

“Have You Received the Holy Spirit?”

Written February of 2007

Scripture Reading: II Corinthians 5:17

“Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.”

Introduction

As True Believers in Christ Jesus it is vital that we understand and embrace what this rebirth or being “Born Again” truly means. Through the course of the next half hour, we will try to answer one of the most important questions of your “Christian Life” which is the title of today’s sermon: **“Have you received the Holy Spirit”?** Let us pray before we start, so that God may illuminate our minds.

Sermon

My dear Brothers and Sisters the phrase **“Born Again”**, is a powerful phrase, which has often times been used to describe someone’s decision to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior. But being Born of the Spirit is something that a lot of Christians today haven’t truly experienced.

Being Born of the Spirit goes far beyond accepting Bible Doctrine; It goes far beyond living right; It goes far beyond your knowledge of Scripture; It goes far beyond coming to Church faithfully each Sabbath or Sunday; It goes far beyond tithing and supporting the church financially; It goes far beyond having leadership positions in church (*Deacons, Elders, Pastors*).

Brethren we can do and live all these things but **if we are not Born Again in the Spirit of Christ, we are Spiritually Dead**. Let us turn to the Scriptures to shed some light on the subject. **Let’s turn to: John 3:3-7**

Did Nicodemus know Bible Doctrine? Did he know the Scriptures? Did he go to church every Sabbath? Did he have a leadership position in Church? The Scriptures tell us “Yes” to all these and he was one of the heads of the Jewish Council (*Sanhedrin*); yet here is Jesus telling him “That’s great that you do all those things for the Kingdom, **but** unless you are “Born Again” you won’t see the Kingdom.” Keep your finger on **John Chapter 3**; doesn’t that sound a lot like: **Matthew 7:21-23**

“Not everyone who says Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom. Many will say Lord did I not do all these things in your name? And the Lord will say depart from me, I never knew you.”

You see my Brother’s and Sister’s unless our **“Christian Foundation”** is the Spirit of Christ, who is the **Breathe of Life**, we are Spiritually Dead. Jesus was trying to convey this to Nicodemus, that it didn’t matter all the good deeds he did, if his life wasn’t first guided by the Holy Spirit, he would not know **The True Will of God**. Many Christians have gotten comfortable, in that their deeds for God assures them Salvation, instead of taking a hard look in our Spiritual Mirror and asking themselves: **Are my deeds centered on Christ’s Love??**

Only through the Holy Spirit can we know the True Will of God. The Holy Spirit is the means that Christ has chosen to be in our hearts and guide our lives; but only if we surrender all to the Spirit of God...The Holy Spirit is all around us, right now in this moment, the presence of God is amongst us through the Holy Spirit. We have access to the Power of God through the Holy Spirit.

But isn't it amazing that most of the time we neglect to tap into that Resource, the **Lifeline that we need as Sinners; we just simply choose not to use**. God will not force Himself upon us; we have to receive Him and ask for His help. Only through a **Baptism of the Holy Spirit** can we know the will of God and receive His Spirit in our lives.

I would like to go back to **verse 5 in John chapter 3: "Except a man be Born of water"** (*Is talking about True Baptism by submersion*) **"And"** (*Is a key word here*) **"of the Spirit"**... There are (3) things or events happening here that lead to this important TWO-part equation of being Born Again, let us analyze the first:

- 1) You are submerged under water through Baptism, which represents the Burial of your old life, which followed the world and sin. So, in essence you bury your **Old sinful Life** in the Baptismal waters.
***As you re-emerge out of the water the Second event happens.**
- 2) You are being Re-Born out of the Baptismal waters, as a life that seeks Jesus Christ, and follows His Word and Doctrines.
***Now comes that key word "AND" we emphasized earlier and its importance to us as True Believers, and the third event that happens.**
- 3) **"And"** You are **Born of the Spirit of God**, which means the Holy Spirit takes over your life, in words, thoughts and actions. **So in other words the Spirit of Christ is Reflected through us, and our lives. We become His vessel of Light.**

Let's turn to **Romans 6:4** and get a clearer picture of what this means:

"Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of Life."

