

Regeneration - Part 2

by Charles Leiter

Regeneration is an act of creative power on the part of an almighty creator, where a person is born again, and becomes a new creation, a new man, and a new heart.

Duration: 46:25

Scripture: Malachi 3:16 - 4:2, John 10:16, John 10:26, Romans 6:1-7, Romans 6:13, Ephesians 2:1-5

Topics: "Spiritual Regeneration", "New Creation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the role of God in the process of conversion and repentance. He shares his personal experience of being transformed by God's power at the age of 16. The preacher explains that the wind blowing represents God's initiation in making someone a new creation. He also discusses the concept of regeneration, describing it as a new creation, a new man, the giving of a new heart, and a new birth. The preacher references Bible verses, including Matthew 12:33 and John 3, to support his teachings on regeneration.

Transcript

I think we all felt a little bit of the reality. I know for myself, I did. When Brother Michael was preaching that the storm clouds of judgment are real.

And myself, I just got it, I felt like I got a glimpse of those clouds and a few of the drops starting to fall already. Like Brother Michael said this thing of 911 that was successful beyond their wildest dreams. God allowed that to happen and brought that to pass.

And so these things are real. But there's a couple thoughts that I have that I want to share. First of all, sometimes God reveals to us seemingly hopeless and irreversible situation in order that we might pray.

The example of Nineveh, Jonah came with a message that had no hope in it whatsoever yet 40 days and it's going to happen. And they, they got on the sackcloth and ashes and started wailing and, and God heard them and it didn't happen. It's unbelievable, isn't it? That's recorded for our hope.

And it's a, it's a great encouragement to me that the Holy Spirit has not stopped burdening the saints to cry out to God to yet have mercy. 35 years ago, when I was a student, there's a brother in Iowa that has been greatly used in my life. And he used to meet for prayer at the church that he attended.

The pastor didn't come and he met by himself for years on a Saturday night. And finally some of us college guys started going there to pray with him. And I remember week after week him pouring out his heart with his arms raised in the air crying out to God to pour out floods upon the dry ground.

With tears streaming down his face. I remember one night in the summertime, he was praying, Oh, Lord, will you not make these bright clouds, clouds of lightning and thunder and pour out your spirit upon this land. And as he was praying, the storm came in, and the lightning was flashing all around and the thunder was rolling and his hands were lifted in the air with tears streaming down his face.

And I just I just had a little taste God is listening. He hears the prayers of his saints. And I know that man still praying 35 years later, he's still praying those prayers.

And that's not that's not man doing that. That's God. And it's a little token that there's yet hope.

Sometimes God has poured out his spirit in a land just before the judgment falls. That's what happened with Dr. Stewart, James Stewart, when he was there in the Eastern European countries, prior to World War Two, a mighty outpouring of the Spirit in one place after another. And that was to that was God's way of preparing his people and strengthening them for when that iron curtain came down.

That may be what it is we want whatever he wants. But we don't have any reason to be discouraged and defeated when we look at all this. And that's another thing I wanted to say.

And that is, we see whenever we begin to see the reality of these things, we see how far short we're falling, how sinful we are. And just how much we have failed God and failed our fellow man. And it's hard to believe when we get a glimpse of that how much God loves us and how much he's with us.

But the fact is, that's just as much in the Bible as the rest of this. And he delights in his children, delights in his people. And that's what we're going to be looking at as we continue on here in Revelation.

I mean, in Regeneration, as we talk about Regeneration. But let me just read something to you that blessed me. It says, Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another.

And the Lord gave attention and heard it and a book of remembrance was written before him for those who fear the Lord and who esteem his name. And they will be mine, says the Lord of hosts on the day that I prepare my special treasure. And I'll spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.

So you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between the one who serves God and the one who does not serve him. For behold, the day is coming burning like a furnace. And all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff and the day that is coming will set them ablaze as the Lord of hosts so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.

But for you who fear my name, the son of righteousness will rise with healing in his wings. And you'll go forth and skip about like calves from the stall. Isn't that something? Encouraging words to us from the Lord.

Well, we started yesterday to look at this glorious subject of regeneration. Regeneration is an act of creative power on the part of an almighty creator. Justification is a declaration by a righteous judge.

But regeneration is an act of power. And we begin to see yesterday that regeneration is described in the Bible using several different pictures. We saw first of all that regeneration is spoken of as a new creation.

