

Msg #173 of Scripture Beneath The Surface

“What Is: Being Born Again In Spirit?”

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to talk about being born again in Spirit. Being born again in Spirit is a basic fundamental requirement of Christianity. If you're not born again in Spirit, then you're not, according to the Bible, a Christian at all. Jesus said in John, chapter 3, verse 5, "Truly, truly, I say unto you, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

So the question for us is, "What does it mean to be born of the Spirit?" And in order to answer this question, we must first understand what a spirit is, and also what it isn't. A lot of Christians have a general understanding of who God is, and also who Jesus is. But most Christians don't have the foggiest idea of who the Holy Spirit is other than being the Spirit of God. But if we Christians are to be born again in Spirit, then we had better make sure we really are born again in spirit and not just the same old man of the flesh that we started out to be.

Spirits are real. No, they're not real in the physical sense, but they are real in the spiritual sense. And just because you can't touch a spirit or feel a spirit or see a spirit is no reason to think they don't exist. In fact, that's the whole concept of spirits, that they exist in a realm different than our earthly physical realm. We are born on this earth as human beings in a physical body. Our existence starts off in a physical earth with physical land, trees, animals, sun, moon, and stars. However, as Christians, we enter into a new realm of existence which includes the spiritual. Not that we never had a spirit before, but that we are now activated into a life by the Holy Spirit of God instead of being led of the spirits of this world.

In the beginning, before the earth was, there was the spiritual realm of God. God is a spirit. And in fact, all the heavenly beings are spirits. In fact, that's what the concept of heaven is, a place where life is lived in the spiritual realm instead of the physical realm.

Earth was the physical creation of God. God created the physical world and physical plants and animals to inhabit it. God also created man as a physical being to walk in this physical world. In the process of time God brought man to the knowledge of a spiritual God, and eventually to a knowledge of becoming spiritual beings, just as God is a spiritual being. Part of that understanding of becoming spiritual beings began with the birth of Christ, and John 1:1-14 tells us that Jesus Christ was the Word of God, that he was God, that nothing had been created except that which he himself had created, and that in the right time, according to God's timing, God had become flesh and blood in order to bring earthly physical human man into a closer relationship with God himself.

Now, because sin had come upon all flesh by the sin of Adam and Eve, therefore the world needed to be saved. The salvation needed was not just being saved from hell, in the strictest sense, but in the very fact that man had been born a physical being and therefore needed some way to escape the death which would come upon all those who were descendants of Adam.

You see, because Adam had only been created as a living soul, all human beings which were to be the descendants of Adam were also born as living souls. However, the problem with being born as a living soul was that we were also subject to physical death. A living soul exists and is able to act and speak because we have physical bodies. As living souls like Adam, we would eventually all die because Adam sinned and died. Adam could not produce descendants different than himself. As descendants of Adam we would all become subject to sin, subject therefore to death, and had no way of escaping it.

Jesus is our Savior because he was not born as a living soul. He was not a living soul, the Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:45, but he was made a quickening spirit. There is a tremendous difference between Adam and Jesus. Adam was only alive in the flesh, and therefore the descendants of Adam could only inherit life in the flesh. And because the flesh would eventually die because of the curse from sin, all men who were Adam's descendants would eventually die. It was the very fact the Jesus was made a quickenning spirit, a life giving spirit, and this fact alone gives mankind the ability to change from living souls in the flesh to being alive in the spirit.

Now, here's the important thing. As it says in John 6:63, "It is the Spirit which quickens." To quicken means to give life. It's like if you cut yourself down to the 'quick', it means you have cut yourself deeply enough to get through the top layers of dead skin and reach the layers of skin and flesh which are alive. If you cut yourself to the quick, you will bleed. The word, 'quick', means living. The Holy Spirit of God is a quickening Spirit, which means it is a life giving Spirit. Romans 8:10 tells us that the Spirit is life.

But how then can we be born again in Spirit? If the Spirit is life, how do we receive this life in the Spirit? Well, Jesus gave us the answer to this in John 6:63 when he told us that the words he spoke were spirit, and they were life. You see, it is the word of God which brings life, but it is also the word of God which can bring death. If the word of God is spoken as a blessing, then life is the result. But, if the word of God is a curse, then suffering or death is the result of that word. Now, we, as human beings, are eligible for life in the Spirit if the Spirit of God dwells within us. The Spirit of God will quicken us. It will give us life.

