

Born of Water and of the Spirit

Part Three

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"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit," JOH 3:7-8.

The most decisive and important message of the entire gospel is to properly understand the new birth. There are so many variations or interpretations of what constitutes the new birth, and the Lord Jesus Christ says, "Ye must be born again."

Without the new birth there is no eternal salvation. Without the new birth we are condemned to hell eternally. That is how important it is that we be born again.

Therefore, it is vitally important that we properly and rightly understand the new birth. There is probably no other thing Satan would rather do than deceive us on this one point; he would let us think we have been born again when in fact we have not been born again.

Nothing is more important than to understand that summons of the Lord Jesus Christ, "...Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," JOH 3:3. We cannot see God's kingdom unless we are born again.

The new birth is a marvelous thing which cannot be comprehended with the natural mind it is a miracle of grace. Nicodemus was the ruler of the Jews, a Pharisee, the teacher of the Jews; the Jews were the tribe of Israel, the chosen of God, but Nicodemus did not understand the new birth.

Look at JOH 3:4, "Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"

Nicodemus did not understand that Christ was speaking about being born spiritually. In V: 5 the Lord Jesus Christ answered him saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Water is the symbol of the Word of God. The Word of God is the vehicle or the instrument whereby the Holy Spirit quickens us unto newness of life. The Holy Word of God quickens us. So if we are blind to the authority in the Word of God, we may lay spiritually dead thinking we are alive. We must see the importance of understanding the authority of God's Word.

It is by the power of the Word that Jesus "cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth," JOH 11:43. And Lazarus who was dead in the grave four days (Lazarus was stinking) came forth by the power of the Holy Word. It is the Word of God that has the power to quicken us spiritually. The Holy Spirit uses the authority of the Word to bring us out of spiritual deadness into a state of spiritual life.

When a little girl in Scotland was asked if she had received the new birth she replied: "I know something has changed, it might be the world&mdashit might be my heart&mdashI'm not quite sure what it is but there has been a great change somewhere."

What is she saying? She had loved the world and the pleasures and entertainments of the world, and now all of a sudden nothing about the world charms her. She didn't know if the world had changed. She thought maybe there was something about the entertainments that had changed. She wasn't sure what it was; she didn't know if it was that or that her heart had changed.

Take note of the second verse of the hymn, "O Jesus, Friend Unfailing," "Nought, nought I count as pleasure, Compared, O Lord, with Thee; Thy sorrow, without measure, Earned peace and joy for me. I love to own, Lord Jesus, Thy claims o'er me divine; Bought with Thy blood most precious, Whose can I be but Thine?" Verse 3 says, "O worldly pomp and glory, Your charms are spread in vain!" Why? Something has changed.

Our text says, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." We cannot tell where it came from or where it went; all we know is that something has changed. We can feel the wind, the effect of it, but we can't see it.

That is the way it is when you are born of the Holy Spirit. You become a different person; have a new desire and a new nature. You no longer have pleasure in the things of this life. Your pleasures become centered in the Lord Jesus Christ, in serving Him and doing His will.

The new birth is referred to in Scripture as a quickening from the dead. It quickens new desires. A dead person has no senses. A person can be so near death that the only way the medical personnel can tell if there is life is by taking a brain scan.

Sometimes that is the way I can tell if I have been quickened spiritually. It is what goes on in one's head. What brain waves can I detect? In other words, our vital signs become the very elements whereby we can detect life. Is the heart pulse correct? Are we breathing? Do we understand what it is to have the breath of life?

If we can see that a person is breathing and has a pulse, there is no need to take a brain scan because the vital signs prove there is life, but if they are missing, a brain scan can determine if there is still life. I want you to think about these vital signs as we go in this text. Look for spiritual vital signs, senses, and tastes.

We have a wonderful sense of taste. What is sweet? Is it the charming things of this world or is it the blessed atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ? When our spiritual senses are quickened, our taste buds begin to work. No longer can we swallow the things that are bitter. No longer do we delight in those things that are bitter. We now have a taste for the things that are precious, those things of more value.