God does a creative work when he regenerates a man. We also saw that regeneration is described as a new man. We become a new man when we become a Christian.

And then we saw thirdly that it is described as the giving of a new heart. Now today we want to look at three more of these. And so let's turn to John chapter 3 and we'll look at the fourth one.

And that is regeneration is described as a new birth. John chapter 3. And let's just read verses 1 through 8. Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to him by night and said to him, Rabbi, we know that you have come from God as a teacher, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.

Jesus answered and said to him, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said to him, how can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he? Jesus answered, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh.

And that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, you must be born again. The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going.

So is every one who is born of the spirit. Regeneration is described as a new birth. And what a glorious thing this is to become a Christian is to be born.

It is to be born. And in the physical realm, whenever you are born, you begin to live, you begin to exist in this physical realm. In the spiritual realm, when you become a Christian, you are born, you begin to live, you begin to exist in a spiritual realm.

And nothing is ever the same again. Nothing is ever the same again. You begin to live.

When you are born again, you begin to exist and to live in the spiritual world. Or to put it another way, the new birth is not something added on to your life. It is life.

You begin to live. Or let me say it like this, being born again is not getting something that you did not have before. It is becoming someone who you never were before.

You begin to exist and live in the spiritual realm. Now I want us to notice four things here concerning the new birth. First of all, the new birth is a real birth.

It is not like a birth. It is a birth. Notice what he says here in verse 6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh.

There is a physical birth. Something real is born in the physical realm. All right, now look at the rest of it.

That which is born of the Spirit, capital S, Holy Spirit, that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. There is something born. See that? Something spiritual born here.

He is talking about something real. This is an incredible thing. In this birth, God fathers us.

Now that is the language of the Bible. You remember what it says in 1 John? We would never say this if we were writing the Bible. God's seed remains in him.

Isn't that incredible? God's seed remains in the person who has been born of God. In other words, he has God's nature. That is what it says in 2 Peter.

We become partakers of the divine nature and God's seed. Now think of this talk. You have been born, Jesus says, that which is born of the flesh is flesh.

But he says there is something spiritual born of the Spirit. And God's seed stays in you. And you have been born of God.

You have been begotten of God. This is something absolutely radical. And by the word radical, I mean it in the way that the word really, what it really means.

It is the same thing we get the word radish from. What is a radish? It is a root. And radical means it goes right down to the root of everything.

There can't be anything any deeper than this. That God actually births us, that we have been born of God. And now this has great implications.

When you say a man has been born of God and begotten of God and his seed remains in him, that means something. Number one, it means that that person cannot stand to live in sin anymore. 1 John 3, 9, he that is born of God does not commit sin.

Why not? God's seed remains in him. And he cannot sin because he is born of God. This has radical implications for what happens as a result of the fact that you have been born of God.

It also has radical implications for how we should view ourselves as Christians. If you are a Christian, you are a child of God. That's not just words, you see, to describe something.

You're a child of God. You've been begotten by God. That's really what it is.

You've been born again. You've been born of God. How should a true Christian think about himself? Well, are you a saint or are you a sinner according to the Bible? You know, Jesus said, don't even sinners do that.

Sinners love one another. Who are you? You're a saint. Don't let the devil convince you that you're a vile, worthless piece of trash.

That's not who you are. You're a child of God. You've been begotten by God.

His seed remains in you. You're a son of God. How could anything be more wonderful than that? I'm a child of God.

He's begotten me. His seed remains in me. That's the way to view yourself because that's who you are.

His very nature remains in you and you love him because you've been born of God. You're his child and he's your father. He really is your father.

Not just words to describe this thing. He's really your father. Think about it.

He's really your father. You belong to him. His life is in you.

You're one with him. Your nature, the nature that he has put in you is his very nature. You're a partaker of the divine nature.

What a blessed thing this is. We're not only sons by adoption legally, but we're also sons by birth. What else? The new birth, not only is it a real birth, the new birth is a sovereign birth.

Look at what Jesus says here in verse 8. The wind blows where it wishes. The wind blows where it wishes. This does not lie in man's will.

It lies in God's will. Notice it. Look at this.

Everything I'm going to tell you here out of verse 8, you've got to remember this. Jesus says, so is everyone who is born of the Spirit. There is not one single person ever anywhere born of the Spirit that these things are not true of.

