

# (Power From on High) 20. Regeneration and Renewal

by A.B. Simpson

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost in the Christian life, and encourages believers to seek a deeper experience of God's grace and glory.*

**Scripture:** Titus 3:5

**Topics:** "Regeneration", "Renewal"

---

## Description

A.B. Simpson emphasizes the transformative power of salvation through regeneration and the renewing work of the Holy Spirit, as described in Titus 3:5-6. He explains that our former state was one of disobedience and sin, but through God's mercy, we are saved not by our works but by His grace. Simpson illustrates the process of regeneration as a divine act that brings new life, akin to the laver in the tabernacle, and stresses the necessity of daily renewal through the Holy Spirit to sustain this new life. He encourages believers to seek continual communion with God, allowing the Holy Spirit to refresh and transfigure their lives, preparing them for eternal glory. Ultimately, he calls for a deeper relationship with the Holy Spirit to experience the fullness of God's grace and glory.

---

## Transcript

"He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior." Titus 3: 5, 6.

This passage gives us a grand view of the plan of salvation. First, the apostle tells us of our former condition, when "we were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another."

Next, he tells us of the source of our salvation. Negatively, it was "not by works of righteousness which we have done," but, positively, "it was according to His mercy that He saved us" through the kindness and love of God our Savior.

The work of salvation is altogether divine. "Mercy shall be built up forever." It was mercy that saved us, and it is mercy that keeps us saved. We shall never get beyond the divine mercy. A poor Indian, once, when asked how he got saved, took a little worm and put it on the ground, and then built a fire of dry leaves around it. The worm caught the smell of the fire and felt its dangerous heat, and began to flee, but

only met another wall of fire on the other side, and so went from side to side in terror and despair; until at last, finding no way of escape, it gathered itself up in the center of the circle and lay there helpless and dying. Then the Indian stretched out his hand, picked it up and saved it. "That was the way," said he, "that mercy saved me." It is according to His mercy that He has saved us, and it is mercy every day that fulfills in us all the fullness of that great salvation.

Then He tells us of the special steps. "By the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed in us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that, being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

This seventh verse does not mean that justification follows regeneration. The Greek tense implies that it precedes it. "Having been justified by His grace" is the true force of the tense. God takes us as sinners and justifies us through His grace the moment we believe, and then He regenerates us and gives us the Holy Ghost and leads us forward into all the fullness of His grace, and on to the blessed hope of our eternal inheritance.

We have, however, only to deal in this connection, with two steps in this scale, "the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."

#### I. REGENERATION.

This literally means "the laver of regeneration." The Greek word really refers to the laver in the ancient tabernacle. You know that in the court of God's ancient sanctuary there were two objects of deep interest. The first was the altar of burnt offering where the sinner came and, transferring his guilt to the sacrifice, received atonement through the blood; the next was the laver, or fountain of water, where he saw his defilement in its mirrored sides, and then cleansed them in its flowing stream. The first represented the blood of Christ; the second represented the Holy Spirit in His regenerating work. This court was open to all the people. It represented the free, full provision of the gospel for the sinner, the justifying, redeeming work of Jesus, and the regenerating grace of the Holy Ghost.

And so the laver of regeneration represents the primary work of the divine Spirit in quickening the soul that, is dead in sin, and bringing it into the life of God. The Bible is full of this. The sinner is constantly represented as dead in trespasses and sins. It is not merely a matter of light. It is not enough for him to form good resolutions and accomplish moral reformations. It is life he needs. And, therefore, we read, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." Therefore, the Lord Jesus says to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Therefore, the prophet Ezekiel says of the coming salvation, "I will take away the hard and stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. A new heart will I put within you, and a right spirit will I give unto you." This is the laver of regeneration, this is the indispensable work of the Holy Ghost in conversion.

Last night I knelt beside a dying bed. It was a dear lad who had for months been dying, but had no one to lead him to the Savior. That day a dear friend had for the first time told him of Jesus and tried to lead him through the narrow gate.

As I knelt by his side, with his weak brain, and sinking body, I felt how impossible it was for me to make him understand his need in this change.

