmly locked, of course. Maybe it's a door that's actually quite secure in the ordinary sense. But, you know, the police have these huge, sort of, heavy, like a battering ram, which a couple of heavy blows and the door is smashed through and then they go.

But you cannot do that with the door of God's kingdom. We try to do it. I tried to do it many times before I was born again.

Thinking that being born again was something that really I could produce myself. That acceptance with God is something that we can actually create ourselves.

That we can do things which will be pleasing to God. And that will get us in. The fact is that everything that we have to do ourselves is tainted by sin. It's warped by sin.

[21 : 22] It's made unacceptable by sin. And because in our fallen condition we find it so difficult to accept that, we really find it difficult to accept that being born again means being born of the Spirit of God.

Being born in such a way that we are given the ability to enter the kingdom of God. We are given that from outside of ourselves. I'm going to read to you something from the Confession of Faith that we have an attachment to.

As a church and as Christians, these great definitions of doctrine that were drawn up by these great theologians long ago. And in the chapter on free will, which is chapter 9, this is what it says.

In his state of sin, the natural man, the person who is not born again, being altogether averse from that good and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself or to prepare himself thereunto.

That is our inability in our fallenness as sinners. That's why we have this as an essential. We can try as hard as we like, and we do try as hard as we like, to enter the kingdom of God.

[23 : 07] We can think that our own diligence will do it. That our own commitment to the things of the church will do it. That these things themselves, good as they may be, will not secure for us an entrance.

The door will not budge one inch by your own works. The Bible doesn't tell us that so that we'll just turn away and say, well, absolutely then, there's nothing for me at all but just to sit back and wait for God to do his work.

Remember, there's the other side. Where God commands us to repent. Where God commands us to believe, to trust in him.

Where God commands of us to give ourselves wholly to him. And indeed, that's what he convinces us of, as we'll see in a minute. In order to enter the kingdom of God.

We've got to bring before God our inability. And we will not be able to enter until we accept fully that we are unable to enter it ourselves.

[24 : 16] And once you've done that, and you've come to rely upon God completely. Then you'll find that you're inside. And he takes you in. Because by his spirit you are born again.

What makes rebirth an essential? Our inability. Our inability to see the kingdom of God. Our inability to enter the kingdom of God.

And the question now for you and for me is this. Whatever we've been up to this evening. Whatever we've experienced. However long we've been going to church.

However short a time we've been going to church. None of these things really matter at the end of the day. The question for you and for me is. Have I been born again? Has my life come to know the change that God's spirit alone brings about?

That's the crucial question. It's an essential that we're dealing with. And because it's an essential. It's essential that we're able to say.

[25 : 29] That we have indeed been born again. So what does being born again consist of? What does it mean? What does it entail? That's our second point. Well it entails first of all the work of the Holy Spirit.

As we've already alluded to. It's mentioned there in verse 5. Unless a man be born of water and of the spirit. He cannot enter into the kingdom of God. And that's why we said.

Being born again means the same thing as being born from above. It's from a power that is outside of ourselves. A power that belongs to God alone through his Holy Spirit. And when you turn again to the catechism.

It's very helpful to turn to catechism 31. Catechism 31 asks the question. What is effectual calling? And it answers you that effectual calling is the work of God's spirit.

And then it tells us what that work entails. And there are three things that the spirit of God does. He convinces us of our sin and misery.

[26 : 36] He enlightens our mind and the knowledge of Christ. And he renews our will. And in doing these three things. Something happens.

What is it that happens? He persuades and enables us. To embrace Jesus Christ. As he's offered in the gospel. In other words. The spirit of God.

In bringing you and creating in you. This work of rebirth. By his own power. In bringing you to be born again. Does all of these things in your soul.

He persuades you. And enables you. To embrace Christ. How does it lead to that? He convinces you of your sin and misery. So you come to repent of your sin. He enlightens your mind and the knowledge of Christ.

He gives you light. From his own power. To understand the truth of God. And he renews your will. That's how he enables you.

[27 : 36] To embrace Christ. He can persuade you. To embrace Christ. By enlightening your mind. In the knowledge of God. In the knowledge of Christ. And convincing you of your sin and misery.

And that will persuade you of your need of Christ. But that itself will not enable you to embrace him. Even if you're persuaded you need him. Something else needs to accompany.

The enlightenment. And the convincing of sin and misery. And what is it? It's the renewing of your will. Because it's your will. In your soul. In the spiritual part of you. It's the will.

