

"BORN AGAIN"

John 3:3

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

We have been trying to stand on a mountain peak and look out upon some of the great doctrines of the Bible. We thought first about the return of Christ. We have talked about the grace of God. We have considered the love of God. And in this sermon, we take up the remarkable subject some people call it conversion. Others repentance. Or just born again.

I remember reading the story about some people who were lost in the mountains. This man said that he had an unusual experience. He was born and raised in these mountains. And he said, he thought that he could never get lost. The mountains were his playground as a child. And his hunting ground as an adult. One day, however, he found himself groping through the brush and clammering over the rocks - hopelessly confused. He wandered around in circles. He retraced his steps. And suddenly, to his relief, he came upon an old man in a mountain cabin. He said that he would never forget the advice the old man gave him. When you find yourself lost in the mountains, never go down. Always go up. At the top of the ridge, you can <sup>GET</sup> your bearings and find your way again.

All humanity gets lost in the mountains of life. We have two or three choices that we can take when we are lost and running around in our confusion. We can either go down and get caught in drugs or drink. Or depression, emptiness, or confusion. Or we can take the other direction.

and head up. And determined to find ourselves, and this is the thing that we want to talk about. The personal search, for the answer of life. To get the true direction of being born again.

Jesus said, that God can change men and women from the inside out. Now this is a challenge. And Jesus said to Nicodemus, this man, John 3:3,7. He did not tell him it would be nice if he were born again. He did not say that it might be helpful to you to be born again. But Jesus said you must be born again.

And it has always been an amazing thing when people discover that he made this statement to a devout religious leader. Nicodemus, must have been shocked by it. Think about this man - he was a good man. He was a moral religious man. His neighbors probably said of him - he is a wonderful man. He is great on the Scriptures. He is a man that fasted twice a week. He spent a couple hours a day in prayer at the temple. He probably gave very generous of his income. And he was a teacher - probably in the school or the seminary there. Now if a person was looking for the best man to get for their church, they would sort out a man like Nicodemus. Jesus said to him - your goodness is not enough. You must be born again. In spite of his education, his professional standing, he saw something in Nicodemus. And he could realize that Jesus meant what he said. Here was a new quality of life for living. And Jesus told him, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. He was explaining to Nicodemus that he didn't have to do certain things to get this eternal life.

Now the Bible refers many times to this change that Jesus talked about here.

✓ Ezekiel said I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you.  
36:26.

✓ Peter in the book of Acts <sup>11</sup> called it repenting, and being converted.

✓ Paul speaks of it in Romans as <sup>11</sup> being alive from the dead. Rom. 6:13.

✓ Col. - it is the putting off of the old self with the evil practices and putting on the new self who is being renewed to the true knowledge according to the image of the one who created him. 3:9-10.

✓ Titus - he <sup>11</sup> calls it the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit. Titus 3:5 - Peter said we are partakers of the divine nature. 2 Peter 1:4.

This is one of the most common <sup>term</sup> ~~terms~~ used to present the idea of having a new life. To beget a term the new birth - means the same thing. The expression that Jesus spoke in John 3:3,7. As being gotten or born again - or more properly from above.

This is a figure of a new creation - as in Gal. 6:5. Eph. 2:10. Rom. 2:29.

Conversion means turning. The Bible is full of this concept and God pleads

with man to turn to him. He spoke through the prophets to turn away from idols. And to turn to him to be saved - to all the ends of the earth. For I am God and there is no other God. Isa. 45:22.

So we are not as we climb on the mountain peak to take a look at this doctrine tonight. We are not talking about something being reformed, but being transformed. We are not talking about something that makes a resolution to do a little better. But makes a resolution to change completely. And through the new birth, a man will be able to enter a new world.

Now there are four or five words that we might use tonight to help us to understand this doctrine. ~~First~~ of all, I want us to think about the mystery of being born again. And ~~second~~, the mediator. And ~~third~~, the method. And finally, the marks of the new birth. How do we know that we have been born again. So if we can take these ideas and mold them into a message - it will help us to see from the observation point a little better what this is all about.