And the first one is that it's a sovereign work. The wind blows where it wishes. You do not control the wind.

You do not direct the wind. You don't stop the wind. It does not matter how obstinate a man is.

It doesn't matter how strong willed he is or resistant he is. The wind blows where it wishes. That's what Jesus said.

That means that the most unlikely person in the world can be saved. It doesn't matter how hard hearted he is or unwilling he is. The wind blows where it wishes.

Now, if the early church, if you had asked them, there was one person they knew was never going to become a Christian, I'll tell you that much, and that was Saul. Next thing you know, who art thou, Lord? You see? And he turns from being a vicious persecutor and blasphemer into the chiefest lover of Christ. Because the wind blows where it wishes.

You see, why am I a Christian and my neighbor isn't? There's only two possible explanations. It's something about me or something about God. That's the only two possible explanations.

And if it's something about me, it has to do with something about that I was more willing, that I wasn't as resisted, I wasn't as hard hearted, something. You see, it gets back to me. The Bible says there's none that understands, there's none that seeketh after God, there's none that doeth good, no, not one.

You find a man seeking God, it means God has done something to seek him first. That's all it means. The difference between me and somebody else is either in me or it's in God and it's in God.

The wind chose to blow. He chose to blow by His Spirit in my life. That's the reason I'm a Christian.

Even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, He made us alive. The wind blew. You know the illustration that's so good concerning Lazarus, it really fits the reality of the spiritual realm.

Jesus is standing out there, He's dead and rotten, and He says, Lazarus, come forth. The only problem is dead men can't hear anybody talking to them. They can't hear anything.

When that effectual call goes out, life comes up in order for you to hear the call. That's regeneration. And in your experience what happens is, you're laying there in the dark and all of a sudden you hear a voice, Lazarus, come out.

What's happened? Life has come in to the point you can hear, you see? Now then you've got to get up and come out. That's what happens in conversion. That's what happens in repentance and faith.

You know, man's involved somewhere along the line, but God is the initiator. The reason that you're a Christian is the wind blew. God chose to blow.

I got up one morning when I was almost 16 years old. I had not a thought in my mind about God. I wasn't seeking God.

Little did I know that by the time I went to bed that night, I would be a new creation changed forever. And all of a sudden I've got a brand new Bible. You know, I was the head of the Sunday school group, but I couldn't have told you Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

And all of a sudden I can open this thing up and I understand it. The wind blew. The wind blows where it wishes.

He talks about that back in chapter 1, doesn't he? He says, who were born, as many as received him, to them he gave the authority, the right to become the children of God, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Born of God. It has to do with the will of God.

Ezekiel 37, he says, son of man, can these bones live? And he took him out there and walked him around and said, take a good look at them. There were very many and they were very dry. One time when I was living in Lawrence, Kansas, after I graduated from college, I went into the museum there that was full of very old and very dry bones.

And I was in there alone somehow. I don't know how it happened, but I was walking down through there. My footsteps would echo through there, clop, clop.

And those bones, you know, all these bones, dinosaurs and different things. And it just came just like that on my heart. Son of man, can these bones live? They're not going to, those things are not going to come alive.

There is no way unless some kind of miracle happens. And he says, all right, start talking to those bones. Oh, Lord, that's not going to do any good to talk to those bones.

Well, you go ahead and prophesy to them. And those bones start rattling around and coming together. There's still no life.

He says, prophesy to the wind. Now, you know, wind and spirit and breath are all the same word in the Hebrew and in the Greek. Just chance that was that way, isn't it? The wind blows where it wishes.

It says, prophesy to the wind, the breath, come, breathe on these slain that they might come alive. And the breath came into them, they came alive. That's what happens when God saves a man.

The breath of God enters into him and he comes alive. The new birth is sovereign. What else about the new birth? The new birth is known.

Verse 8, the wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it. You do hear the sound of it. It's known in its effect.

Now, you can't see it directly. You can't see wind directly, but you can see the effects of it. It's known by its effects.

Wind always implies movement and energy and vitality in life. If there's no movement at all, there's no wind. I mean, you go out and look at the leaves on the trees and they're just grouping there and you say there's no wind.

Where there's wind, there's movement and it's known. God's spirit is like the wind. That's what Jesus is saying here.

Sometimes it's like a powerful gale. That's what happened on the day of Pentecost. Three thousand people, just like that.