The nature of this quickening is real, and it is revealed by our Saviour in the parable of the prodigal son. As we go through this parable, notice how the Lord Jesus Christ shows repentance. Compare repentance with brain waves; our attitudes and mental dispositions show repentance. It is a change of mind.

Have you seen a change in your values? Have you noticed a difference in your tastes? Have your spiritual senses been quickened? See how beautifully our Saviour unfolds the meaning of the new birth in the parable of the prodigal son.

Notice LUK 15:32, "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." To understand this, look at EPH 2:1, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Spiritual death is where a person can walk in trespasses and sins. When a person can live in and delight in sin, it is a sign of spiritual death.

In the parable of the prodigal son we see the father saying they were making merry because his son was dead and is now alive. Where is the difference? He had gone out, wasting his living in the things of this life&mdashhe was dead. Now he is alive. What happened? He had come to himself and returned to his father's house and into his father's service. He is alive. He was lost and is found.

This parable teaches the true meaning of repentance, which is the first evidence of the new birth. The Lord Jesus began preaching the gospel of the kingdom saying, "Repent." The first word in the gospel is "**repent**". The first evidence of true spiritual life is repentance. Now let's see how blessedly the Lord Jesus illustrates true repentance in this parable.

FIRST there is a change of attitude. There is a change of values. LUK 15:17 says, "And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!"

A look at the earlier verses in this parable tells what happened. This prodigal son went to his father to ask for his inheritance. He took it, went out, and wasted it in riotous living. He lived in the pleasures of this life.

The Lord changed his appetite for these things by bringing him to want. The Lord brought him down with poverty; he was brought to the point where he was feeding swine and eating the husks the swine left.

This is how the Lord changed his attitude. He came to himself; he thought of his father's servants who had bread enough and to spare while he was literally dying of hunger. He saw the poverty of serving sin. He saw the wretchedness that leads to eternal death. He saw that everything he had done in serving this world was emptiness.

The prodigal son came to himself; he had a change of attitude. What brought this about? He wasn't sure what brought this change. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth."

In your life and in mine, circumstances bring us to the point where we see that the pleasures of this world are no longer the great goal of our life. The Lord uses circumstances in providence to bring us to this point. The prodigal son now sees what a fool he has been; he realizes that the pleasures of this life lead to poverty&mdashspiritual poverty.

SECOND, there is a well-planned change in our course of life and a confession of our

guilt. We must understand the meaning of true repentance. True repentance is the instrument whereby the new birth takes place.

As with Naaman the leper we read "Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean," 2KI 5:9-10.

Now notice the miracle of healing was directly related to the obedience of faith. It wasn't until he obeyed that he was healed. "Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean," 2KI 5:14. As he obeyed, the miracle was performed.

The miracle of the new birth takes place as we begin to obey. That is the instrument the Lord uses to bring it to pass. Notice the well-planned change in the life of the prodigal son. LUK 15:18 says, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee."

In other words he came to himself, realizing what a fool he had been. He carefully planned how to retrace his steps. He planned to go to his father, confess how wrong he had been, and ask if he could re-enter his service.

THIRD, we left the service of our Father in the fall of Adam when we are quickened by grace. There is an urgent desire to return into the service of our Lord.

When we no longer find serving the flesh and the world a delight, we see the emptiness of sin, riches, and the pleasures of this life&mdashnow we begin to see the fullness there is in Christ; then we have a desire to return into His service. We can no longer serve sin and the things of this world. We have a desire to serve our Lord.

Now notice this third element in LUK 15:19, "And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." He was not looking for a place of glory or honor in the service of his father; he was asking to be one of his slaves or hired servants. In other words he is saying, "Can I just enter your service again? I have wasted everything I have. I took my inheritance, left, and wasted it." The great question that remains is whether he can re-enter his father's service!

This shows one of the elements of repentance: a change of attitude toward serving the Lord. We no longer want to serve the world because our new chief delight is serving the Lord.

