

(Christ--the Way God Makes Man Righteous)

10. Regeneration--born of the Spirit

by Denny Kenaston

Regeneration is the operation of God that changes a penitent sinner into a new creature by personal union in Jesus Christ, resulting in a new heart and a new spirit.

Duration: 51:27

Scripture: Matthew 28:19, 1 Thessalonians 1:6

Topics: "Regeneration"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding salvation in the biblical context rather than through an American lens. He describes the biblical setting as a radical, sold-out kingdom church filled with individuals who have been with Jesus and embraced his teachings. The power of the Holy Spirit is present among the people, leading to a complete transformation in their lives. The speaker reminds the audience that the book of Acts is a testimony of God's saving work and highlights the need for believers to recognize that salvation is just the beginning of their journey.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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Thank you for that song. The word for Monday is redemption. I want you to learn that definition, redemption.

And also your assignment for the weekend is to read chapter 1 and 2 in that book, Bone of His Bone. That is your assignment. We're going to drop down out of the theologies of heaven and into the realities of everyday salvation next week.

So, I do want you to read those two chapters. The author, I may not agree with everything that he has to say in there, but he is clearly burdened about how this salvation gets lived out in reality in our lives. And that's why I chose that little book for you for the last week of our sessions.

Let's pray. Father, we do commit our time to Thee. Oh, we do thank You this morning for the glorious salvation that was brought in Christ Jesus.

Amen. Before the world began, we thank You, Lord, for the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world. God, we do thank You this morning that somehow in Your wisdom, in Your grace, dear God, in our willing hearts we find ourselves in the middle of that so great salvation.

Thank You, Lord. God, we pray that You'll make it clear and plain to us this morning. Open up our eyes, Lord.

Fill us with Your Spirit, oh God our Father, we pray in Jesus Christ's name. Amen. Alright, the title of the message this morning is Regeneration...born of the Spirit.

Born of the Spirit. That's what regeneration is. It is being born of the Spirit of God.

How my heart thrilled as I sat back and pondered all that happens when a penitent sinner believes on Jesus Christ. My heart thrilled. And so I'm pretty excited this morning, you'll bear with me.

I mean, if you think healing a withered hand is a miracle, this work of God in the soul of man is far more glorious when that fellow reached forth his withered hand in the midst of the synagogue and Christ made his hand whole. That's nothing compared to salvation. Nothing.

So with God's help, I want to bring all the teachings of the last two weeks, kind of bring them together this morning. Our definition, regeneration. It is regensis.

Again, birth. It is the operation of God. Don't forget that, brethren.

It is the operation of God, whereby He changes a penitent sinner into a new creature by personal union in Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17 If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away.

Behold, all things are become new. The word regeneration is only used two times in the New Testament. And one is in reference to again birth of this world.

And the other is in reference to salvation. The phrase most often used is born again in the New Testament. But there are many different statements that are used to explain this powerful change that takes place in man.

I want to put our diagram on the board again this morning. Maybe one of these days I'll learn how to make a circle right. Spirit, soul, and body.

That's what man is. A tri-part being made in the image of God. The reference to salvation or regeneration to salvation is found in Titus chapter 3, if you want to turn there.

Which, by the way, is a beautiful description of the radical change that takes place when God saves a man through faith in Jesus Christ. It's very interesting to me how many times you find this beautiful definition of

salvation in the Scriptures, though it is referred to from many different angles, it seems like every time you will also find the depraved condition of man in the same context. Sometimes it's before and sometimes it's after.

Ephesians chapter 2, the description of man's depravity is before and then the salvation. Here, again, depravity is mentioned before the verses 1, 2, and 3, and then the verses about regeneration are 4-7, when Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus. He spoke about that regeneration to him, and then went ahead and began to describe the depravity when he said that men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.

But notice these beautiful statements in Titus chapter 3, verses 4-7. But, there's that but again, after he describes man's depravity. But after that, the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared.

Oh, praise the Lord! Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us. You see, Paul is pointing them back to something that happened. He saved us.

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us. And then he begins to describe this mighty salvation. By the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.

It came through Jesus Christ our Savior, that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. And there we find many of those words, or the expressions of the reality of the words that we've been looking at for the last two weeks. Notice how that justification, that legal act of declaring righteous, produced an inward re-gensis.

And that is the key to understanding this whole mixed up confusion that we have in America today. Mark it down, brethren, true justification. When God truly declares a man righteous based on the atonement of Christ, there is a regeneration that takes place on the inside of that man and changes him forever.