## I. MYSTERY     v. 4

The mystery of the new birth is something that has been present since then that Nicodemus received the message. It is impossible for us to read the words of Jesus here. And remember that they are solemn words. And not become fascinated that he seems to describe a great mysterious necessity. To which the heart itself must become conscious. We must be born again. Yes, I know I must be born again - maybe Nicodemus says My life must make a fresh start on

a new plan. And the heart becomes aware of this. Now where do I start. And where do I begin. And this is the wonder of the new birth - the mystery of it.

These words have opened the gateway to all sorts of escape. Some have been provoked to be self-satisfied. And others have been stirred to deeper consciousness.

And the hearts which God has led through this rich experience have been introduced to a new life. These words have come and have taken hold. And they have said - I have been born again.

When you think of the thing that happened - it perhaps is still a mystery for some of us. And still when we hear it - just like Nicodemus, when he first heard it. How can these things be?

Men are tempted to think about this because of their authority. Or they say, I wish that I could make it plainer. I know of course that this is a (description) of a spiritual experience. But it is kind of vague to men except to those who have experienced it. Now no man can intelligently tell what life is saved. And how all of it happens. But the very fact that Jesus chose the common life of ours - with its beginning and its ending - to represent to us the soul's deepest existence. It seems to imply that all men who live the physical life - may somehow understand the spiritual life. At any rate, he says, it is like a birth. Now what Jesus meant when he said that men must be born again. The difficulty of understanding that truth and the new life,

I think sometimes lies in our (wanting) to grasp the (whole thing) at one time. We want to see the whole exhibition. You asked me what life is in the most common place, of living men who are out here before me. And I am utterly a failure to tell you. What it is that is in them. Now it is so in the spiritual life. It is hard to tell what the essence of the new Christian life is in any man. How do I explain when somebody is converted. How do I handle this mystery.

There are many different ways that I might try to start. And perhaps tell about some of the deep things. But not able to go ahead and tell about the whole thing that has happened. The soul passes into life, and then he passes into the second life. It seems to be really a mystery. A man from the shallow life, the old life dies - and then he is born again. The first birth, the death - and then the second birth. This is everywhere.

Now this may not make sense to us when we begin to talk about these things.

But we must, somehow, it has to be done by the Holy Spirit. Except a man be born again. Then, if that be true - how do we understand what Jesus meant. Did he mean a new teacher. A heart that is all wrong made right. A heart that is out of harmony with God now made in perfect harmony with God.

This mystery many people say is out of date. There are folks who will say - well, the Lord can make them good somehow or other. Just when they are going to die. There are a lot of people who feel like maybe this is what God was talking about.

Now look, if God can make you right - just before you die, he can make you right while you are living. And if he cannot make you right while you are living, he cannot make you right just before you die. Now there are some people who say, I don't believe it. If he could make Adam good out of nothing - he can make you good out of what is left.

Now the word mysterious But here is the word must and again. And these words are not old-fashioned. And the truth comes home to our conscience. And they are not out of date.

Nicodemus probably knew a great deal about church. He was probably a pretty good moral man. But Jesus did not spare him - he loved him. He did not compromise with him. He did not lower his standards with him. Here is something that never runs dry. It is a power, and only a power that can break the chains that bind us. And open the eyes of the blind. And cure the wounded lives. And lift men from sin and ruin. And we need to emphasize this.

Now there are some people who say that this is out of date and that the preacher is an antique, when he talks about the new birth.

Now, it is mysterious to me if you think that you have gotten beyond the teaching of the new birth. And you don't think you need it. You think about the past week in your life what has happened. The last days that you have spent. Would you be ashamed to let God look at your life? And to look into your heart? So this is a mystery here. And people try to side-step it.