It's the will that makes the choice. It's the will that moves you to do things. And to embrace Christ.

Your will is active. In embracing him. Because it's reaching out to him. And taking him. And willingly saying. I must have you.

[28 : 31] I'm happy to receive you. That's the will being renewed. Because up till then. It's as it was with the Jews with Jesus.

We will not have. We will not have this man. To rule over us. You see they're outside the kingdom. They don't want God's way of the kingdom being something in which they're involved.

Under God's kingship. Under Christ's kingship. But we come to a very different way of looking at things. When we're born again.

When the spirit of God comes to persuade and enables us. To persuade us. By convincing us of sin. And enlightening our mind. In the knowledge of Christ.

That's really if you like. Throwing the light switch on in our souls. As chapter 9 verse 25 puts. One thing I do know is it. Where I was blind.

- [29 : 32] Once I now see. And isn't that what. You find in John Newton's great hymn. The one we know so well. Amazing grace. How sweet the sound.
- That saved. A wretch like me. I once was blind. I once was lost. But now I'm found. Was blind. But now I see.
- Why is he now seeing? Where once he was blind. What turned him from blindness. The blindness of being an ignorant. Blasphemous. Seafaring captain.
- In charge of slave ships. Carrying slaves. From Africa to other parts of the world. And doing it willingly. And leading a debauched life. As he tells us. In his own writings.
- What is it that made the difference. In the life of this man. It's this amazing grace. Why is it so amazing to him? Why was it so amazing to him? As he wrote in that great hymn. Amazing grace.
- [30 : 29] It was amazing. Because through it. He came to be born again. His life was changed around. And it began on the inside. Not something that is. A product of his own mind.
- Of his own thinking. It's not something that he was able to do to himself. It's not a change of mind. That he brought about. It's all of grace.
- The power of God. The power of the spirit of God. That's what you and I need. That's what our need needs to be brought to. That's what we need to express.
- In the presence of God. As we come to him. Lord we need to be born again. Lord I need to be born again. Lord I need a new heart. So created in me.
- So that I will praise your name. And you are enabled to enter. To that same spirit. Because as he renews your will.
- [31 : 29] He makes you willing. To embrace Jesus Christ. Nobody comes to Jesus Christ reluctantly. Because from the moment that your will is renewed.
- You come to Christ willingly. You serve Christ willingly. You don't do it unwillingly. Or regretfully. Or reluctantly. Because your will is renewed.
- Are you tonight willing. To be a Christian. Are you willing to be a servant of Christ. Are you willing to be ruled by Christ.
- Are you really willing. With all of your will. With your whole heart. If you put it that way. To really have this man. To reign in your life. To rule your life. To dominate your life. To look after you in this world.
- To prepare you for eternity. Are you really willing. Do you really will that. And if the answer is no. Then you have not been born again. And if you are not born again. You are lost.
- [32 : 31] You are outside of the kingdom. You don't have acceptance with God. You are not in the security zone. Within the kingdom. And its provisions.
- It is the work. Of the Holy Spirit. And you know. The work of the Holy Spirit. This is where the gospel comes. As well into importance. The work of the Holy Spirit.
- Is so keyed. Into the gospel. And to the word of God. That being born again. Is something that the spirit does. But does. Through the word of God.
- Remember Peter. How he put it. In his first letter. When Peter came to write. His first letter. He was writing. To encourage. People who were. Suffering for their faith.
- And. This is how he put it. In the first chapter there. Having purified. Your souls. By your obedience. To the truth. For a sincere. Brotherly love.
- [33 : 28] Love one another. Earnestly. From a pure heart. Since you have been. Born again. Not of perishable. Perishable seed. But of imperishable.
- Through the living. And abiding word of God. And this word. Is the good news. Is the gospel. That was preached. To you. How were their lives.

Changed. By the spirit of God. What did the spirit of God. Use. As the primary. Means. By which that change. Came about. The word of God.

The word of the gospel. Friends. It's a sad sight. For many reasons. Tonight. To have more pews. Here empty.

Than are filled. I'm talking about. Those who are regularly. With us. But are away today. Somewhere else. Or prevented by illness. I'm talking about. Those pews. That are never filled.

[34 : 22] Why is it sad? Well it's sad. Not because. We want to be able to say. That we have so many people. Coming to the church. To the congregation. It's not because. We want to have. Statistically. A number.