That is the bottom line. I said earlier that we will be giving a clear and a high ideal of salvation for the sake of teaching. You see, we want to look at it in the context of the Word, not in the context of American Christianity.

Otherwise it can get blurred. So we want to lift the standard high here this morning. Because of this desire, I would like to create in your mind a high and a holy setting, which will produce the clearest conversion possible.

Will you allow me to do that? I think it will help you to understand salvation from God's perspective. See, I'm afraid too many times we've been reading an American Bible. Did you know that you can read an American Bible? We read the Bible in light of our American experience.

And it really doesn't come out the same. So I would like to change the environment as we look at salvation this morning, and the salvation of a soul of man from the American environment back into the New Testament environment. Let me describe the biblical setting to you.

Stage one. A radical, sold-out, kingdom church. The kind that Brother Dean has been talking to us about at the beginning of this week.

A radical, sold-out, kingdom church made up of men and women who have been with Jesus for three years. They've been sitting at His feet. They are embracing His teachings.

And they are now filled with His commission, which He gave them before He ascended back into heaven. This is the biblical setting. Stage two.

The power of the Holy Ghost is present mightily upon that church and among the people. He, the Holy Ghost, is present to convict and to reprove the sinner of his offenses toward God. This is also part of the environment.

And stage number three. There is an environment of persecution. The cost of following Christ, believing on His name, is high and very clear to all who are invited to come.

That is the biblical environment that we're going to set this salvation down into the middle of. It's very important that you understand how different that environment is than the one that we live in today. We all have to admit, this is very different than the one we live in.

The early church had entered in at the straight gate, and they were standing on the narrow way calling the world to repent, to flee from the wrath to come by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ in the way that we have described. How beautiful for a holy church to be standing on a narrow way calling the world unto Christ. How different that is than much of what we find in our day.

Think about the hidden cost of obeying the saving word that Peter gave the people on the day of Pentecost. I say hidden, because Peter didn't tell them that they had to surrender. He didn't tell them they need to deny themselves.

He didn't tell them, take up your cross. He didn't say any of those things to them, but the cost was there nevertheless. Would you agree? It was there.

These Jews will lose everything. Your name is wiped off the family books. You don't receive any inheritance.

I mean, you are gone. Now repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whoa! But yet, in that environment, while they heard those words, they were also under deep conviction of the Holy Ghost.

God was pressing upon them. Yes! Whom He crucified. What about the Philippian jailer? Think about him.

We are going to focus on him a bit here through the day and through this session. But think about the Philippian jailer. These two preachers are the off-scoring, the troublemakers of Philippi.

You look at his cost. He is the jailer and they are the jailed. Now how is a jailer supposed to treat the jailed? So he related very differently to the prisoners than what is normal.

I think of the early Anabaptists. It was the same way for them. Because there was a few, a few brethren who were willing to take that clear stand that Brother Jerry has been admonishing us about for the last few days.

Because there was a few that were willing. That immediately created an environment, a powerful salvation environment. Did it not? This environment produced a need for a deep decision in the hearts of those who

heard the saving word from the Anabaptists.

Yes, it was no doubt an obedience of faith for each one of these in the examples that I have given you. It was way more than a mental ascent. Amen? Oh yeah, I believe.

Oh yeah, Jesus died. I believe Jesus died. No, no, no, no, no.

It is way beyond that. As those poor people in the different little villages in Europe stood in the dark corners and listened to the Anabaptists as they proclaimed the saving word in their day. And those people hiding in the shadows knew, if you yield your heart to what this man is saying.

I mean, the guy who was here last week is dead for what he said. You will be just like that guy. But yet, the Holy Ghost was gripping the hearts of the people.

You have sinned against the Holy God. Free from the wrath to come. Right into the arms of Christ.

Who will join us? Said the Anabaptists. And amazingly, thousands as we heard, thousands and thousands said, I will. This environment of conviction, of joining the radicals, of facing persecutions eliminates most of the half-heartedness.

Which, by the way, only produces superficial converts with no substance or reality to their experience. And that's what we have today. Superficial converts that have no substance or reality of salvation.

The Apostle Paul described the effects of this salvation-friendly environment in 1 Thessalonians chapter 1. Do I dare call that salvation-friendly? Do you get it? This salvation-friendly environment. Listen to what he said in 1 Thessalonians 1 verse 5 and 6. I believe Jeff read it to you yesterday or the day before. For our gospel came not unto you the saving word that we brought.