Now this doctrine, the mystery of it doesn't belong to any one church. It doesn't belong just to the Baptists, the Methodists, etc. We didn't invent it. There are men who preach this - several hundred years ago that they didn't invent it. Jesus said, we need not to forget that. And we know if this is God's message - then we must listen to it. It is a message that is mysterious and that is spoken to drunkards, to harlots, to murderers, and to out-casts of society. And even to church members. It is possible for a person to be a member of a church without being born again.

In one of Moody's campaigns he said, the inquiry room revealed to him the awful fact the number of church members who knew nothing about the new birth. They know the letter of the law, he said, very well. But he says, they are very ignorant of the free grace. So it is possible to have your name down on the church register and not have it on the lamb's book of life. Now this may startle you - but if I can get you thinking about this for a moment, as Nicodemus in this mystery said - how can a man be born when he is old. It is possible to be saved when you are an old man. Yes, it is possible - but it is difficult. How often do you see gray headed men join the church. There are very few who come. They will tell you if you ask people, that they came to Christ before they were 25 years of age. The majority of people come when they are under 25. If you go over 25-30, you have less. And the higher you get - 50-60 there are less. And when you get up to 70, you may write down that there are very few who come. Now what does this mean. It means that you can say no to Christ until you lose the desire to say yes. What it means is - can a man be born when he is old.

You have crowded life with things and have crowded God out. And the things of the judgement day is going to come.



Yes, a man may come and it is impossible for him though - ye must be born again. There is no other way to get in. And men still say, well, show me how it works. Do you know how electricity works. The new birth has a lot of mystery in it.

II. MEDIATOR OF THE NEW BIRTH V. 6

Now let us think for a moment of that one who mediates to bring about the new birth. Luke 19:10. The whole mission of Jesus, the mediator is here stated. "To seek and to save that which was lost." That says it all. When we listen to that word, we know that we have the truth.

Now this is something that we need to talk about and tell about.

Someone was talking about an old preacher who was 77 years of age, and there was a lovely lady living out in Texas who was about 77. And they fell in love and he used to come out there to court her. On the summer evenings he would sit upon the lawn. And both of them were slightly deaf. And he had a loud voice. And their love making sometimes could be heard all over the place. And Dr. Gordon said, that one night he remembers hearing the old man say, "Matilda, I love you." "I know it, she replied it." "But don't talk so loud" - there are some things that ought never to be shouted.

Well, Dr. Gordon said, he reflected on that. In his own quiet way - talking about the son of God. You know, there are some things that we can shout

about but there are some things that we need to talk about with reverence. And when we come to talk about the new birth, and the mediator, the first definite assertion is that Jesus has come. He has come to be the Saviour. And this is what man has been searching for all through the ages. And Jesus had a saving mission. And he says, behold, I make all things new. Now here is the key thing. He has come to seek and to save this old world. This old world was tired and he came to give it rest. It was sorrowing and he came to bring it joy. It was a dark world and he brought light. It was a dying world and he came and brought life and liberty. It was lost and he came to be the mediator to bring it back to God.

And if you could write down in one sentence about Jesus, you would say that he came to take out of the human heart everything that (sin has put there). And he came to put back into that human heart everything that (sin took out) of it. And that is what he does through the new birth. He is the mediator. Through his power and the Holy Spirit. Yes, we lost a great deal in our human nature because of sin. And that is a bad picture when you think about this world, the rebellion, and the sin in America. And this is the way to get back on the right road.

God never breaks an engagement - he is never late. But he was there when man needed him. And man was hiding. But man was not there. And so we see, that God came to bring man back. And he is the mediator of this. We have a lost nature. And of course, this idea is that we can become a new creature. In Jesus Christ.

Bishop Moore said once, he was traveling across South Georgia. He was just a young preacher. And the train stopped by a sleepy little town. There was an old Negro lounging outside the station. He said, I raised the coach window and called out - and said, Uncle George - "does anybody around here enjoy religion." Quick as a flash he replied. "Yes sir, them that's got it do." Then what's got it do indeed. And I think that is true today - the only people who enjoy religion are those who got it. And today who have the nature and the love of God implanted within them. They love the things that God loves. They delight in the things which he delights in. The mediator can come and take away from a man who is having a struggle with the Devil and restore him. Therefore, God became man and took upon him a birth from the fallen nature. Yes, nothing less than the mysterious incarnation. To open the way for us to be partakers of divine nature. All nature and creatures stood around about Adam. They were unable to help, as he was unable to help himself. It was not until the son of God entered by a birth into this fallen nature, by this mysterious way, the fallen nature might be born again of him - according to the Spirit.