The Body of Sin dies, and a new Person is Born of the Spirit of God. This further explains how we as True Christians die to the world, but through the Glory of God we are created new, and walk in that Newness of Life, which is Christ dwelling in us, and in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. Paul also explains this further in his letter to the Galatians.

In Biblical times when the people wanted to establish or claim a Covenant (*Promise*) with God something either had to be sacrificed (*or die*) or blood had to spilt in order to seal or ratify the Covenant coming to pass. Christ Blood ratified the forgiveness of sin in our lives, but in order for us to truly be partakers of that Covenant we must die to self (*symbolically bury our old lives in those Waters*).

Let's look at: **Galatians 2:20**

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

When we are Born Again of the Spirit, we no longer live for the world, but for Christ who Died for our Sins, because he loved us so much. **So, in essence we live our lives reflecting the same Love He showed us in dying on the Cross.**

I firmly believe that almost every Christian who gets baptized starts off with that Newness of Life Paul talks about; but somewhere along the way we unknowingly get caught-up in the trivial things of this world. **We get caught-up into the Traditions, Customs, Rules and Regulations of man. We make religion more important than a Relationship with God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit.** We forget to ask ourselves every second of the day: **"Am I Reflecting the Love of Jesus in my words, thoughts and actions?"**

This is something I began doing in August of 2005; last week I gave my testimony, and I would like to share with you how I was **"Born Again"** (2) years ago for the Glory of God.

My Born Again Experience

Two years ago, I went to visit my Brother's former neighbor about a business opportunity. We somehow ended up talking about God almost the whole time. After a couple of hours of speaking about God's grace and His Purpose in our lives; Pastor Garcia asked if he and his friend could pray for me. I agreed, he then proceeded to place his hand on my head, and his friend Philippe put his hands on my shoulders.

They proceeded to pray the most eloquent prayer I have ever heard, the prayer lasted approximately 30-40 minutes. During the Prayer I began to sweat heavily, and I was weeping as well. Where Pastor Garcia had his hand on my head, I could feel each fingertip Ice Cold, as if I had five cubes of ice around my head. I felt my whole body on fire and I continued to sweat heavily. Before the end of the Prayer, God gave me a Vision of what my Purpose was for Him. He showed me what He wanted me to do with my Life.

When the prayer finished and Pastor Garcia removed his hand from my head, I felt as if a demon had left my body. I began to cry, and weep. For the first time in my Life I felt **Peace**. I felt **true Joy and Serenity**. I felt **Free** like if I was floating on a cloud. My mind was blank, I tried to think of something, and I couldn't think of anything. All that I felt, was that I was given a Second chance to live my Life for God, to live for His Glory and **NOT** my own.

As soon as I left Pastor Garcia's house, I called my Wife and told her of my experience and she began to cry, together we Praised God for His Love and Mercy. In the weeks that followed my Wife realized that I was a completely different person, and that a transformation had truly occurred that night at Pastor Garcia's house.

Satan can only keep his hold on us if we let him. In **Ephesians 6:12** it tells us as True Believers in Christ Jesus **“we are fighting a war against principalities, against rulers of darkness, against spiritual wickedness.”** These demons gain a foot hold on us every time we get **Angry**; Every time we **Lose our Temper**; Every time we make our **Vanity** more important than God; Every time we Drink **Alcohol, or do Drugs**; Every time we let our **Habits** control us; Every time we let our **Past Disappointments** dictate our Present and Future.

Only through the Power of the Holy Spirit can we have the **“Spiritual Vision”** to see the chains Satan tries to place on us. **Does Satan have you chained down Spiritually?**

We say that we Believe in Christ, in God the Father, yet there are some of us who have not received the Holy Spirit the way God intends His True Followers to do; and some of us do not live out of the Spirit the way we should.