But how does the Spirit do it. How does the Spirit work in us to create that life within us that will cause us to live forever? Again, John 6:63 gives us insight, for it says that it is the word of God which is spirit, and it is the word of God which is life. You see, the key to understanding how life in the Spirit is attained is by understanding what takes place in the process. It's quite simple, really. We just have to look closely at the principle to understand it.

Let me give you some definition of what a spirit is and what a spirit does. A spirit moves us. That's it, essentially. A spirit moves us to actions and words. When we humans speak or act, it is the result of the spirit within us. But it goes a little deeper than that. The spirit within us, whether a good spirit or a bad spirit, moves us to act or speak, but it only moves us to act or speak according to what it finds in our hearts. Our heart is the key structure, the key location, of our thoughts, beliefs, and convictions. And it is the spirit within us that searches our hearts and then moves us to act or speak according to what it finds down deep within us. This is why Jesus said in John 6:63 that his words were life, they were spirit. Now, the words that Jesus spoke would be either received or rejected by people. If we receive the words of Jesus, then the Holy Spirit of God, when it searches our heart, will find the word of God there. And, if it finds the word of God in our heart, then he, the Holy Spirit, will be authorized to move us to speak or act according to those words.

What you are, down deep in your spiritual heart, is what will be manifested outwardly in your flesh. If the word of God abides in you, then you will manifest that word of God. However, if the lies of Satan, the delights and temptations of this world abide in your heart, then the Holy Spirit will not find God's word there, and will not be able to move you accordingly. What will move you, if the lies and temptations of this world are found in your heart, are the evil spirits. Evil spirits can move you to words and actions just as easily as the Holy Spirit can move you to words and actions. It all depends completely on what is found in your heart. If, in your heart, you believe and receive the word of God, and the gospel of his son, Jesus Christ, and his words abide in you, then the Holy Spirit of God will find that word and will move you to manifest those words. But if the word of God is not believed, if it is rejected, or is flooded over with a multitude of Satan's lies, then the only spirit that will find anything with which to move you will be an evil spirit.

A spirit is the vital principle of life. Humans will die because they are flesh and blood. And the only way to live a life eternal is to be quickened by God's Spirit. God is a spirit, and he lives forever. We can also live forever if we are made alive in the Spirit instead of having only a life

in the flesh. When Christians die they will lose their body of flesh. However, they will then have life in the Spirit because they will still be part of the body of Christ. Because Christ lives forever, we also will live forever. But when a person has rejected Christ, then the only thing in that person's heart is the lies of this world. The word of God has been rejected, and therefore the only spirit that can find something in the heart with which to move them is an evil spirit.

Now, let me ask you something. Do you know what it means to be animated? Animation is a demonstration of life. To be animated means to be alive, in the sense that you are moving. When an animal is dead, it doesn't move. It's not animated. It doesn't exhibit life. That's why they call cartoons on TV, animations, because they simulate life. When the drawn cartoons move on the television screen, they are considered to represent living things because they move. However, humans are not cartoon drawings. We are moved by spirits, and spirits move things whenever it finds words in a person's heart. According to what is in the heart, a spirit will move us accordingly. It is the spirit that moves us, but it is the words found in our heart that allows the spirit to do the work.

And another thing. When a professional writer is writing, one of the biggest problems he faces is a lack of inspiration. To be inspired means to be moved by your spirit within. Now, think of this carefully. This is important. No writer writes spirit. A writer cannot write spirit, but a writer writes words. He writes his thoughts. It is the thoughts in the writer's heart that are put on paper. Now, it is the spirit that moves the writer to write, but it is the thoughts of the writer that end up on the paper because he is inspired.

The word, 'inspire', comes from two words. The first part of the word, inspire, is 'in', and the second part of the word, inspire, is 'spirit'. When someone is inspired, they are in spirit. Or you could say that when a person is inspired, they are 'in the spirit'. To be inspired is to be moved into action or speech by the spirit within you.

Now, here's another thing. When a spirit moves you, there are emotions present. This is because the action of the spirit is a direct result of the thoughts, beliefs, and convictions which were found in your heart. Every emotion displayed in humans is a result of thoughts, beliefs, and convictions. What you think about a certain situation will specifically determine how you react. If a situation arises which displeases you, you will react with anger or contempt, or in some other negative way. If a situation arises which pleases you, you will react with words or actions of kindness or happiness. This is because anything that happens to you will either conflict or agree with your perspective of how you want things to be.

You see, this is why Jesus said that his words were life. If the word of God is received into your heart, then the Holy Spirit will find them there. And when you are confronted with any situation at all, it will be the Holy Spirit who will find God's word in your heart, and will therefore cause you to react positively in a good way.