It came not unto you in word only. Oh, it came in word. But not in word only.

But also in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance. And Jeff missed this point, but I want you to see it. As ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

Much assurance because you saw what that saving word did in our lives as we were among you. And by the way, that does give much assurance to a lost person who is coming. If they look and see, whoa, this saving word changed that man's life.

I mean, he is different. It must be right. Much assurance, Paul said, as you saw the way we lived when we were among you.

Do you see it? There again. Join us. There again.

The word comes. There again. The Holy Ghost is there.

Oh, and also verse 6, And ye became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost. Do you see that salvation-friendly environment? There it is. And he goes on to describe the total change in the lives of these converts who received the saving word.

And he says, your testimony, the testimony of your life and what you're doing and what you're saying is going out all over the region. So much so that I don't even need to tell other people what God did there. Your testimony is so clear, I don't need to say a word.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

That's the way it should be. So, what happens to the jailer that night at midnight when he, under deep conviction and trembling for good fear of God, fell down in front of Paul and Silas and said, men and brethren, what must I do to be saved? What happens in this man's life, in the jailer's life, when he believes that saving word? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Number one, he is justified.

God, the judge, performs the legal acts of declaring him righteous because of Christ's atonement. His sins, because of that atonement, are washed away in the blood of Jesus. Hallelujah.

And with that, he is freed from the guilt and the penalty that was heavy upon him. In short, he is forgiven and his slate is wiped clean. It's like Pilgrim in Pilgrim's Progress, carrying this heavy load on his back.

This heavy load, which, by the way, is a picture of guilt and condemnation. He knows who he is and he knows he's going to have to pay for this thing and he's carrying this load around with him. But, when Pilgrim lifted up the eyes of his heart and saw Christ on the cross, rolled away, rolled away, rolled away.

The burden of his heart rolled away. Every sin had to go neath the crimson flow. Hallelujah.

Every burden was rolled away. He is justified. God, the judge, declares him righteous because he believed the saving word with penitence of heart.

Amen. Justified fully through Calvary's love. Oh, what a standing is mine.

I believe that, brethren. Oh, what a standing is mine. Standing in Christ, in the righteousness of Christ.

Beautiful. Number two, as he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, he is redeemed. Bought back.

Snatched away from the devil and out of the prison that sin had him bound in. Because Christ, the ransom, has been paid and Satan no longer has authority over him. Did you get that? Because Christ, the ransom, has been paid, the atonement, the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, Satan has no more authority over him.

Or you, my friend. Or you. Redeemed.

Redeemed how I love to proclaim it. Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. He's redeemed.

And Satan has no more authority over him. Number three, he is regenerated. Born again by the Spirit of God.

Recreated. A mighty work of death and resurrection takes place in the center of his being. He becomes a new man.

He was in Adam. Now he is in Christ. What a difference that will make.

He was in Adam. But now he is in Christ. He is by the Spirit baptized into Christ.

Baptized into Christ's death, where he also dies. And he is baptized into Christ's resurrection, where he also is made alive again. He is given a new heart.

My, what a gracious God we have. He is given a new heart by God's operation of circumcision. Colossians chapter 2. Note the diagram.

This work takes place in man's spirit. You think about it. That jailer, he still has the same body that he had when he fell down on his knees there and said, What must I do to be saved? He still has the same soul, his mind and his will and his emotions.

They are all who he is. Yes, some changes are taking place in how he thinks and all that. But his soul is basically the way that it was.

But down here, a mighty work takes place in the center of man's being. Let's turn to Ezekiel 36. I had you reading there.

I wonder what them Old Testament saints thought about. You know, those sincere ones, those followers after righteousness that we read about there in Isaiah 51. I wonder what they thought when they read verses like this in Ezekiel 36.

I mean, their heart, their sincere heart must have just stirred within them. And they must have thought, Oh, my. You know, Peter says there in 1 Peter 1 that the prophets of old desired to look into and see what the grace of God that was to come would do in the heart of man.

These are the kind of verses they read right here. They read them and they thought, Wow, a new heart. We are going to start reading in verse 24.

The other verses explains a bit of God's heart, some of his motivations for salvation. But this morning we're looking at this change that takes place. And God says in verse 24, For I will take you from among the heathen.

And I would have to say to every one of you, you have been called out. Have you not? Called out and gather you out of all the countries and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean.