He had never done anything very wrong, and he had no deep sense of outward sin, but God helped me to show to him that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh" and that his natural heart could not enter the family of heaven any more than the little kitten upon the hearth, or the canary in the cage, could be a member of my family or enter into my sympathies, joys, and conceptions.

Then, as his heart felt his need of this great change, it was easy to lead him to Jesus and to offer him the free gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, and to tell him that he could take it in a moment as the gift of God's great love. Then it was that the blessed Holy Ghost came to our relief, and showed His almighty new-creating power.

Never shall I forget the strange sweet flash of eternal light that shone across his countenance for a moment, as he accepted that gift and with all his heart said, "I will," and then threw his head upon my breast and his arms about my neck, and for a long time lay there, while I prayed, and he entered into the bosom of everlasting love.

When I left him, all was peace and the sweetness of heaven; and in the early morning he passed through the gates into the city, and those that were by his side told us how, just before he passed through, God gave to him a vision of the opening heavens and the chariot that was to bear him home; and the dear family, who knew not God and scarcely understood these wondrous things, were unspeakably touched with the message of divine grace that had come to him, and through him to them, from the gates ajar.

This is the laver of regeneration. O precious friends, you cannot enter heaven without this new heart! You cannot see the Kingdom of God without this divine life, You cannot come into it without this divine touch. You cannot bring it to yourself. You cannot work it up by struggling and by effort. Thank God, there is a better way. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name; which were born not of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

O, sinner, come to the laver of regeneration! Let your hard and stony heart bow at the feet of Jesus. Receive Him; come to Him with all your hardness and helplessness, with all your lack of faith and feeling; and He will take away the stony heart, and give you a heart of flesh, He will plunge you in the laver of regeneration, and then lead you on into all the fullness of His grace and glory.

## II. THE RENEWING OF THE HOLY GHOST.

After we have received the new life it needs to be sustained; it needs to be cherished, matured, built up, and led on into all the fullness of Christ. This is the work of the same blessed Mother God that brought us first into life. This is what is meant by the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

1. First, it suggests the daily dependence of our life. We are not supplied in a moment for a lifetime. We have no store of grace for tomorrow. The manna must fall each day afresh; the life must be inhaled breath by breath; we must feed upon the living bread day by day. It is not at our command, but all derived from Him.

We must abide in Him, and He in us, "for apart from Him we can do nothing." Our store of grace is not a great reservoir, but just a little water pipe carrying enough for the moment and ever passing on. And so we must learn to live in constant communion with Jesus and constant fellowship with the Holy Ghost.

He is only too glad to have our fellowship. He does not weary of our oft returning. He longs to have us come to Him and keep coming again and yet again, and "He is able to save to the uttermost," or rather,

forevermore, "all that keep coming unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

2. The language implies our spiritual freshness. We cannot live on old food and stale bread; but God's supply for us is perpetually fresh and new. "I will be as the dew unto Israel" is His own blessed figure. It does not rain always, but the dew comes every night and sparkles every morning upon the flower and the leaf. It comes gently, quietly, not in the rush of the tempest, to wash out the tender plant, in the supply which refreshes without disturbing. And then it comes in the hottest weather and the most trying times. Indeed, the dew does not fall, but rises; it is always in the air and is absorbed by the plant just as its condition is fitted to take the moisture that is always floating in the atmosphere. The Holy Ghost is always within reach, if we are in condition to receive and absorb Him. Oh, let us drink in the dew of His grace and live in the renewing of the Holy Ghost!

What a beautiful figure of this was given in the rod of Aaron, which, when placed within the holy sanctuary, budded, and blossomed, and bare fruit. So the rod of faith, and prayer, and holy priesthood, and communion, bears fresh buds, blossoms, and ripe fruit, continually.

Still more beautiful was the figure of the water that flowed through the desert for the supply of Israel's thirst. Once it was struck at Horeb and opened its bosom for the flowing stream, but ever after that the river was there to supply their needs. And so, when they thirsted again, God sent them back and bade Moses not to strike the rock, but "speak," said He, "to the rock, and it shall give forth its waters." Moses made the mistake of striking it, but the waters were there and flowed all the same, and God's faithful grace was still supplied.