Even in the beginning, when God created the earth, there was the action of the Holy Spirit. In Genesis 1, verse 2, it says that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters which covered the earth. Now, we know that when the Holy Spirit was moving on the face of the waters, there certainly was a creation which took place, but it wasn't the spirit that created it. It was the word of God that created it. Now, this might seem confusing, but notice something. Whenever God did something, it was his word which was spoken that brought it about. When Jesus did miracles, those miracles were in complete accord with the word of God. And, according to the faith of Christians, when anything is accomplished on earth, it is not our own word or our own strength which accomplishes anything, but it is the word of God that is responsible for the results. Nothing, nothing at all, is accomplished unless it is completely in line with the will of God. As it says in Romans 13:1, there is no power but that power which is of God. And John 1:1-14 tells us that Jesus was the word of God. When Jesus spoke the word of God, people were healed, the dead were raised, and the sea was calmed. It is a direct response of God's word which causes all things to come to pass according to, and only according to, God's will or according to what God will allow. There is no power but that which comes from God, therefore, no one speaks or acts unless God allows it. Even Proverbs 21:1 tells us that a king's heart is moved just like rivers of water, and that God moves that king's heart wherever he wants it to go.

But even though it is the word of God which can move all things, it is only the Holy Spirit which can cause the word of God to be manifested, to be shown outwardly. It is the word of God that resides in the heart of a true Christian, but it is the Holy Spirit, dwelling within us, which sees that word of God and then brings it to pass according to God's will. The Holy Spirit does not act separately from God, but causes actions to come about in response to God's word.

When we are born again in spirit, this means that we must have the word of God in our hearts in order for the Holy Spirit to move us according to God's will. When the Bible tells us that we must be born again not only with water, but also of the Spirit, this means that unless the Spirit finds thoughts, beliefs, and convictions in a person's heart that are in agreement with the word of God, he, the Holy Spirit, will not be able to demonstrate God's word by moving the person. Think of it. How could the Holy Spirit move you to works of righteousness when your heart has not received God's truth? You can't manifest truth if there is no truth within you. All that can be manifested in you would be the lies of Satan.

If you are inspired, you will be inspired by what is found in your heart. Inspiration is the result of your thoughts, beliefs, and convictions. And, if lies are the foundation of your heart, then lies will be outwardly shown. And, if lies are dominating your heart, then the Holy Spirit will not be dwelling within you because it will not find the word of God there. To be born again in Spirit means to receive the word of God in your heart to such an extent that the Holy Spirit can abide in you and move you to speak and act in righteousness.

Sometimes people don't realize what emotions are, and they don't realize that emotions are a response of the spirit within them. When you receive input from some source or another, you will react. If someone offends you, you will exhibit some type of emotion, either positive or negative, depending on which spirit is in control. Emotions are a manifestation of what is taking place in your mind. If you feel especially threatened by a dangerous situation, you might begin to perspire or to run away or to scream, or whatever. If someone is kind to you, you might respond with a smile, laughter, or returned kindness. But no matter what takes place, you will exhibit emotions. Sometimes these emotions can be hidden, but they will still be there, and they are always a physical response to stimuli. Whatever you experience on the outside of you will cause a reaction to come from you, and the reaction you show will be determined by the thoughts, convictions, and beliefs within you.

Emotions will always be produced in any given situation, and most of the time they can be seen outwardly by others. But emotions are not the spirit. They are emotions of a physical body which are caused by the spirit within you. If the word of God dwells within your heart, then most of the time you will react properly. Let's hope so, anyway. But the key to proper responses is to have the word of God firmly in your heart. That way, the right spirit will move you, and your responses will be in righteousness instead of evilness.

Now, one last thing. Many people make the mistake of saying a sinner's prayer without ever feeling strongly about receiving the word of God into their heart. If you get baptized in water you won't necessarily be saved, because the Bible says that you must be born of water and of the Spirit in order to enter the kingdom of God.

If you truly receive the word of God in your heart, and if your heart's desire is truly to receive Jesus Christ as Lord, and you truly do love the word of God, then the Holy Spirit will be able to dwell within you because he will find the word of God there and will be able to move you to works of righteousness. In actuality, having the Holy Spirit abiding in you will give you new life in Christ because you will be moving according to a new life. You will be moved by the Holy Spirit. You will be animated with righteousness. Your words and actions will testify of the life eternal. You will be alive, forevermore.