The washing of regeneration. You shall be clean, God said. I mean, God says in the book of Hebrews, He doesn't just make your heart feel better.

He totally cleanses the sin right out of it. I will sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean. Clean from all your filthiness.

Clean from all your idols. Will I cleanse you? Say, I'm not clean like that. Do you repent like that? Oh, glory.

Verse 26. And a new heart also will I give you. Right here.

Right here. I'm going to give you a new heart, God said. And a new spirit.

A new spirit will I put within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh. And I will give you a heart of flesh or a soft heart.

One that I can write my laws upon. 2 Corinthians chapter 3. Written by the Spirit of God, not on tables of stone, but on the fleshly tables of a new and a soft heart. That's how we get changed, brethren.

God gives us a new and a soft heart. One that He is able to write His laws upon that soft heart. By the Spirit of the Living God.

Through the Word of God. He writes His laws upon our heart. I'm going to give you a new heart, God says.

And a new spirit will I put within you. And I mean, that would be enough, wouldn't it? But God doesn't stop there. He doesn't stop there.

And I will put My Spirit within you. I will put My Spirit in your inner man. Welcome home, Adam! And if that's not enough.

And I will cause you to walk in My statutes. And you shall keep My judgments and do them. This is clearly what Christ was describing to Nicodemus.

Is it not? As He began to admonish Nicodemus there and say, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. But that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Marvel not that I say unto thee, ye must be born again. It's not enough to be born of the flesh. That's our physical birth.

We must also be born of the Spirit. A recreation inside of man. Oh, how beautiful.

When you look at it all together, yes, you can see righteousness imputed there as God declares man righteous. You can see righteousness imputed. But can you not see here, brethren, righteousness imparted? The righteous God comes to live inside of man.

Do you think that this righteous God who has come to live inside of man will allow a wicked, unrighteous life? God forbid that He would put His Son through all that He put Him through, that He would agonize Himself through the death of His Son, and bruise His Son, and put His very life in us, and allow wickedness and unrighteousness. No, He will not. He will not do it.

This is what God was after. That's what He wants. Righteousness imputed.

But righteousness imparted as a holy God comes to dwell in the center of man's being again. The Bible expresses this work of God in man's spirit in several different ways. Ephesians 2, Paul says, quickened.

Colossians 2, he speaks about the circumcision of the flesh. In Romans 6, he describes it as a death, a baptism into Christ's death, and into Christ's resurrection, a new life coming forth out of it. In John 3, and James 1, and 1 Peter 1, he speaks of it as being born again.

And in Ephesians, and in Corinthians, he speaks about, and Galatians, he speaks about a new creation which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness after the image of Him that created Him. Do you see, brethren? All these different terms are used, but it's speaking about the same thing. A new man.

And may I say it? A new race of men. Right? But ye are a chosen generation of royal priesthood, a holy nation, a new race of man. There was the Adamic race, and now there is the Christ race.

Which one are you going to be in? Do you want to be in Adam? Or do you want to be in Christ? What a different life those two produce. Amen? A new man. That finishes regeneration.

That was a long point. Number four. And we already read it, but I want to emphasize it.

What happens to this jailer when he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ? He is filled with the Spirit. He is baptized, overwhelmed, immersed in the Spirit of the living God. Like Peter said, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Paul, Ananias speaking, Saul, I have come that you might receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. He was filled with the Holy Spirit. Those 3,000 were filled with the Holy Spirit.

And behold, they turned Jerusalem upside down, didn't they? I mean, if those wicked rulers thought they were going to take care of things by crucifying Christ, they had no idea what was coming. You got rid of one. Now you have 3,120 of these fellows to deal with.

And if you think that's not bad enough, in two more days there will be 5,000 more added to that, filled with the Holy Ghost, living the life of Jesus Christ, burning inside of them, ready to go to the chopping block. Right? Having already made their choice when they said, uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh, using Parris Reedhead's little phrase, their uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh was a whole lot deeper than modern day evangelicalism. A whole lot deeper.

This man's new heart is now filled with God's Spirit. He is in Christ. And Christ is in him.

God's laws are written upon his new heart. And he is moved and motivated and empowered to walk in God's ways. That union of God and man in life, purpose and spirit has been recovered.

Yes, man is filled with the righteousness of God. Number 5. He is reconciled. He is reconciled to God.

You know like it says there in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 where Paul said to the Corinthians, I beseech you, be ye reconciled to God. It's not that God has to be reconciled to man. Man needs to be reconciled to God.

