

## **The Role of the Holy Spirit in Being Born Again**

The title of today's message is: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Being Born Again. Last week we talked about how a person gets born again and then what it means to be born again. This week we're going to talk about the role of the Holy Spirit in being born again. You ask, "Jim, what inspired all this teaching about being born again?" Here's what inspired it:

We said in our message, "The 7 Principles of our Judeo-Christian Heritage," that the way revival and the next Great Awakening is going to happen in the United States is one person at a time.

According to George Barna's research, 35% of Americans say they're born again. If each born again Christian would just lead one person to faith in Christ and then disciple them during the next year, 70% of the total population would be born again, and that would probably lead to a change in the spiritual, social, and political climates in the United States of America.

Our founding fathers understood that our form of government was never intended to change society because government is incapable of producing morality. Government can attempt to restrain immorality, but only the power of the Gospel can change people's hearts. The founders weren't looking to government to change their society, but to safeguard the values that already existed. The reason our society seems to be morally decaying isn't because of the government; it's because the church hasn't instilled faith in the Gospel into the hearts of people. The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has more power to change the hearts of people than all the military might and legislative powers of any government.

We must get back to the basics of changing the hearts of people, one person at a time, with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. 70-90 percent of people who come to Christ and remain faithful do so relationally – in a one-on-one scenario. In other words, a friend, relative, or acquaintance leads them to Christ, invites them to church, and then discipled them.

Let's start in John chapter 3 with the story of Jesus conversing with Nicodemus.

**John 3:5-8 (NKJV)**

**5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is BORN OF water and THE SPIRIT, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.**

**6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is BORN OF THE SPIRIT is spirit.**

**7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'**

**8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is BORN OF THE SPIRIT."**

In this portion of Scripture, Jesus is talking about being born again. When a person places their faith in Christ and confesses Jesus as their Lord, they're born again. When a person is born again, the spiritual part of them changes, not the mental part and not the physical part. Now, that person must renew their mind and present their body until their new righteous nature of eternal life gains the ascendancy in their lives.

Now I want you to notice the person in the Trinity who facilitates being born again; namely, the Holy Spirit (see verses 5, 6, and 8). It's the Holy Spirit who removes a person's old sinful nature of spiritual death and replaces it with a new righteous nature of eternal life.

### **The Holy Spirit facilitates the born again experience.**

This is confirmed in Titus chapter 3.

#### **Titus 3:5 (NKJV)**

**Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.**

Titus 3:5 confirms that it's the Holy Spirit who facilitates the born again experience. Do you see the last phrase, "through the washing and regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit does 3 things: He washes us (forgives our sins), He regenerates us (removes our old sinful nature of spiritual death), and He renews us (puts a new righteous nature of eternal life within us – in our now recreated human spirit).

### **The Holy Spirit, through the new birth, gives us eternal life – the life and nature of God.**

Next point: One of the reasons it's so important for someone to be born again is so they can understand the Word of God. This can only happen with the help, and by the power, of the Holy Spirit. This is confirmed in First Corinthians chapter 2.

#### **1 Corinthians 2:11-14 (NKJV)**

**11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.**

**12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.**

**13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.**

**14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.**

In verse 11, because God is a spirit, He relates to mankind spiritually, not mentally and not physically. However, if we're born again through the Word of God, doesn't it just make sense that we should renew our minds by meditating on the Word of God and present our bodies by obeying the Word of God? All of this can only be done with the help and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In verse 12, when we're born again, we receive the Spirit of Christ, which is from God. The Spirit of Christ is the same as the Holy Spirit. The purpose of the Holy Spirit (at the end of verse 12) is so we can know the things that have been freely given to us by God. This includes being able to understand the Word of God so we can enjoy the promises of God and experience all the benefits of our salvation.

In verse 13, the contrast is made between man's wisdom and God's wisdom. The bottom line difference between the two is man's wisdom is only concerned with the things of this life, while

God's wisdom includes being concerned with the things that will matter for eternity. Worldly wisdom will stand before the Great White Throne Judgment and end up in the lake of fire. Godly wisdom will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and end up in the Millennium with Jesus.

Finally, in verse 14, the natural man (a person that's not born again) can't understand the Word of God. To a person who's not born again, the things of God are foolishness to him or her.

Did you ever meet someone, and when you start talking about the things of God, they get disgusted, defensive, or even belligerent? In other words, they just don't want to hear it. The reason for that is because they're not born again. The spiritual part of them is still spiritually dead – their spirit isn't alive to God yet. They can't understand the Word of God, and as a result, you talking to them about the things of God sounds ridiculous to them.

However, you're the one God is using in their life who must first be an example to them, then lead them to Christ and disciple them with the Word of God. Important point now:

### **A person can't understand the Word of God without the Holy Spirit.**

If every born again Christian would just lead one person to faith in Christ and then disciple them during the next year, 70% of the total population would be born again, and that would probably lead to a change in the spiritual, social, and political climates in America. This is how revival and the next Great Awakening is going to happen in the United States and around the world.

Closing comments now:

Charles Finney was one of the greatest American preachers in the 1800's. During revivals Finney held in Boston, 50,000 put their faith in Christ in just one week. Finney always demanded a verdict from his question: "What will you do with Jesus Christ?" Perhaps the next Great Awakening will begin with the question, "Do you know Jesus?"

Maybe you're too intimidated to sit down and share Jesus with someone in the way we've been talking about. No problem, here's what you do: The next time you're talking to someone about the things of God, simply ask, "Do you know Jesus?" and then let the Holy Spirit do the rest. Here's why the question, "Do you know Jesus," is so effective.

Many times we ask people, "Are you a Christian?" when perhaps a better question would be: "Do you know Jesus?" According to statistics, between 75 and 85 percent of Americans identify themselves as Christian, but only 35% are born again. Many times a person will readily say, "Yes, I'm a Christian," but when asked if they know Jesus, they may hesitate. The reason they hesitate is because they may know *about* Jesus, but they don't necessarily know Him personally. Sweeping statement now: Someone may be a Christian, but that doesn't mean they know Jesus personally.

Now, it's your turn to ask them, "Do you know Jesus?" so they can become a citizen in the Kingdom of God – a son or daughter in God's royal family. Amen?