And yet again, when they came into the boundless desert, there was nothing but the fiery sand beneath them and the burning sun above them. But again the water was there. All they had to do was to gather in a circle, and dig with their spades a well in the desert, and then gather around it and sing their song of faith and praise; and lo, the waters gushed forth, and their need was all supplied.

This is the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Thus He supplies our daily needs. Thus He waits to meet the cry of faith. Thus He loves to answer the song of praise, and flow through all our being with His glad and full supply, until "the wilderness and the solitary place shall rejoice, the desert (of life) shall blossom as the rose." This is what the Apostle Peter meant when he spoke of the "times of refreshing that should come from the presence of the Lord," before "the times of the restoration of all things," which Christ's advent shall bring. We are in "the times of refreshing," and we are waiting for the times of restitution. Oh, let us take the blessing! Oh, let us claim the fullness! Let us receive the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Let us enter into the mighty promise, "I will make you and the places round about you a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing."

3. There is one more thought suggested by this expression. The Greek word here used is employed once only besides in the New Testament. We find it in that remarkable passage in the twelfth chapter of Romans, where the apostle says, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."

It is well known that the expression there should be translated, "Be ye transfigured by the upward renewing of your mind." It is the same word as here used for "renewing," and it is connected there with the figure of transfiguration.

The thought of the apostle here is that the Holy Ghost is leading us on to our transfiguration. It is not merely grace, but glory, that He wants to bring us into. It is not enough to be regenerated, we want also to be glorified. It is not enough to go to the laver of regeneration. Let us enter in through the door, and then go in and out and find pasture. Let us pass in to the golden lamps of the Lord. Let us feed upon the table of shew-bread with its sweet frankincense. Let us breathe the odors of the incense that fill the sanctuary. Let us have "boldness to enter into the Holiest by a new and living way;" and there, in the light of God's Shekinah presence, there, under the wings of the cherubim, there, in the innermost presence of God, let us anticipate the glory of the life beyond, and go forth with its radiance upon our brow to shed its blessing upon a dark and sorrowful world.

The Holy Ghost wants to transfigure our lives just as truly as He transfigured Christ's. Two and a half years of that blessed life of ministry had passed. He, too, had been born of the Spirit. He, too, had been baptized in Jordan's banks. From the opening heavens the Holy Dove had come down to rest upon Him. He had gone forth, in the power of the Spirit, into the conflict with Satan in the wilderness, and the service of love through the villages of Galilee.

But now He was going down into the deep valley of Kedron, into the shame of the judgment hall, into the dark, sad conflict of Gethsemane, into the mystery of the cross, into the awful place of God's forsaking for the sins of men, into the deep, cold grave. And He needed more. He needed the glory as well as the strength of God. And so He went up to Hebron's height that night, and was clothed upon with the glory of His primeval throne, and His Advent reign; and then, in that glory He went down from the mountain to cast out the demoniac at its foot, to triumph over persecution, rejection and every adversary, to endure the cross, despising the shame, and to be the Conqueror of sin and death.

So we read that, after this, there was a strange majesty in His mien, "and as they saw Him, they were amazed, and as they followed, they were afraid." O, beloved, we, too, are entering upon strange and solemn times! Dark clouds are round about the horizon, lurid lightnings are flashing from the sky; solemn mutterings are heard upon the air; there are signals of a crisis; everything is troubled; days of solemn meaning are drawing nigh.

We need more than we have had. We need to pass from grace to glory. We need the transfiguration life as well as He. We need to look from Hebron's height above the valley of humiliation and suffering, away to the sunlit hills of the Advent glory. Oh, shall we be transfigured, too? And then shall we go forth, like Him, to triumph over Satan, sin and death, to shed the light of His glory around us, to stand unmoved amid the perils and convulsions of our time, to meet our coming Lord, proving "all that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

Let us come apart with Him like the three disciples of old. Let us rise to an exceeding high mountain apart. Let us not fear the shadows of the night, and the cloud of the glory as we enter in; and we, too, shall know something of the meaning of His mighty promise, "The glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as We are One."

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ab-simpson/power-from-on-high-20-regeneration-and-renewal/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**