That would say. This is what. Our congregation is like. Look at how many people. Come to church. It's sad. Because empty seats. Means. Empty souls. Lost souls.

It's sad. Because. There are so many people. Out there. More than there are. In this building. Who have never been born. Again. Who need to be born. Again.

Again. And when you and I. Come to realize. The importance. Of being born again. And the emphasis. That the Bible. Places upon it. As an essential thing.

In relation to human beings. It's then. That you and I. Begin to realize. And realize. We hope. More and more. How urgently. These people out there. Need the gospel. Because it's the gospel.

[35 : 21] That the spirit of God. Uses primarily. To convince us. Of our sin and misery. To enlighten our minds. In the knowledge of Christ. And to renew. Our will.

It's the spirit's power. But it's the power. Of the spirit. Accompanying. The word of God. And if people. Aren't familiar. With the word. And don't hear the word. And don't bother.

To come to where. The word is preached. Well they're going to be. As Nicodemus was. In darkness. In their lostness. They need.

To be born again. Just as you and I do. And we need. To serve. Jesus Christ. To bring that message.

To them. And if they don't. Come to the message. Where it is proclaimed. Then in some form. That message. Needs to reach them. Who's going to bring it.

[36 : 19] To them. You are. Who else. Who else. Can do it. You're the church. You're the people. That worship Christ.

You and I. Together. You don't just. Leave it to the ministry. You don't leave it. To the elders. You don't leave it. To the office bearers. You actually. Serve.

Christ. As his people. In the world. By bringing. This essential. Before the world. Of your day. And impressing. As much as you can.

Upon people. How it is an essential. And why it is an essential. That they be born again. That their lives. Be changed from within. That's the work of the spirit.

It's secondly. And this is a. A final point. It is. An enormous change. It's a radical change. What a change. It is. And there are various ways.

[37 : 14] In the Bible. By which that change. Is described. And by which you can see. It is. Such a great change. Let's go to mention. Two of them. When it talks. In 2nd Corinthians. About this being.

A new creation. 2nd Corinthians 5. 17. If any man be in Christ. He is a new creation. Or in 2nd Corinthians 4. And verse 6.

God who commanded the light. To shine. Out of darkness. Has shined. In our hearts. Not just into our hearts. But in our hearts. That means creatively. He has worked in our hearts.

By the Holy Spirit. And created light in us. The light of life. And we become a new creation. You go back to Genesis.

And the description that you have there. Of God creating the universe. And there is a series of verses. As you know very well. In Genesis chapter 1. Where it says repeatedly.

[38 : 13] And God said. And God said. Let there be light. And there was light. And God said. Let the earth bring forth. And it brought forth. And God said.

Let us make man in our image. And he made man in his image. A new creation. It is the work of God. It is bringing something into being.

That did not exist until then. Except in his own mind. That is what it is. In our lives as well. We are all individual human beings. With a rational faculty. That God has given us.

We can think. We can read. We can see. We can speak. We can hear. We can have all of these things. And they are great blessings to have them. But we cannot see the kingdom of God.

Until we are born again. And we cannot enter the kingdom of God. Until we are born again. And we are not what we should be.

[39 : 10] Until God comes. With a creative explosive power. With a might that he alone has. To turn us inside.

The opposite of what we are naturally. Indeed it is. Something that is true of the end of the universe as well. As we know it. The word regeneration is used.

In Matthew's gospel. Verses. Verse 28 of chapter 19. And regeneration is used. That same word in Titus. Chapter 3. Verse 5. Of this change.

This born again change. We are born again. We are saved. Not by works of righteousness. Which we have done. But by the mercy of God. By the washing of regeneration.

You see. That brings in. The idea again. Of the spirit coming to regenerate. To bring to life. God begins with what is dead spiritually. And what is dead spiritually.

[40 : 13] He brings to life. Demonstrated in. The great miracle of bringing Lazarus back. From the tomb. Christ speaking to that which was dead.

Lazarus. Come forth. And out he came. And every soul that is born again. God comes to speak to it. In his own time.

And as God speaks to that soul. Where life is created. Where life is created. God speaks to that deadness. And that deadness is changed. And that person comes to be a new creation.

And if you just follow that out. It's a wonderful. It's a wonderful thing to actually see from the Bible. How the environment that God has.

For his redeemed people at last. Is one that fits their new state. As a new creation. When you go back to the beginning of things. When God created the worlds.