Brothers and Sisters, we are Spiritually outside of Christ, unless the Spirit of God dwells in us. We will live a life without Purpose unless the Holy Spirit guides us every step of the way. **We will walk through this world in Spiritual Darkness, unless the Spirit of God shines in our heart and in our lives, so that we can be a Light amongst a World of Darkness.**

A Supernatural act happens when a person truly receives the Holy Spirit. They are transformed and Christ is always with them through the Holy Spirit. **It is only in dying to the world that we truly find Life. A new nature evolves when we are Baptized in the Spirit of God, and we walk as new vessels of Light for the Kingdom of God and only for the Glory of God.**

We are going to look at our final text for this morning, which was our Scripture Reading found in: **II Corinthians 5:17**

“Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.”

As Jesus told Nicodemus and I tell you now, **you must be Born Again**, if we are to be partakers of God’s Kingdom. Nicodemus had only two parts of the three-part equation we talked about in: **John 3:5. You cannot love God Properly unless we receive His Spirit.**

My Dear Brother’s and Sister’s that is why I ask you the same question I began with: **“Have You Received the Holy Spirit?”**

I would like to close with a short story, a familiar one perhaps, but relevant to this morning’s Sermon:

The Full Price was Paid

There was a little boy who wanted a dog, but his Parents told him no, because they couldn’t afford to buy one. But the little boy was determined to have a dog; he spent weeks working for his neighbors’ raking leaves, taking out the trash and saved his allowance for weeks till he had saved \$20.00. Now the only problem was there weren’t any Pet stores close to his house. But the little boy was still determined to get his dog.

One day while walking home from school, he saw a sign in front of a house that said **puppies for sale**. He rushed to the house and an elderly gentleman showed him the litter which had been born. The little boy immediately asked how much for one of them, the elderly man said \$20.00 (*imagine the excitement of the little boy, because he had exactly \$20.00 in his pocket that he had saved*). The man showed him the best of litter, and the little boy looked them over, one by one; but then he noticed one of the puppies in the corner and asked what about that one; the elderly gentlemen proceeded to tell him....

That puppy was born with a bad leg and probably wasn't going to make it, and most likely he was going to put him to sleep. The little boy almost shouted "**I want that one**"; the elderly gentlemen asked puzzled and confused, why would you want that puppy when all the rest of the litter are much better? The boy answered, **because we understand each other**; He lifted up his pant leg which revealed a brace around his leg, you see I was born with a bad leg too. The elderly man moved by what he heard, told the little boy to only pay him \$10.00 for the lame puppy; but the little boy proudly said, **NO, I will Pay Full Price for him, and Love him the same**, he then gave the elderly gentlemen all he had, his \$20.00 and went home with his new puppy...

In Closing

No matter what has happened in your life, no matter what you've done, what Sins you've committed, **Jesus understands you**, and Loves you so much that he paid the **Full Price of Sin for you**; by dying on the **Cross on Calvary**. **God is so determined to save you, that He gave His only begotten Son, that if you Believe and Accept that Sacrifice, you would not perish, but have Everlasting Life**. Christ understands you, and he's only waiting for you to open your Heart to Receive His Spirit.

As the last song plays, I would like to invite you up front for a special prayer:

Altar Call

If there are some here today, that the honeymoon period of your Baptism has Worn off, or maybe you've forgotten every once in a while, to ask yourselves: **Am I Reflecting the Love of God?** And want to re-commit yourselves back to God, Come forward. Or maybe there are some that have slipped further and further from that Love and Zeal you had in your Baptism, maybe some have never Completely and truly understood what being Born of the Spirit meant.

Brothers and Sisters it is time to **re-ignite that original love** that you had with Our Father in Heaven; Or maybe you have never experienced the true depth of that love and would like to do so, please come forward. **Or maybe you've never known the love of God, the power of His grace and mercy and you want to give your life to Him, and receive His forgiveness through the Blood of Jesus Christ, come up now, Jesus is waiting for your Step of Faith....**