What brought about these changes? "The wind bloweth where it listeth." The Lord gives this change of attitude, and He uses His providence and circumstances to bring about changes in our attitudes. We don't know where these changes came from; all we know is that they are there. That is the work of the Holy Spirit who is working a new birth in the soul.

FOURTH, as the Holy Spirit instills the Word into our hearts, this well-planned repentance is put into action.

We must understand; if the prodigal son had made his plan which included arising, going to his father, telling him of his sin, and asking to come back as his servant, it would have availed him nothing if he had not put his plan into action. He had to get up and do it, and it was in the doing, putting this plan into action, that his restoration with his father took place. That is how his reconciliation was effected.

Notwithstanding all his change of attitude&mdashall his enlightened plans&mdashHe would never have become reconciled with his father if he had merely sat in the pig pen planning, planning, and planning, while he continued feeding upon the husks which the swine left, but not acting upon the plan.

It was by the obedience of faith, i.e., by putting his well-planned repentance into action that reconciliation was effected with his father.

What did the son do? LUK 15:20 says, "And he arose, and came to his father. [Do you see the importance of putting his plan into action? It was when his father saw not only a change in attitude but in his actions that the father's heart was moved.] But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

Did you see the first words of that Scripture? "And he arose, and came to his father." That is how the new birth brings us into reconciliation with the Father. It is not only that we have come to a change of attitude or mind or have new desires to come back into the service from which we broke away, but by our actions&mdashwe must also arise and go to the Father.

Now see how the Lord looks upon you and I and see the joy there is in heaven over one sinner who repents. There is such joy in heaven over one sinner that comes to himself--who not only desires to, but who arises and returns into the service of his Father. See the father's response, "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

The son did not even get a chance to tell his father his confession of all of his sins. His father called for the best robe, a ring for his finger, and shoes for his feet before he had a chance to make his confession.

The Lord looks at our hearts. The father saw in the heart of this young man that he was returning to his house and service, no longer serving the things of this life.

As this well-planned repentance is put into action, the beginning of miracles takes place. What is that? When the power of the Holy Word of God becomes our authority, we put it into action and come into the service of our Lord. Then there is the beginning of miracles where the water was turned into wine. The wine is the symbol of joy. There is rejoicing.

As the Word of God becomes our highest authority and we put it into action, then we see the reaction of the Father.

LUK 15:32 says, "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." Do you see the joy? There was rejoicing; they killed the fatted calf and brought together friends and relatives

to rejoice. In the parable just before this one of the prodigal son, Jesus said there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repents; the angels in heaven rejoice over the true repentance of even one sinner.

When that beginning of miracles has taken place there is no more desire to serve sin or to live in the pleasures of this world. Our taste buds have been restored as we have been spiritually quickened. Our senses have been enlivened where we can now taste the bitterness of sin that we had not previously tasted. Now we no longer see pleasure in the things of this world and our desire to do such things is gone.

1TI 5:6 says, "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." If we can find pleasure in the sins of this world, we are dead spiritually while we are alive physically.

Our text compares the work of the new birth with the wind, and we need to see why this is important. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

This word **Spirit** comes from the Greek word **pheuma**; the first translation of **pheuma** is "a currant of air, i.e., breath."

Read again the previous paragraph to see how Jesus compared the Spirit to the wind. When the Holy Spirit works grace in our hearts, the first thing that takes place is the receiving of breath.

The second translation is "a spirit, i.e., the human rational soul, vital principle, mental disposition." As soon as there is spiritual life breathed into our soul, there is a change in our mental disposition. Our attitude changes; it is repentance.

That is what it is to be born of the Spirit. We will have a change of mind, a change of attitude, a new life, and a new breath of life breathed into our souls by the Holy Spirit.

The third definition of the word **pheuma** is in a Divine sense; it is translated as "the Spirit of Christ [which still lends itself to our mental disposition or the Spirit of Christ], the Holy Spirit; life, spiritually minded." See how the word **spirit** means attitude.

