

## Chapter Two

### Born Again

#### Our Dire Need

To be born again is the greatest miracle and the most needed miracle that could happen to anyone. When you are born again you are radically changed for the better at the core of who you are.<sup>1</sup> You become a child of God.

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. <sup>2</sup>Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.  
(1 John 3:1, 2)

Everyone and anyone who places his or her faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation becomes a real child of God at the moment of belief. And we can see aspects of this life of God in us now. Through the Spirit of God in us we can have lives of faith, hope, love, joy, peace, faithfulness, goodness and so much more. And when Christ returns we will be fully conformed to his image, which is the image of our Father God. Therefore, Scripture exhorts us saying,

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup>Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

<sup>3</sup>For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup>When

---

<sup>1</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:17 declares that we become a new creation.

Christ *who is our life* appears, then  
you also will appear with Him in glory.  
(Colossians 3:1-4)

Through our union with Christ we have spiritually entered into Christ's death and resurrection the moment we are born again. We have new life within us so we can understand the good will of God and enjoy fellowship with God. To set our mind on things above is to think about God's Word which gives us a new identity and purpose in life. And our life in Christ is hidden now, in that the world cannot fully appreciate that we are children of God and that one day we will share the glory of Christ. Another aspect of our lives being hidden in God and Christ is that we are forever secure in their love and care.

But without being born again we are lost—dead in trespasses and sins. We are alienated from the life of God. And we are manipulated by worldly ideals and values and wisdom that only leads to frustration,, sorrow, heartache, wickedness and the wages of sin, which is to perish. Most people in the world do not understand their dire need to be saved and born again. When challenged on this they do not think there is any thing wrong with them; they are good people, perhaps better than most. They don't understand why they need to be saved by trusting in Jesus Christ to be born again.

One way to help people come to a realistic, painful and yet hopeful understanding of their need for Christ, is to show them how deeply sin is rooted in our hearts. And that this sin nature is the root cause of all of our troubles, sorrows, tears and tragedies. Sin is the source for all of the evil we see in the world. Once you understand that you are terminally ill with sin, then hopefully you will be motivated to seek salvation.

For example, you visit a doctor because you have a wound on your foot that won't heal. The Doctor examines you and does his tests and then says to you, "I have bad news. The infection in your foot is incurable and left untreated it will kill you. We need to cut off your leg below the knee before it is too late." When you understand the true nature of your health you can make the decision about what to do with your foot. This is why Jesus Christ said what he did to a man named Nicodemus.

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. <sup>2</sup>This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered and said to him,  
“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless  
one is born again, he cannot see  
the kingdom of God.”  
(John 3:1-3)

When Jesus insisted to Nicodemus that he must be born again, he brought home the truth that this is not optional. Just as you can't put a fancy sock over a seriously infected foot and live, you cannot ignore the fact that you are a sinner doomed to perish if you are not born again.

As I mentioned in the last chapter Nicodemus was a Pharisee which means that he was a very religious man. The Pharisees devoted their lives to their moral and religious standards. But Jesus told Nicodemus that he needed to be born again, because he was a sinner by nature and needed a new nature. Nicodemus was perhaps one of the best men that his religion could produce. But Jesus Christ was insistent.

Jesus answered and said to him,  
“Most assuredly, I say to you,  
unless one is born again, he  
cannot see the kingdom of God.”  
<sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said to Him, “How  
can a man be born when he is  
old? Can he enter a second time  
into his mother's womb and be born?”

<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, “Most assuredly,  
I say to you, unless one is born of  
water and the Spirit, he cannot  
enter the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup> That  
which is born of the flesh is flesh,  
and that which is born of the Spirit  
is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Do not marvel that I said  
to you, ‘You must be born again.

<sup>9</sup> Nicodemus answered and said  
to Him, “How can these things be?”  
<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered and said to him,  
“Are you the teacher of Israel, and  
do not know these things?”  
(John 3:3-7; 9, 10)

Ever since the time of Adam's sin everyone is born of the flesh and his or her heart is polluted by sin. And the wages of sin is death, not everlasting life. Now, you may be thinking, "OK, I think I understand what you are saying. But I know people who seem good and moral. And I am not that bad of a person."