III. METHOD V. 8

We have talked about the mysterious, and we have said a word about the mediator. Now something about the method. How to be born again. How does it happen to us.

Now we might first discuss some of the things that are not the new birth. It is not reformation. We could try to turn over a new leaf. We could quit our evil life and join a church. And feel that's enough. People have gone through reforms, but they still have the sin in their lives still there.

He still has some debts that need to be settled with sin. It is not a loud profession. Now there is a difference in a profession of faith and a possession. Judas made a loud profession but he really never possessed eternal life. We are told that he was a Devil from the beginning. And he went to his own place.

It is not joining a church, and every man saved ought to belong to a church. If you are a Christian, you should belong to the church. And joining the church will not save anybody. The church is not our saviour - but it is the home of the Saviour. If you say that you can live just as well outside the church - you certainly are reflecting upon the wisdom of Jesus who loved the church and gave himself for it.

There are some who probably would say, now why preach conversion to a professing people. But we need to preach that God's spirit may find you out. And not only let you know where you are but what you are. You will not be easy with yourselves or angry with the preacher of Jesus Christ. For we preach conversion and the new birth.

Now the author of this conversion is the Holy Ghost. It is not of a man's free spirit or will that he does it - but it is the invasion of the spirit of the living God to affect this change that he can be born again. And conversion means that a man is being turned from Hell to Heaven. From the world to God. Now Jesus demanded conversion - and the elements of conversion and the method is by way of repentance, renouncing your sin, and the Bible says that sin is a transgression. And God hates sin. And the word repentance may be an unpopular word but in the first sermon that Jesus ever preached, he said,

repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

Ezekiel preached repentance. Therefore, I will judge you, oh house of Israel. Everyone according to his way, saith the Lord God, repent and turn you from your transgressions. So iniquity will not be your ruin.

This is mentioned 70 times in the New Testament Except ye repent. So this sermon that Peter preached on Pentecost was repent.

Now what does Jesus mean by this word. Why does it appear over and over in the Bible. Well, it said it has something to do with feeling sorry and to regret. Now the Bible says a great deal more. It says it is regretting and feeling sorry about sin - but it also means to change or to turn. So here is a word of power and action - repentance. Like Jesus, who told the story of the prodigal. He dramatizes it. He was lost. My, he was sorry for what he did. But he changed his direction and he came back home.

One man in talking about the method of being born again and repenting - the old timers mourner's bench - people have told all kind of truths about these things. And it was stated at that time that a man had to do certain things. So he went down and he was kneeling and trying to find God. Some sister came by and slapped him on the back and said - "hold on brother". If you want God, you'll have to hold on. A few minutes later, a church officer came by and slapped him on the back and said - "brother, turn loose". Then later, another sister came in a few minutes and said to him - the night I was converted

a big light hit me in the face and knocked me cold. The man said, I tried to turn loose and hold on at the same time. While looking for the light. I almost never made it in the confusion.

Now many people have various ideas - that to be converted you must have some demonstration of emotion. Or some other reaction should take place. And this keeps many people from coming to God.

The method simply is - first, (I must acknowledge my sin.) There must be a knowledge of sin. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Isaiah was convicted of his sins he said - whoe is me, I am a man of unclean lips. Job said I abhorre myself. Peter said, I am a very sinful man. And Paul said, I am the chief of sinners. Now the Holy Spirit brings this conviction. This is part of the method. We have a conviction.

Now the second thing that may take place in the new birth is the emotions. A genuine experience, as Paul said - godly sorrow that worketh repentance.