LUK 9:55 says, "But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." What does that mean? You do not realize what an attitude you have. To be born of the Spirit is a change of attitude and a change of mind or mental disposition. It is that which one used to love is now hated, and that which was once hated is now loved. A change of attitude occurred.

The word **wind** and the word **Spirit** in our text are both from the same word **pheuma** in the Greek. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit," JOH 3:7-8.

In other words our attitude goes where it wants to go. Can you always tell what is the source of your attitude? When the Holy Spirit quickens us, our attitude begins to reveal the Spirit of Christ&mdashit is one of self-sacrifice and reverence for the will of God. It is the Spirit of Christ that becomes our attitude, and it takes control.

First let's see how the new birth, by the quickening of the Spirit, is referred to in Scripture as **breath** or **the breath of life** or the quickening of our spiritual life.

It all began in the creation where man was no more than a brute beast until the Lord "...breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul," GEN 2:7.

Do you know what it means to become a living soul? It means we have rational thinking and are able to understand. We were given the ability to reason. A beast was not given this ability, a reasonable mind.

When the Lord led the Prophet Ezekiel into the valley of vision to illustrate the spiritual deadness of Israel, He showed him a valley full of dry bones. EZE 37:3 tells us, "And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest." The Lord gave Ezekiel a vision of dead bones; dead, no sinews or flesh or skin covered those bones. Can the bones live?

As Ezekiel prophesied according to the direction of the Lord, the bones came together, bone to bone, the sinews of flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

The Lord was illustrating what Israel had become. It also symbolized the professed Christian; the professed Christian church is nothing but dead bones.

As the prophet prophesied, the bones came together: bone to his bone&mdashthe flesh and sinews came upon them, but there was no breath in them. They were spiritually dead; their hearts were still filled with the things of this world. That is the message the Lord is teaching us with this vision of the valley filled with dry bones.

Israel had become apostatized and forsaken the Lord. Even though they were still performing all the rituals, they were not serving the Lord. They had the wrong mental attitude. They were like the dry bones which were covered with sinew and skin, yet they were dead because they had no breath in them.

Now notice how the wind symbolizes the Holy Spirit breathing the breath of spiritual life into them in EZE 37:9-10. "Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

This valley of dry bones became a standing army. How? The breath of life was breathed into their nostrils; the Holy Spirit quickened them, by the wind. This is symbolic of how the Israelites had become spiritually dead, and new life comes by the spirit of grace giving the breath of spiritual life.

The Lord Jesus Christ teaches how futile it is to gather together in a church where the Spirit or the breath of life is missing. How many churches today go whoring away from the blessed Bridegroom?

Some churches even go to the extent of worshiping a female god under the profession of

Christianity. They have gone a whoring away from the true Bridegroom. He is teaching us how futile it is to gather with such a church because the breath of life is missing.

In REV 3:1 we read, "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."

This verse speaks to one of the seven churches of Asia that had been instituted by the apostles. They were an organized church, organized by the apostles, but He knew their works. There was no repentance or change of attitude; their hearts were whoring after the world. They professed to be living Christians, but they were actually spiritually dead.

This is a solemn truth, and a solemn reality in our day. The professing Christian church to a great extent is a dead church; it does not have the Spirit of Christ. It does not have the new desire to know and do the will of God. It lacks reverence for the authority of the Word.

Since it is possible to appear to be alive while we are in fact spiritually dead, and since this distinction is all decisive for eternity, it is of utmost importance to rightly divide these truths.

In MAT 7:22-23 we read, "Many will say to me in that day [in the Day of Judgment], Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? [in other words, we have preached the gospel in thy name] and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? [This is speaking of the church of Christ, the professed, believing church] And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Oh, what a solemn day that will be. On the Day of Judgment many will say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?" Jesus will tell them He never knew them. Those who have never been quickened and are still serving sin have not been born again and have not come into the service of the Lord, they still work iniquity!

