

The New Life Within



Born Of God (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again sharing with you precious insights out of Scripture that have made the difference between success and failure in my life and can do the same in yours. Our theme for this week is "Born of God." It deals with the most profound life-changing experience that can ever happen to any human being. The decisive act that brings about this experience, as I've explained in my previous talks this week, is personally receiving Jesus.

Let's go back for a moment to John, chapter 1, verses 10-13 which speak about two aspects of human response to Jesus those who did not receive Him and those who did.

> "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. [That's the negative. Thank God it doesn't end there. The next word is a 'but.'] But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Take that last verse and leave out the negatives, the "not's," and you have: "...who were born... of God." How did that come about? Very simply, by receiving Him. When they received Him, God gave them the right to become His children and they did it through faith, through believing in His name.

Let's look at the result now in simple terms. The result of receiving Him is a new birth. First of all, there are three negatives: it's not of blood, it's not of natural descent; second, it's not of the will of the flesh, it's not of human desire or human decision; and third, it's not of the will of a man, it's not of a husband's will. It's not of that kind of sexual impulse that brings about a natural birth.

And then we come to the positive: "... born of God"; therefore, God's children. And we also spoke yesterday about the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus in which Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about being born again and Nicodemus had no idea what He was talking about. He could only think in natural terms but Jesus explained to him in essence this is

not a natural or a physical experience, this is a spiritual experience. And so he said to him, "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit." So Jesus says it's not a fleshly experience, it doesn't proceed from fleshly impulses or desires or power but it's a spiritual experience, an experience brought about by the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit and the result is something spiritual not something physical.

Let's look then at the three distinctive features of the new birth as described there by Jesus: first of all, it's from God; secondly, it's from above (for that's the alternative meaning of the word translated "again" born from above); thirdly, it's by the spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God. And the result is a totally new spiritual nature.

In my talk today, I'm going to explain more fully the new kind of life that's produced in us by the new birth. We may state this very simply: This new life is Jesus Himself, His nature, His life imparted to us by the Holy Spirit. We have to be so very simple at this point. It's not really theology, it's a very simple basic fact which leads to experience. The life is Jesus.

Let's take some statements made by Paul and see how he expresses this. First of all, in Philippians, chapter 1, verse 21, Paul makes one of the most simple yet profound statements ever recorded in literature:

> "For me, to live is Christ…"

It's a personal matter, you understand. He didn't speak for anybody at that point but himself. Everybody has to make this personal. It's not congregational, it's not an experience that's national, it's an experience that has to be individual. "For me, to live is Christ…" Christ is life. My life is Christ. It's an indestructible life. It's an eternal life. It's a divine life. It's a life that can never be harmed or overthrown by anything that happens on the earthly plane. It is Christ.

And then, in Galatians, chapter 2 and verse 20, Paul again makes it very personal. It's so important to make this thing personal.

I remember growing up in the Anglican Church in Britain as a boy. I was taught to say in various phrases, "Our Lord and Savior." Our Lord, it was general. Then I met a little lady and I heard her say, "My Lord and My Savior." And I said to myself, "I can't say that." I had the general, the collective. I didn't have the individual and the personal. Bear in mind this has got to be personal, something for you. Just as Paul said, "For me, to live is Christ…"

So in Galatians 2:20, Paul returns to the first person again.

> "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live [Well, if you no longer live, how are you alive, Paul?], but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Paul says, "It's not I who is living any longer." Why not? "Because I've received Jesus. I came to the end of myself. I came to the end of my own life. In Christ, through His crucifixion, through His death, I died. I have been crucified with Christ. From now on, there's a new life. The cross was the end of the old life. The grave was where it was buried. But when Jesus was resurrected and I received the resurrected Christ through the Holy Spirit, then I started a totally new life. It's Christ now living in me."

And then again in the writings of Paul in Colossians, chapter 3, verses 2, 3 and 4:

> "Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things. [You bear in mind that this comes from above.] For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. [You see, when we come into this experience, we have a hidden life, a life the world doesn't see, a life the world doesn't understand but it's real in us. It's real to us. And then Paul goes on to make this amazingly simple statement:] When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."