Now the third thing that is involved is the will. It is only when we come to the will that we find the heart to repentance. We determine to forsake sin. To change our attitudes toward sin and to God. And only the spirit of God can give you this determination. Now there are hundreds of people tonight in this country who have their names on the church rolls. They go to church and it is o.k. when the weather is good. They give a little money to support

the activities of the church. And they come in and maybe once in awhile, they talk the language of a Christian. They may even be able to quote a fair amount of Scripture. But they have never really experienced true repentance.

They have a sort of a (take it or leave it) alone attitude.

They might turn to God and (pray) when they get into a tight spot. But the rest of the time, they do not think about God.

→ There is not one verse in the Bible that indicates that you can be a Christian and live any kind of life you want too. When Christ enters into the heart, he demands that he be Lord and master. He demands complete surrender of your intellectual process, your talents, your abilities.

Too many today professing Christians would give up going to church and they give a choice. If given a choice between making a down payment on say a new car, or some luxury - or contributing to building a mission somewhere - it is easy to guess what their decision would be. There are thousands of so-called Christians that put money in things that make for a high standard of living, ahead of the teachings of Christ. Why we find people who spend all kind of money on movies and ball games, but they cannot find time for God. We can get a bigger television set, but we never feel we can afford to tithe God's money. I think a change must take place because we are just idol worshippers. Worshippers of graven images. Jesus demanded that he would be the Lord of our life - our family life and our business life.

Now the method is when you accept and experience the new birth - you are ready to give up all of this and the sin in your life. And don't try to be a part-way religious. And don't say I am going to give up some of my sins and hang on to some of the others. I'll live part of my life for Jesus and then I'll live the rest of my life as I desire. Jesus demanded a total change and a total surrender.

The Bible teaches when we get to the age of accountability, that God looks upon us to make the spiritual choices. Every individual is guilty before God. And I say to you, repentance and the new birth is not old-fashioned. Now it may not seem proper in your thinking. But it involves an acknowledgement of our sins, unto God. And it involves a genuine sorrow for sin.

And with this comes a change of purpose. A willingness to turn around from sin. Now if we had to repent and to be born again without God's help, then we would be helpless. But the Scriptures teach that we are dead in the trespasses of sin. And a dead man can do nothing. Therefore, we need God's help even in our repentance. Sometimes, the new birth may cause men to make restitution. If we have stolen, lied, cheated, hurt other people. We must go and make all of these things right.

And of course, another key word - in the method of it is faith. In conversion, we must have a turning from. That side is called repentance. And then a turning too. And that side is called faith. Belief that Jesus is the mediator. And faith that he can do what he says he can do.



And we place our faith in Christ. We make him our choice. It means that we commit our lives. We surrender.

Now somebody may say well, I don't feel saved. I don't feel forgiven. But don't depend upon feelings for your assurance. Christ has promised and he cannot lie.

Jesus described the conversion experience like the movement of the wind. The wind blows and you hear the sound of it. But you do not know where it come from and where it is going. So is every one born of the spirit. V. 8. It may be gentle - it may be like a cyclone.

Now the method is - remember, you must first of all recognize what God did. He gave himself and died on a cross, a substitute that whosoever believes.

Second, you must repent for your sins. Jesus said unless you repent, you will perish.

Third, you must receive Jesus Christ as Saviour. And as Lord, but as many as received him - to them he gave the right to become children of God. To those that believe in his name. John 1:12.

Fourth, you must confess Christ publicly This is a sign that you have been

converted. Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, I will confess him before my Father who is in Heaven. Matt. 10:32. It is extremely important that if you will receive Christ, that you take the opportunity just as soon as possible to make this confession.

And the method says that you can make it happen today. Now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation. 2 Cor. 6:2.

#### IV. MARKS OF THE NEW BIRTH

How do I know that I have been born again. Now listen, there are some marks of the new birth. He tells us so in the Bible. How can I know about it.