What does Jesus mean by, "...ye that work iniquity"? See what He said in the preceding verse! MAT 7:21 says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven; but **he that doeth the will of my Father** which is in heaven."

We can talk about repentance, but the repentance of the prodigal son was no repentance at all until it was put into action. Our repentance is not acceptable until we arise and put it into action.

The prodigal son had a carefully planned repentance, but until he **arose and went to his father**, it was in fact no repentance at all. Until our actions prove our sincerity, it is not true repentance.

Does this mean that all we have to do is say we are sorry for our sin and say a few prayers, and do what we can to reform our lives? Is that the new birth? So many people teach this based upon ROM 3:28. "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

This verse is wrested to mean the law is abolished, therefore we do not have to obey the

law. Their philosophy is that the blood of Christ removes sin; we confessed we are sinners by saying the sinner's prayer, and we are saved. Satan's gospel steals a bit of truth to convince the sinner that he can be saved without repentance.

One thing is very clear. We may be able to change our lives to some degree, but we cannot change our hearts; that is the work of grace. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to change our hearts. The Pharisees were blameless as touching the law. They never broke the letter of the law, but oh, how miserably they crucified the spirit of the law.

The law says "Thou shalt not kill." EXO 20:13. As long as the scribes and Pharisees didn't kill their brother literally they believed they had not broken the law. They did not understand the spirit of the law of love, i.e., "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also," 1JO 4:20-21.

The Lord Jesus says, "...whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets," MAT 7:12. Hating our brother is also murder. We need the attitude change, a new heart, and a new nature, to be renewed in the spirit of our mind. Cf., EPH 4:19-32.

We might make reforms; a drinker might quit drinking; a smoker may quit smoking. Could we then say, "Look at the changes; look at the broken habits." We may take up a new course of life, but we cannot change our nature.

We may make many reforms, and break old habits, but we cannot create a new principle within. We need a new heart; we need to ask the Lord to give us the quickening grace of His Spirit. We need that new mind, that new attitude. A new desire to serve and a delight in serving the Lord, instead of the old man of sin, is needed.

Look at what we read in JER 13:23, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil."

Have you ever pictured an Ethiopian changing the color of his skin? Soap and water will not do it. All the soap and water we want to use on our outward skin will not change what is in the heart. We need a change of heart, a change of attitude.

If it were possible for a leopard to change his spots, then evildoers would try to do good. Our Saviour teaches us that a coffin may be ever so beautiful on the outside, yet death reigns within.

See how Jesus upbraided the Pharisees in MAT 23:27-28, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whitened sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." A change of heart, attitude, and mind must come by the grace of God.

Another thing is equally clear. There is no pastor, or any man, who can effect this change. Have you ever tried to talk to one of your loved ones, child, husband, and wife, using the Word of God to effect a change of their attitude? You can't do it; the Holy Spirit is the only one that can change it.

The Holy Spirit does it by the power of the Word. When the Holy Spirit takes the Word of God with power and applies it to the heart, then there is a new breath, a new desire, a new quickening, and a new taste.

You cannot bring God's Word with power in the soul, regardless of how clearly you explain it. The other person will usually gainsay it by saying, "Yes, but I believe...." All of a sudden the Word of God means nothing because their beliefs, what they think, must be changed.

You can bring forth God's Word with great clarity, but it will not penetrate below the surface without the Spirit's application. It is like trying to change the color of the Ethiopian's skin with soap and water; regardless how clean it may appear to be, the color is not changed.

The Apostle Paul said in 1CO 3:6, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." Who can make a dead soul alive? No one except the Creator of heaven and earth who does so by the power of His Word.

You can preach to your loved ones at every opportunity, and it is our duty to do so, because it is by hearing the Word that they are persuaded (cf., ROM 10:17) but it isn't you who will persuade them.

It is the Word&mdashand the Spirit applying the Word that will persuade them. Paul said he planted; that is the step we must take to reach others. Others will water, but God will give the increase.

