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The Gospel According to Matthew

You Must be Born Again (Part 3)

May 5th, 2019

Sermon Text: Matt 15:10-20

Scripture Reading: Psalm 69

Mat 15:17-20 Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? (18) But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. (19) For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. (20) These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.”

You must be born again. If you are Christ is yours and you are Christ’s

and all the promises given to Abraham are yours:

Heb 11:8-10 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. (9) By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. (10) For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

If you are not born again, and if you depart this life in that dead condition, you will never see the kingdom of God. Christ will send you away into what He called “outer darkness,” without God and without hope and without life, forever.

You must be born again.

This past week a lady asked me a very good question that concerns all of us. She has been the victim of two wicked

and evil abusers in her life, the second one almost killing her. And so she asked me, “how can I avoid getting into a relationship with another evil man?” I wrote a blog post to answer her question.

This subject concerns all of us, doesn't it? How can WE avoid being duped by a wicked person who simply wants to do us harm? Many portions of the New testament concern this very subject – the letter to the Galatians for example, and also the letter to the Corinthians. 1 John and Romans as well. I know more than one genuine Christian women who have been sure they were marrying a fine Christian man: many were pastors or missionaries – only to suffer for decades at the hands of a counterfeit.

Well, this morning I want to show you how the answer to this question is directly related to our subject, *you must be born again*. Let me begin by sharing a few personal experiences with you – and I know that many of you have had the same things happen to you.

Darkness and Light

In every church that I have been the pastor of, I have been hated by quite a number of people. People who claimed to be Christians and were members of those churches. It didn't take very long

after I arrived that certain people wished I had never come. I could go on and on telling the stories, but as many of you have personally shared in those experiences, I don't need to explain in detail. You know what I am talking about.

But here is something that perhaps you haven't thought of. Once those “church conflicts” started to take place, early in my ministry I would consult people for some assistance. In our first church I talked to our district minister. In the early years here I consulted seminary professors and church “experts” for advice.

Nothing helped.

For the most part, what I was told was that these things happen often in churches and that I needed to:

- Be patient
- Love the people
- Be humble
- Remember that we are all sinners (an unbiblical lie by the way)
- And in some cases perhaps it is best if the pastor just moves on to another church. (The average stay of a pastor here when I first came was 3 years and if you rule out the pastor who stayed longest, that average comes down to about 2 years or less)

In other words, most all of the “experts” were of the opinion that ALL conflict in the church is a 50-50 deal. Both parties are at fault. And thus these conflicts were actually just a failure to communicate, and if we each just worked harder at understanding one another, we could get along. This is the same kind of nonsense that many so-called “biblical counselors” lay on people who have been terribly harmed by evil.

But it never worked. Why? Well, the people who hated me did not want to “get along.” They hated me.

It took me many, many years to realize that I had been taught wrongly, that much of my training was absolutely contrary to God’s Word, and that the real reason for the vast majority of this wickedness in local churches was directly related to our subject: *you must be born again.*

Let me show you what I mean. Let’s consider what the Lord effects in our lives when He saves us.

- Forgiveness of sins
- Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us and our sins to Him on the cross
- We are adopted so that we become children of God and He our Father

- All of the blessings of the inheritance the Lord promised Abraham become ours because in Christ we are children of Abraham, and thus heirs of the Promise
- We are delivered from Satan’s kingdom and made citizens of Christ’s kingdom of Light
- We are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and become the temple of God
- We become members of Christ’s body, the true church, a holy temple being built on Christ the cornerstone
- We are buried with Christ and raised up as new creations, so that even when this old body dies, nevertheless we shall never die. We have eternal life.
- The Spirit of Christ goes to work in us to transform our minds and we now love the Lord and love His Word.
- Also by the leading of the Spirit we love the Law of God and we desire to obey Him and put to death the deeds of the flesh by the Spirit.

And that no doubt is not a complete list. But let me state the obvious conclusion which comes from these things –

We are brand new creations. We are not who we used to be. We are the

people of Christ. He is in us. We walk now in light and righteousness, not darkness and unrighteousness. We are saints – holy ones.

And it is these things that explain why we experience this hatred so often from people who claim that they are Christians. I have finally come to see it. I now understand why all of this hatred came my way. Here it is:

1Jn 2:19-20 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. (20) But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge.

Joh 15:18-19 “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. (19) If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

1Jn 3:11-13 For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. (12) We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous.

(13) Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you.

Joh 17:14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

Here is the root of the issue and it was NEVER once addressed in my seminary classes or by any of the so-called “wise and experienced” pastors and others I consulted. Do you grasp the impact of that? This is like a new doctor discovering cases of cancer in his patients and when he consulted the specialists they tell him, “No, that’s not cancer. You are wrong.”

Do you understand the consequences of NOT realizing these things?

- You will wear shame and false guilt and blame for causing the problem
- You will become discouraged and feel like giving up
- You will yield to the wicked and let them have their way, continuing on in their work of deceiving others

If you are born again, then you are going to have enemies, most of whom are people who claim to be Christians. People who you initially thought were sound Christians and whose help and

support you appreciated, suddenly in an instant hate you with intense hatred and want nothing to do with you. Some of them will be your own parents or siblings or even your children or spouse.

Am I popular with the world? What kind of people are drawn to me? What kind of people do I desire to associate with?

Draw Closer to Christ

Luk 6:26 “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

2Co 6:14-18 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? (15) What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? (16) What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Jas 4:4 You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

(17) Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, (18) and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.”

1Jn 4:5-6 They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. (6) We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

You must be born again, and if you are born again these are the things that you will experience. You *will experience them*.

Now, as we know, often it is quite difficult to sort out who is a genuine Christian and who isn't. But it is vital that we be able to make this distinction because *the most evil, the most dangerous, the most deceitful kind of unbeliever is the one who is parading*

Now, here is a question for each of us to put to ourselves:

as an eminent saint, a find and upstanding Christian. So how are we to discern and see through the fog that the wicked cast over themselves?

I can tell you.

Grow closer and closer to Christ. Grow in the knowledge of Him and His will. Here we have it in the Apostle Paul's words –

Col 1:9-14 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking **that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, (10) so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;** (11) being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; (12) giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. (13) He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, (14) in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

This is why you read His Word. It is why you come to church and hear His Word. The Holy Spirit in you uses these things to do what Paul's prayer

says: that we increase in the knowledge of God and His fruit becomes more and more evident in our lives.

And guess what? As you do this more and more, the wicked will become visible. How? They will hate you. They will grow cold toward you. They will depart from you. They reveal themselves for who and what they really are. But if you are lazy in using the means Christ has given us to grow in Him, if you still want the world to like you, then to that degree you will remain deceived by them, and they will lead you astray from Christ:

Mat 5:14-16 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. (15) Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. (16) In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

How do I know? How do we avoid being drawn in by a wicked person who is wearing a Christian disguise or some façade that makes them look like just the greatest thing that ever came your way? *Let your light shine. And that light is Christ.* Stop trying to please people like this. Live for Christ. Don't be ashamed of His Word. As

you do, you can be assured that the wicked will eventually show their hand. They will hate you. And when they do, you can know that it is because they are darkness and you are light.

And that is how it should be for every real Christian. Because, *you have been born again.*