Well, there are people who for any number of genetic, educational, economic and moral and social reasons have learned to behave. But they have all sinned, including you and me. In psalm 19:12 David cried, "Who can understand *his* errors? Cleanse me from secret *faults*." Or as another translation puts it, "How can I know all the sin lurking in my heart? Cleanse me from these hidden faults."<sup>2</sup>

All of us have secret faults. All of us know that we have fallen short of the glory of God. We all know that we don't always live up to our own moral standards, let alone God's moral standards. We have an infection that will not heal without God's grace to us in Jesus Christ. Here is what the prophet Jeremiah said about our condition.

The heart is deceitful above all *things*,  
And desperately wicked;  
Who can know it?  
(Jeremiah 17:9)

The translation called The Message translated the verse as follows.

The heart is hopelessly dark and deceitful,  
A puzzle no one can figure out.

Here is what the Bible says about all of us.

for *there is* no one who does not sin  
(1 Kings 8:46)

*There is* none who does good,  
No, not one.  
(Psalm 14:3)

Who can say, "I have made my heart clean,  
I am pure from my sin"?  
(Proverbs 20:9)

---

<sup>2</sup> The New Living Translation

For *there is not a just man on earth who does good  
And does not sin.*  
(Ecclesiastes 7:20)

This is why God promised in the Old Testament that in the new covenant He would give us a new heart and put His Spirit in us.<sup>3</sup> This is the new birth. Now, having a sin nature doesn't mean that we are always doing bad things. It means that we all have the potential to do bad things. And on our own we do not desire to live according to God's Word. We do not want to please Him, we want to please ourselves.

What I am presenting is not a pretty picture of the human condition. But my hope is that this diagnosis concerning the sin that destroys us will lead to taking the medicine that heals us—faith in Jesus Christ. In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he reminds us of our terrible condition before our faith in Christ.

And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, <sup>2</sup>in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, <sup>3</sup>among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.  
(Ephesians 2:1-3)

Before our salvation in Christ, before being made alive, or born again, we were spiritually dead and living in the realm of trespasses and sins. Our tendency to sin, to think of ourselves more than God was our natural nature. It was the very air we breathed. And the world around us with its ungodly values and standards cattle prodded us to think and feel and behave in an ungodly manner. And the world doesn't know any better, because it is blinded and manipulated by Satan.

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no

---

<sup>3</sup> Ezekiel 36:26

longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, <sup>18</sup> having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; <sup>19</sup> who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. (Ephesians 4:17-19)

This is a sobering and shocking statement. Without any godly influence people live their lives in the futility of their minds. Their thinking as far as godliness is concerned is irrational, distorted and empty of true value. They are alienated from the life of God, because they are ignorant of His good will. Satan blinds people to the truth that they are sick with sin. He sways those who live according to the flesh to set their minds on the things of the flesh.<sup>4</sup> He does this in the realm of art, science, politics, education, technology, business, philosophy, religion— everywhere. And without being reconciled to God, we become more and more apathetic about the things of God and our hearts become hard.

Someone has coined our current culture the outrage culture. We see wrong and injustice everywhere and we rage against it. In a society that desperately wants to believe we are good the way we are, this outrage should open eyes to the fact that we are not basically good. But the main problem of why I am so easily deceived is me! Apart from God's grace I am my problem, my heart is hopelessly dark.

This is why I need God's mercy and love to save me through faith in Jesus Christ. But sadly, tragically, some people will never be saved. And this is not because God does not love them. It is because of what they love. Here is what our Lord Jesus said,

And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (John 3:19)

---

<sup>4</sup> Romans 8:5

Even religious people will not be saved if they refuse to come to Jesus Christ by faith. Jesus said the following to the religious people of his day.

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. <sup>40</sup> But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.  
(John 5:39, 40)

Our only hope for everlasting life is to be born again. Our only hope is God, because he loves us. He loves you personally.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.  
(John 3:16, 17)

The infinite love of God for us is our only hope not to perish. It is the love of God to us through Jesus Christ that enables us to be born again with a new nature so that we can live a life that pleases God and blesses us.

If you are saved, if you are born again be ever so thankful to God for His love, grace and mercy. Rejoice in your salvation and your future hope of life and glory. And live for God in all you do.

Our dire need is to be born again. If you have not yet trusted in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior I pray that you do so now. Jesus Christ invites you saying, "Come to Me...and I will give you rest...and whoever comes to Me I will never cast out."<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 11:28; John 6:37