Can you make a dead person live? No. Who can? The Creator of heaven and earth who breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life in paradise to make us a living soul can make the dead live and quicken a dead soul.

JOH 1:1-3 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [The Lord Jesus Christ is the Word] The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

Life comes through Christ, and Christ is the only source of life. The unction, the power, and the authority of the Word are found in Christ alone. The authority of the Word is what the Holy Spirit uses to quicken a soul.

So how do we identify this being "...born of water, and of the Spirit"? As I pointed out the meaning of the word **Spirit** in our text in the first place means "breath," or breath of life, but in the second instance it means "a spirit, i.e., the human rational soul, vital principle, mental disposition." In the third instance it refers to a Divine sense; **pneuma** is translated as "the Spirit of Christ [which still lends itself to our mental disposition], the Holy Spirit, life, spiritually minded."

This is what constitutes being born of the Spirit.

It is the Spirit that "...worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure," PHI 2:13. In other words, He gives us new desires and enabling grace to willingly do God's

good pleasure.

The blessed effect is what we see illustrated in EPH 4:23-24, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind [this is the new birth which results in action]; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

What is righteousness? It means a right attitude toward our brother. What is true holiness? It is the first table of the law to love God with our heart, soul, and mind. It is to begin to observe the law of love.

The two preceding verses tell us what it is to be created in righteousness and true holiness. Look at EPH 4:21-22, "If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts."

What does the word **conversation** mean? The word **conversation** as used in Scripture means the mental disposition. This word **conversation** is not confined to speaking verbally; everything that traffics the mind is included in the meaning of this word **conversation**. It includes everything that goes through one's mind.

Wherever one is and whatever one is doing, working or resting, one's mind is always thinking about something. What is the conversation of your heart? What is your conversation?

The new birth changes the conversation of the old man to be no longer concerned with the things and desires of the flesh. The corrupt thoughts and mental disposition are put off. The greatest sinners see the greatest changes.

Think about Mary Magdalene; she was possessed of seven devils, but when she was renewed in the spirit of her mind, she received the forgiveness of her sins, as she walked in the law of love. Salvation to so many people means they are going to heaven to escape hell.

The gospel begins with "Repent." How can sins we are still living in be forgiven when there is no desire to change? Those sins are still cherished. **Repent**, as the first word of the gospel must come before forgiveness.

Now watch what happens. See how our Lord Jesus showed that Mary Magdalene was walking in the law of love before she received the assurance of forgiveness of her sins. Look to see what comes first as we read LUK 7:44-48.

The stage is set in the preceding verses where Mary Magdalene is seated at Jesus' feet wiping His feet with the hairs of her head as she wept over her sins.

"And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. [As she walked in the law of love, as she washed His feet with her tears, she came in repentance, and then Jesus said,] Wherfore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; **for**

[because] **she loved much:** but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven."

Do not overlook the chronology of events that led to Mary Magdalene's pardon. She was never assured of any pardon while she was possessed with seven devils. She first came to a change of heart, and truly mourned over her sins. As she washed Jesus feet with tears of remorse, her sins were forgiven.

Do you want your sins forgiven? Are you only looking for an escape from the fires of hell? Do you still cherish and love sin? If your answer to either of the last two questions is "yes," you are still hell bound. Before we become a proper candidate for a pardon, we must understand true remorse over sin, over having sinned against such a loving God.

Do you truly weep tears over your sin? Do you come to Him wanting to serve Him because you are filled with remorse over having sinned against such love? Are you filled with love toward our Saviour and desire to serve Him from a motive of love? Mary Magdalene's sins were forgiven because she loved much.

When we are renewed in the Spirit of our mind, the strongest and the worst habits are broken as burnt flax straw. Habits can be so strong that we have no power against them; we are not able to break them. However, old habits can be broken as easily as breaking some burnt straw. Why?

They have lost their power; our desires are no longer for the conditions that produce these habits. Now we have a new desire to walk in the ways of God because we have learned to see how displeased our heavenly Father is with sin. Rather than let one sin go unpunished, He would put it on His Son on Calvary's cross.

