

The Old Hickory

Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.

Jackson, TN 38305

February 06, 2011

Volume 31, # 06

HAVE YOU BEEN BORN AGAIN?

I WAS BORN IN 19__. You are a person who was born into this world in human form with human attributes. You are subject to the limitations of that humanity. Even though the Psalmist describes man as “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14), Job described men as “those who dwell in houses of clay, Whose foundation is in the dust” (Job 4:19), and the Apostle Paul described the physical bodies of men as “earthen vessels” (2 Cor. 4:7). The flesh is weak and frail, subject to suffering and death. As we grow and mature, we may come to recognize that we have been created by God (Psalm 139), and we have purpose in living (Eccl. 12:13-14), if even for a brief time (Jas. 4:14), in our physical bodies. Through the gospel of Christ we may learn that at some point in our lives we become separated from God due to sin in our lives (Rom. 7:7-25).

I NEED A SECOND BIRTH! My birth into the human family does not incorporate a means for me to abolish the sin barrier between me and God (Isa. 59:2). My fleshly birth does not equip me for erasing the sins of my life. We truly need a power beyond ourselves that can rescue us from this condition and provide a removing or forgiveness

for our sins. Thanks be to God that He has made a way for all men through the kingdom of Jesus Christ! Hear Paul: “For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” (Col. 1:13-14). Wow, that’s the prescription I need! I need to be in that kingdom! The first and fleshly birth was not enough. Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3). It is absolutely essential for one who wants the blessings of forgiveness and the promises of the gospel to be “born again!”

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I AM BORN AGAIN? There are more blessings to be obtained than the Fuller salesman has brushes! God sees you in a new light as He looks upon you as a citizen of the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13). We become children in God’s spiritual family: “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” (Gal. 3:26-27). The new birth results in a “new creature” (2 Cor. 5:17), and this new creature practices righteousness. (1 John 2:29; 3:10). He has access to Divine power to accomplish the work and live the life (Eph. 3:20-21) as one who walks in “newness of life.” (Rom. 6:4). One who is born again may give up his physical body in death, but he will “live forever.” (John 6:50-51, 58). The new birth is what makes men “freed from sin” (Rom. 6:18). And the good Father takes care of His children by providing access to cleansing by the blood of Christ as he walks in the light (1 John 1:7). This enables all who have been born again to remain in a saved condition. There are many more blessings in Christ!

HOW CAN I BE BORN AGAIN? Jesus Christ has the answer to our question of “How?”! “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5).

(a.) BORN OF THE SPIRIT: The term “Spirit” is an allusion to the source of the spiritual “seed,” which is “the word of God.” (Luke 8:11). That word of God (the gospel) is planted in the human heart in the conversion process. Notice what Paul says about the Holy Spirit’s message: “In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God’s own* possession, to the praise of His glory.” (Eph. 1:13-14). The enabling power of the Spirit is “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” (Eph. 6:17). It becomes clear to the New Testament student that the Holy Spirit, operating through the Word of God, “begets” a person who gladly receives it. James stated, “In the exercise of His will He brought us forth [“begat” – KJV] by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.” (Jas. 1:18; see also 1 Pet. 1:23; 1 Cor. 4:15). One who is “born of the Spirit” is “brought forth” by the Spirit’s message when he hears, believes and obeys it (Rom. 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Rom. 1:15-17; Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Heb. 11:6; Rom. 2:8; 6:16-18; Gal. 3:1; 5:7; 2 Thess. 1:8; Heb. 5:9; 1 Pet. 4:17).

(b.) BORN OF WATER: To be “born of water” is a clear reference to the water of baptism, which is a necessary act of obedience for anyone who desires entrance into the kingdom of Christ (Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27). The only objections to this understanding have been recorded in recent history by those who have departed from the doctrine of Christ in favor of their own doctrines. Paul recorded, “having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,” (Col. 2:12-13). Isn’t that what we were looking for, the erasing of sins? Baptism accomplishes that (Acts 2:28; 22:16)! Weren’t we looking to be found in Christ? Baptism accomplishes that

(Gal. 3:27)! One's being "raised" to "walk in newness of life" comes with baptism (Rom. 6:4-11)!

WILL YOU BE BORN AGAIN? Friend, what about you? Are you willing to hear what Jesus Christ said about entrance into His kingdom? Are you willing to conform to what you can see in your own Bible, without being influenced by the biased speculations of men? Can we help you comply with the Lord's instructions to be "born of water and the Spirit?" Will you not "enter into the kingdom of God?" Can we help you receive salvation today?

-GFS

A Child In Your Hands

Few responsibilities in life exceed the challenge which becomes ours when a child is placed in our hands. Every parent of a child has God-given duties toward that child: to love in word and deed and truth, to protect from harm, to provide with the necessities of life, to present a good example to follow, to teach right from wrong, to equip to fill a useful place in life. Any parent who is a Christian has the duty to so teach, to so influence, to so mold, if possible, his child that the child will choose to become a Christian when accountability is reached.

God is concerned about our roles as parents. He knows our potential, our limitations, and our opportunities. He knows our attitudes and intents; He considers the efforts we put forth; and He observes the fruit of our labors. We have the instructions of His holy word, and, as Christians, we have His promises, His providence and constant access to prayer.

- Bill Crews

> There are far more people willing to applaud a good life than are willing to make the sacrifices necessary to live one.

SUNDAY'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"The Man Approved of God!"* (text: 2 Tim. 2:14-19); Sunday evening: Jesus Christ: A Closer Look – *The Heart of a Disciple: Purpose & Sacrifice!* (Mark 8:31-37).