First I John 5:10 - He <sup>if</sup> that is born of God hath the witness within himself. <sup>if</sup> If you are walking in newness of life and trying to keep yourself unspotted from the world, you are a child of God. You feel different about God. And you think of him as your Heavenly Father.

Second I John 5:1 - <sup>if</sup> whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God. You say, I believe that. But how do you believe it. Do you give just your intellect to it. Do you believe it with your heart. If you really believe a thing in your heart, then you will confess it with your mouth.

And then you will take Christ and introduce your friends to him at every opportunity. It will be a proud thing for you to talk about Jesus and your church.

Third, I John 3:14 - We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. That is a mark that is on you. If you are born of God - you will love Christians. And I have seen individual congregations all torn to pieces by strife and descension. Now, I believe that is of the Devil. Now it makes no difference what a man's social position is. It doesn't make any difference who he is. If he has the spirit of God in him, you are going to love him as a brother. And you will take delight in doing it.

Fourth, I John 5:4 - Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world. Now, I tell you, this ought to cause some of the church members tonight to wake up and to examine themselves. Now instead of over-coming the world, you are being over come by the world. Paul says, they that are of Christ have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof. A thing that is crucified is supposed to be put to death. And if your old nature has been put to death and you are really born again, you are not going to love the old world and be charmed by it so much.

Now you will see these empty-headed church members out here throwing away themselves in worldly things. But if you are born again and the spirit of God is in you, you are going to love the things of God and the things that God loves. Of course, if you are ruled by your carnal nature, I'm going to tell you - you'd rather play golf on Sunday than go to the house of God to worship.

And you'd rather a thousand times go to some show and watch a bunch of half-dressed girls show off than you would to go to prayer meeting. Now, where should a Christian - (a born again person) be expected to be found. Now God I think expects him to (be found) in the church. He that is born of God overcometh the world. Now the world will always be your master unless you give God the rightful place in it. (If) you give the throne over to the Devil, he is going to have the rule. When you have been born again - you'll know that you have been born again by this.

Fifth, I John 2:29 - Everyone that doeth righteousness is born of God. <sup>//</sup>  
What is righteousness. It is simply this - that which is right in the sight of God. <sup>//</sup>

Now before I became a Christian (I did as I pleased) I never stopped to consider what God might want me to do. But after I became a Christian I never made that mistake. Or if I did make a mistake, I'd fall on my knees and ask God to forgive me. And promise God that I was going to be a better person. It is (not) enough for us to believe the Bible. The Devil believes that. But the Christian must practice what the Bible teaches. It is not enough for you to belong to some church or have your name on the roll.

You can ask some people - (what) are you. Well, I am a Methodist. I am a Baptist. Now look, there are going to be a lot of these in Hell. Because it is not joining the church - (but) it is doing the will of God.

You ask somebody else if they are a Christian. Oh yes, I have been

confirmed. The thing is not whether you have been confirmed - but have you been converted. Born again.

I John 3:9 - Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin. If you are a Christian, a newborn Christian - you are not going to want to go on in sin.

Peter fell down and wept and repented of his sin. And there are lots of people in church today who make sin a practice in their lives. Sometimes it is secret sin. No body knows about it but themselves. And of course, God knows about it.

If you make a practice of doing wrong, you are a child of the Devil as sure as you are born and you will be in Hell. Because it says here, you will be a different person. Now you take the old illustration of a sheep. Let him fall in the mud and he gets out of it very quickly. And he will let you know it. - Now go Man Spot again. Hog let him get in he'll lie down

& grunt with satisfaction. you can drag him out & scrub him up, but he will squeal while you are doing it. & Run for the mud as soon as you turn him loose.

its a difference of the Nature  
Hog likes mud  
Sheep doesn't

When Born again you won't lie down in sin -

No matter how soiled your past - How corrupt your present - There is a way out.

N.B. (ill) a man used litch horse in front of Saloon -

- One morning Saloon keeper came along found horse litch front Meat ch.

- Saw the man on St. say why is your horse litch in " " " " ?

last night he was converted in the revival meeting & alve changed litching parts

(That's what it means to be B.A.)