It's sure good that God foreknew that all those people would just happen to be there by chance at the same place at the same time. No, God's Holy Spirit is what made the difference on the day of Pentecost. The wind blew.

The wind blew in three thousand. So, sometimes like a mighty, powerful gale, sometimes like a gentle breeze. You just see one little leaf moving, but it's God and we can be thankful for that too.

Very thankful. There's a poem that I have on the wall of my study. I may not quote it quite right.

I'll get one verse before the other maybe, but who has seen the wind? Neither you, neither I nor you, but when the leaves hang trembling, the wind is passing through. Who has seen the wind? Neither you nor I, but when the trees bow down their heads, the wind is passing by. You see, the reality of God's Spirit, it's known.

You can see something and it's always known. That's what Jesus said. The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it.

So, as everyone that's born of the Spirit, it is impossible to be born of the Spirit of God and you don't see something supernatural in a person's life. That's impossible. He says every single one.

Everyone that's born of the Spirit. You hear the sound of it. What else? It's mysterious.

The new birth is mysterious. You don't know where it comes from. You don't know where it's going.

So is everyone who's born of the Spirit. Every single time the new birth is always mysterious. We don't know who might be next.

We can't predict what God might do. Might be the most unlikely place that you could imagine. We have repeatedly, we've seen this happen among the college students there that we're trying to minister to.

Mona and I had some of them in the van that we had a couple of years ago and we were trying to, we were taking them to some meetings and talking to them. We got back and we said, well, so and so, Lord's going to do something there. I mean, He's going to do something in their life, but so and so, there's nothing going on there.

Well, you can guess which one of them's still walking with God now and has been converted. The very one you didn't think. You can't predict.

You don't know. You don't know where it comes from or where it's going. That's the way it is.

It might be one person saved at a meeting. Might be 3,000. Contrast the stuff that's going on today.

I read an interview with a guy. It was back when they were doing this deal where they call everybody on the phone and try to lead you in a prayer. He said, we found out that such and such percentage, I forgot what it was, 83.6% will decide for Christ.

You know what that means? You're dealing with psychology, not the Holy Spirit. Not anything mysterious about that at all. The Holy Spirit is a person.

You might talk to 10 people and nobody gets saved, or you might talk to 10 people and all of them get saved. You don't know what he's going to do. Well, regeneration is a new birth.

We could spend the whole time on this side, but let's go on to the next one. Regeneration is the receiving of a new nature. Now, the word nature is not used in the Bible, but the concept is clearly here.

I want you to see it. Matthew chapter 7, Matthew 7 and beginning at verse 15. Beware of the false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles are they? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.

Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits. Now, I say the concept of nature is here.

We're going to look at this. He talks about thistles and thorn bushes, and he talks about fig trees, you see. Two different things here.

Now, notice, first of all, there are only two basic types of trees. You're either a fig tree or you're a thorn bush. There's no half and half tree.

There's no composite tree. You're either this or you're this. You know, it's been on my mind for a long time.

Maybe sometime the Lord will open it up to me to preach on this, but think of this. So many times, it's either you're either this or this. You're either for me or you're against me.

You're either saved or you're lost. It's always two things. There is no third group in these things of God.

He says there's this tree or there's this tree. There's only two basic types of trees. There's either good or bad, grape vines or thorn bushes, fig trees or thistles.

No halfway group, no composite group. There's no concept of a tree having two natures. You're either one kind of tree or you're the other.

Secondly, notice this. Trees bear fruit according to what they are. That's what he's saying in verse 17.

Every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. In other words, the kind of fruit flows from the nature of the tree. Now you can take apples and here's this thorn bush and you can take apples out there and tie them on there, but they did not flow out of the tree.

That's what every hypocrite does. He tries to put this fruit on and it did not come from within. He can't produce good fruit.

It's impossible for him to produce good fruit. It's just that unnatural for a Christian when he sins, just that unnatural. The kind of fruit flows from the nature of the tree.

Grape vines produce grapes, thistles produce thistles. Now notice what he says. Every, every, verse 17, even so, every good tree bears good fruit.

Have you got in your head the idea that some good trees don't bear good fruit? Have you, I mean, look at how, how many times are we hitting this thing? And it keeps on. God hits it from every angle from A to Z. And here we have it again. He's saying every good tree bears good fruit.