When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, sweating blood, He said, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt," MAT 26:39.

Therein the Father was so pleased. The Father was so pleased that the Son of God was willing to obey and step into His wrath to take the penalty of sin. It was that act of obedience that made His blood acceptable before the Father as the appeasing of His wrath upon our sins.

Do you see why it is necessary that we love much before we talk about forgiveness of our sin? We must first love to do the will of God; it must become our chiefest pleasure and greatest delight. That is the work of the new birth. That is being born again; our hearts have been changed to love to do His will. "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much."

The Father was able to accept the blessed blood of Christ as the appeasing of His wrath because Jesus loved much; He loved the Father to such an extent He said, "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

When a person has a faith's view of this, the power of sin is broken. Old habits are no longer controlling us. No matter how base and vile you may have been, the new birth purifies the most impure minds.

1CO 6:9-11 says, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

Does that include any of us? Can anyone say they have never been covetous, that we have not desired something that wasn't ours? Can anyone say they have never had impure or hateful thoughts?

We can't enter; we can't get in the kingdom of God without repentance. Why? The Apostle Paul goes on to say, "**And such were some of you**: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and **by the Spirit of our God.**"

If the washing of the water of the Word washes us, we are no longer serving sin. We are sanctified, i.e., cleansed, and set apart for the Lord's service. Now notice the chronology again!

First, it says we are sanctified, then after being sanctified, it says, "...ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." First, we are washed; then sanctified, and then we are justified. There is no justification while we are living in sin.

When the Holy Spirit changes the spirit of the mind, He can change the most obstinate Pharisee into an apostle of that very Jesus he had been persecuting. Saul, later known as the Apostle Paul, had license to put the children of the kingdom of Christ in prison. The Lord Jesus appeared to him saying, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest," Saul answered, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" ACT 9:5-6.

The same Manasseh who had filled Jerusalem with idols, murdering his own children in honour of these false gods was renewed in the spirit of his mind. He went on to purify the temple, put down idolatry, and lived a godly life. Notice the total contrast when the Holy Spirit works grace in the soul.

A man who had been promoting idols and sacrificing his own children unto them had a complete change of heart. See 2CH 33:9, "So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err [as king he commanded them to do evil], and to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel."

After Manasseh was renewed in the Spirit of his mind we read in 2CH 33:15-16, "And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city. [That is a complete reversal of the former mental attitude and actions.] And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel."

As with Manasseh, we don't need to question whether we have been renewed in the Spirit of our mind; our actions reveal what is in our hearts.

PRO 8:13 says, "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the forward mouth, do I hate." Do you understand the work of the Spirit and

the new birth? Have you learned to hate evil and the things you used to cherish?

If we have been quickened, we will prove it by our spiritual growth. Spiritual life is not like a beast that grows to maturity and stops growing, but it is like a tree, which continues to grow, as long as it endures.

ISA 65:22 says, "They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands."

What does that mean? It means they grow; a tree grows by adding new rings to its circumference as long as it is alive. As long as we have spiritual life there will be spiritual growth.

Many people may say we are saved by faith, but see what Peter says about spiritual growth. 2PE 1:5-7 says, "And beside this, giving all diligence, **add to your faith virtue**; and to virtue knowledge [this is spiritual growth, new things are added]; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity."

Growth continues as we add one to another of these things. All of the attributes of godliness keep growing.

See how these things grow into a blessed assurance of our salvation. 2PE 1:10-11 tells us, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: **for if ye do these things**, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." It is in doing these things that we grow in grace, and we enter the everlasting kingdom. Amen

The only way to be saved is to follow the simple plan of salvation found in Acts 2:38 , 39 . **Believe** in God and who He is , **Repent** of all sin, **be baptised in Jesus name** for remission of sins , be **filled with the Holy Spirit** with the evidence of speaking in tongues, **and endure to the end**.

Acts 2:38-39 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. (KJV)