[41 : 14] And this world. And then he created Adam and Eve. Before they fell. Where did God put them? He put them in a garden. The garden of Eden. The garden of delights.

Why did he put them in that garden? Because it was fitted out for them by God. It was an environment in keeping with themselves.

As people who were perfect. Who bore the image of God splendidly. And in perfection. Nothing less would do. For God's created human beings.

Than the garden of Eden. And nothing less will do for God's renewed. Recreated human beings. His saved people.

Than the garden of the new creation. As Isaiah puts it. As Peter picks it up again. In his writings. In the second letter. We are looking forward.

[42 : 14] To a new heavens. And a new earth. In which righteousness dwells. Why a new heavens. And a new earth. Because the whole environment.

Of the creation. Is not presently suitable. To be a housing. For the redeemed people of God. To be an environment. For the people of God.

Means. Even the creation itself. Will be renewed. And regenerated. So that there will be a new heavens. And a new earth. And the old one. Will have passed away.

And for new creations. For new people. For people made new. A new soul.

A new body in the resurrection. There will be a new environment. A new heavens. And a new earth. Isn't redemption magnificent? Doesn't being born again.

[43 : 13] Bring you into something really special. That's what it means. To come to be born again. To be brought into. The kingdom of God.

That is what is awaiting us. Just like little children. Thinking that Christmas is actually now a bit nearer. Thinking about what they might be opening on Christmas day.

And the excitement building up. So we should be as Christians in a far higher sense of course. That the day of our redemption is drawing ever closer. And in doing so.

What a wonderful, wonderful morning that's going to be. A morning of the resurrection. The morning of ascension to glory. The morning of the new heavens and the new earth.

To be with all other renewed human beings. Sharing together with our Savior Jesus Christ. And God our Father. And the Holy Spirit.

[44 : 15] The treasure of redemption. But there's also a new outlook. Not just a new creation.

But a new outlook. In 2 Corinthians 5.16. Paul again says. Henceforth we know no man after the flesh. Yea, even though we have known Christ after the flesh. Yet even now we know him no more after the flesh.

And that really in a sense is similar to Isaiah 53. The people who were there in the chapter saying that they had seen this figure. This individual. This person.

That they once thought so little of and despised. He was like a root out of a dry ground. He had no form nor comeliness or beauty.

That we should desire him. Until things changed. And oh how they changed. Then they saw him as one whose sufferings were caused by the bearing of their sins.

[45 : 15] Bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him. And with his stripes we are healed. There's a new outlook. You don't see anything the way you once used to.

That doesn't mean that the change comes about in a way that has flashing lights in your head.

That you see spectacular things happening and therefore you know that you're born again. Sometimes, many times, being born again is really just illustrated if you like by a mother coming to a child in the morning to kiss them away.

Gentle. Gentle. And yet definite. From one state to another. And that's how Paul puts it.

All things have passed away. Behold, everything is made new. When Noah stepped out of the ark. He was stepping into a new world.

[46 : 25] The old world had perished. God had brought a flood on the earth. And all that was previously known of Noah was destroyed. Only he and those in the ark survived.

You can just pick the description there in Genesis. You can go through the description and picture in your mind what it must have been like as far as you can. What a different world in many respects to the one that he had left behind when he entered into the ark.

A world that God had cleansed. A world that God had changed. And that's the imagery that Paul is using and that Peter is using. And especially Paul when he says, If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.

You have stepped out into a new world. A new outlook. A new way of looking at things. Including people. Behold. Behold. All things have passed away.

Everything has been made new. You must be born again. Let's pray. Lord our God.

[47 : 40] When you bring before us the extent of our need and the depth of our need. And the great power that is required to change us inwardly. To meet our need.

We thank you that that power is in yourself. That it is through the power and the agency of your spirit. That we come to be born anew. That we come to be spiritually changed.

So that we enter into your kingdom. That we are able then to see and to perceive things in a new way. We pray that each of us will know this for ourselves.

Your word makes it clear that it is an essential in our experience. To know that we have passed from death to life. And Lord we pray that as we find these things set out in your word.

That it may be our concern day by day. To be amongst those who are born again. Who have the power of your spirit within them. Who look forward to that great day.

[48 : 40] When all things will be finally completed. And for those who have been born again. To enter into the new universe. The new heavens and the new earth.

Grant these mercies we pray for Jesus sake. Amen.