Every bad tree bears bad fruit. That's just the way it is. Beloved, these are Jesus words.

We cannot let anybody, including our own theories, cancel out what he's saying here. Every single one. And he puts it the other way around in the next verse.

Verse 18, a good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit, a corrupt tree. It's a cannot. It's impossible.

And he says every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thirdly, notice here, the fruit of the tree does not make the tree what it is. It reveals what the tree is.

It reveals what the tree is. He says you'll know them, you know them by their fruits. You know who they are by what comes out of them.

You don't get to be a grapevine by trying to produce grapes. You have to have a miracle to make you a grapevine. God has to do something.

And this concept of a new nature is very far reaching. The Lord Jesus talks about it. Let's just look at a few more verses.

Matthew chapter 12. We see it again. 1233.

He says either make the tree good and its fruit good or make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt. The tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers.

How can you, being evil, speak what's good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. The good man, there are some. What Jesus says here, now you know there's nobody good in himself whatsoever, but there's some people that God's done something in their heart and put his life in them.

The good man out of his good treasure brings forth what is good. The evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth what is evil. A couple more.

John chapter 8. These are amazing passages. John 8 and verse 47. He who is of God hears the words of God.

For this reason, you do not hear them because you're not of God. Now people have got that thing turned around totally. They say, well, if you hear his words, then you become one who is of God.

No, he says you don't hear his words because you're not of God. That's the reason you can't. Go over to chapter 10, verse 26.

You do not believe because you're not of my sheep. Now there's people that say you're not a sheep because you don't believe. No, he says you don't believe because you're not of my sheep.

And back up in verse 16, he looks down, clear down through history, says I've got other sheep that are not of this fold. They're going to come. They're going to hear my voice.

They're going to come and there's going to be one flock and one shepherd. He calls us sheep before we ever come to him. I've got these sheep out here and they're going to hear my voice.

That's encouraging, isn't it, in evangelism? He's got some sheep out here and they're going to hear my voice. Well, I say a new nature. Number six, the new birth is described as a crucifixion and a resurrection.

Let's read in Romans chapter six. Romans six and we'll read verses one to seven. What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? May it never be.

How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death? Therefore, we have been buried with him through baptism into death in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the father, so we too might walk in newness of life. Or if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that our body of sin might be, and here the idea of destroyed or done away with, it misses the idea. It's the idea of being rendered powerless.

Just like you remember there in Hebrews two, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death. Well, the devil has not been annihilated, but his power has been broken. And that's the idea here.

Our body has not been annihilated, it's not been destroyed, but its power has been broken. That we should no longer be slaves to sin, for he who has died is freed from sin. Now, if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him, knowing that Christ having been raised from the dead is never to die again.

Death no longer is master over him. For the death that he died, he died to sin once for all, but the life that he lives, he lives to God. Even so, consider yourself to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

It was a very liberating thing for me when I saw that he's talking here about what happens in regeneration. You know, we can try to imagine back there somehow I died with Christ on the cross. Well, that's true in the sense that everything was purchased there, and it was all done there.

But he's talking here about what happens when you are regenerated, united to Christ, converted. Because he talks about us being raised up to walk in newness of life. That happens when you become a Christian.

That's what he's talking about. Now, what happens in regeneration? Your old man, that is the person that you used to be in Adam, is crucified, dead, and buried. And you're raised up to walk in newness of life as a new person who's been raised from the dead.

Notice what he says here in verse 4. He says, so that we too might walk in newness of life. And in verse 13, present or yield yourselves unto God as those who are alive from the dead. You're a Christian, you're alive from the dead, you see.

Talking about something real here. Now, I don't like the term positional truth, because what that means in most people's minds is pretend, imaginary. Justification is positional in that it's legal.

God justifies me in the sight of His law. But when we start talking about regeneration and holiness, we're talking about a creative act of power that God does something to you and with you. Something real.

And this isn't some mystical thing that you can't figure out what in the world is he talking about. He's saying your old man, the old you. Remember what Paul says in Galatians 2.20? I have been crucified with Christ.

You see? And I'm living now, but it's no longer I that's living now. Christ is living in me. And so he's talking about something that happens when you become a Christian, you see.

Your old man, the person that you used to be, is crucified, dead and buried. He's not still hanging on the cross, half alive, shouting orders at you. He's gone.

Dead and buried and completely and never will be back again. I never did know the old Michael Durham. And I'm glad I didn't.