Let me just take out some words: "Christ… is your life." Christ is my life. Now I can say that. I've been able to say that for more than forty years. It's a living, personal daily reality. I'd like to ask you: Can you say the same? Christ is my life.

Let me say just a word further about how we actually receive this new life. Let me speak about it for a moment in terms of the mechanics. I want to turn to Romans 8, verse 10. The key understanding is that this life is imparted by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God. Paul says in Romans 8:10:

> "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit [capital "s," the Holy Spirit] is life because of righteousness."

You see, there has to be a death before there can be a new life. So, when Christ comes in, on the basis of His crucifixion, we see ourselves crucified with Him. The body, that is the old, carnal life, is dead and it's dead because of sin. It had to

submit to God's judgment on sin which is death. But thank God, again, there's one of those beautiful "but's." It doesn't end with the death but the spirit is life. The Holy Spirit is life. The Holy Spirit comes in, imparting to us a new life, the very life of the resurrected Jesus. And this is because of righteousness, it's not on the basis of our own righteousness but it's on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus imputed to us through faith in Him.

But this inner life also affects our physical bodies. So Paul goes on to say in the next verse, Romans 8:11:

> "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, then He that raised up Christ from the dead will also quicken [or give divine life] to your mortal body..."

In this dispensation our bodies remain mortal. They're still subject to decay and to death. That's a reality. Our hair begins to turn gray or drop out. Our teeth are not as strong as they were. Our muscles don't function exactly as well. That's a reality in the life of all of us. But we don't have to submit to that totally because although we're in a mortal body in that body inside it is a divine eternal resurrection life and that resurrection life in the Holy Spirit can give divine life to our mortal body. I believe God can keep us vigorous and healthy as long as He has a task for us on earth and when our task is finished then He can take us to Himself.

Paul expresses this, too, just one more quotation. 2 Corinthians 4:16:

> "Therefore we do not lose heart [so don't lose heart, dear friend, dear Christian brother or sister don't lose heart because], though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day."

We have this conflict in the Christian life. The outer man is decaying. We are still in a mortal body. We are still subject to the pressures of life. But we don't have to be discouraged, we don't have to lose heart because there's something else in us that is greater than all that comes against us. Paul has said, "He that is in me" or "He that is in you is greater than all that comes against you." You can count on that inner life. If Jesus is living there, He's equal to every need, every situation, every problem, every pressure. Your outer man is perishing, decaying; but your inner man can be renewed day by day.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this same time. Tomorrow I'll be sharing with you how to nurture this new life we receive in Christ.

Radio Program

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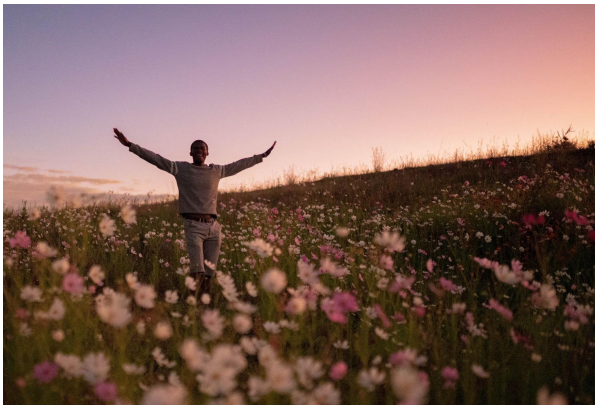

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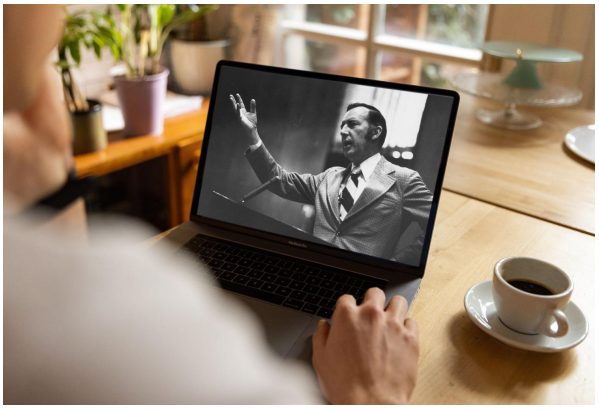

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