He is reconciled to God. God was in Christ, Jesus, reconciling the world unto himself, bringing them back. The enmity is changed to friendship and peace.

Hallelujah! A holy God, friendship and peace through the atonement of Jesus Christ. Yes, at-one-ment has taken place. And man is reconciled to God.

Number 6. He is sanctified. We haven't studied that word yet. He is sanctified.

That is, he is set apart. As we understand the basic understanding or the definition of set apart or sanctified, it's easy for us to say after looking at all we've looked at this morning, yes, he is sanctified. He is set apart in Christ Jesus through this mighty work in the inner man.

He is set apart. He is set apart unto God. And he is set apart from the world.

Can you see how those two work together? Set apart unto God. I mean, if I'm over here in the world and God calls me out of this world. He calls me unto Christ.

And I am set apart from this world as I come to Christ. Do you see that? We will say more next week about this because there is an ongoing aspect of this work of sanctification. But I want you to note that the work begins right here.

Set apart in Christ. And lastly, he is born into a family. He is born into a family.

He is adopted into a family. He is baptized into a family. Reason together with me.

That mighty work which is done by the Spirit of God baptizing that penitent sinner who is believing in Christ, baptizing him into Christ, into the death of Christ and into the resurrection of Christ, to be baptized into Christ, to be in Christ by the Spirit of God is to be in the body of Christ. Right? And thus, the jailer senses this mysterious union, this lovely union and fellowship and drawing and love toward Paul and Silas, the guys that he threw into the clinker and locked the door behind him, put him in stocks and walked out and left him in there. Now, all of a sudden, there's this mysterious something inside of him that draws him to them.

And it's called the body of Christ. The church, if you may, baptized into the body of Christ. That's that beautiful church that Brother Dean has been speaking about this week.

Again, remember where he went? He went back to the book of Acts to help us see what it looked like. And he went back to the early Anabaptists to help us to see what it looked like. I think as we look at this doctrine of salvation and what it's supposed to produce, and then you look at what is called salvation out there and maybe even some among us in here, we can see why it's such a confusion.

What is the church? Where is the church? The church is an assembly of believers who have been baptized by the Spirit of God through repentance into the body of Christ. And they are one. They are one.

Alright. I think that's enough. We could go on a bit further, but I think that's enough.

You get the picture? Transformation! Total change! You say, but Brother Denny, I didn't experience all of that the way that you just described it. Yeah, that's possible. That's possible.

The environment was different, right? Maybe there wasn't much power of the Holy Ghost to really bring you to the depths of your need. There wasn't much commitment required because everybody else is doing it, right? But that's not the point this morning. The point is, this is where God is going.

Are you willing to go there? That's the question. Again, as we look into the book of Acts, as a testimony of God's saving work. And by the way, that's what Acts is.

Acts is a testimony of God's saving work in the lives of people. To see what happened to those who believed the saving word of salvation in Christ in that day, it is very clear that these people were completely changed into another man. Would you agree? I mean, they were changed.

These guys were fanatics. They were radicals. It's easy to see that God's beautiful salvation work was worked out in beautiful ways in that salvation-friendly environment of the book of Acts.

It's easy to see. But I want to remind you this morning, as glorious as all of this is that we looked at this morning, it's only the beginning. It's only the beginning.

It's not the end. It's the beginning. We've taken two weeks just to get to the front door.

And brethren, if that front door entrance is glorious, and it is, how much more glorious now being reconciled by the death of His Son. How much more glorious now, Romans chapter 5 says, how much more shall we be saved from His wrath if God, while we were sinners, reconciled us by the death of His Son. How much more now, being reconciled, having been washed in the blood, and all these glorious things have happened, how much more shall we be saved who believed in Him.

This is just the beginning. Just the beginning. Next week, we will go on unto perfection, if the Lord will permit, using the words of the Hebrew writer.

We will go on unto perfection, if the Lord permits. Let's bow our heads. Oh, Father, we love You this morning.

My, what a good Father You are to us. How can this be? Lord, that You saved me 35 years ago, Lord. Oh, thank You, Father.

Thank You for the work of God in this needy soul of mine. Father, You, Your Spirit, released upon all men in these last days, can make all of these words very distinctly personal to every one of us here. I entrust these dear hearts, each one into Your care.

Holy Spirit of God, be Thou faithful and attend unto this saving word in each one of our lives. Lord, we ask this in Jesus Christ's name. Amen.

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