And I never will know the old Michael Durham because the old Michael Durham is crucified and gone. See that? He's made you a new man in Christ. He's raised you up to walk in newness of life.

He's changed you from the inside out. Well, why do I still have a problem with sin again? The question comes up. Why do I still have a problem with sin? Because I am not yet totally redeemed.

My body has not yet been redeemed. My physical body, we're waiting for the redemption of our bodies. And even though there's nothing sinful about my body as such, sin tries to reign in my mortal body.

And that's what the Bible talks about when it talks about the flesh. And he says some amazing things. He calls sin a deed of the body.

Romans 8, 13, If you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body. Well, it's not like my hands and arms are just moving on their own and something sinful about my body as such. But sin's trying to reign in my mortal body.

That's your flesh. Now, he says two things to get from this. Number one, that's not who you really are.

That's not the deepest truth about you. That's not the ultimate truth about you. You are one who is alive from the dead.

As a Christian, you're a new man raised up to walk in newness of life. That's who you really are. The second thing that we learn from this is that I don't have to be defeated by the flesh.

So there's two things we get out of Romans 6 and those passages when it talks about our old man has been crucified and we're a new man. What do we get? One, I am alive from the dead. I'm a new person.

Two, I don't have to be defeated anymore by the flesh. I can walk in the Spirit now and I won't fulfill the lust of the flesh. That's what these passages are about.

If you by the Spirit do mortify and put to death the deeds of the body. Beloved, sin's days are numbered in every Christian. Just a little bit longer and it's all over for sin.

I gave the illustration yesterday of this factory which all these things are weak analogies but they give a little bit of feel for these things maybe. I like to think of it like this too. It's like a war.

You know, a lot of times this happens too. In a war, finally the enemy surrenders and they give up and they sign the peace treaty or whatever and they surrender and the war's over. They're defeated.

But there's little pockets of resistance out here that don't know the war's over yet and they're still fighting tooth and toenail. Now the fact is they don't stand a chance. I mean their nation has already surrendered.

They're defeated. It's over for them. You see that? They don't have any hope whatsoever of surviving.

Now that's the way it is with sin in the life of a Christian. The root has been cut. Here's another illustration.

You take this tree. It's got these big leafy branches and you saw that thing. Just cut it right off with a chainsaw.

Cut it right off the ground. That's all over now. You take that tree over and set it on the ground and put some wires there to hold it up, keep it from falling over and somebody drives by in the car and you say, look at that dead tree over there.

That's not, that tree's not dead. Yeah, it is. You just don't know the facts about it.

In a little while every leaf on there is going to fall off because the ax has been laid to the root. Any sin that we're still fighting right now, beloved, it's not an expression of who we are. It's an expression of who we used to be, vestige of what we used to be.

And as days are numbered, every now and then we, I'm sure you have it here too. You'll have a snowstorm late in the spring. One time I think we had one April 10th.

We had a blizzard. And you know when it's December and winter's just coming on and you have something like that, you kind of groan. You think, man, we may be in for a hard winter.

When you have something like that on April 10th, you just laugh at it. You know that as days are numbered, it's not even going to be there one day usually before it's melted and gone. That's the way it is with sin and the life of a believer.

It's doomed. It's perishing. It's gone.

Now Paul says, realize who you are and embrace who you are. Realize that that thing is gone, doomed, destined to pass away. That's not what's going to last forever.

That's not what's real. So be consistent with who you are and lay hold of and embrace who you are. That's again, this is a New Testament way of teaching growth and grace.

Who are you according to the Bible? Well, you're one who is alive from the dead, Romans 6, 13. Don't yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin. Don't present yourself in that way.

But what? Present yourself unto God as one who is alive from the dead. That is, realize that you are one who is alive from the dead. Now when you become a Christian, when you first become a Christian, you feel this a little bit.

You realize I'm alive from the dead. But after you go for a while and you start realizing, you know, you got those pockets of resistance, they're firing at you pretty hard. And you start thinking maybe this war is not over after all.

And I might even lose this war. And you start seeing how much of sin remains and you start thinking how bad and rotten and vile you are. And pretty soon you don't have words bad enough to describe yourself as a Christian.

Now you just try coming before God and you say, Lord, here I present myself to a vile, rotten piece of meat. You can't have any victory like that. You present yourself, if you're a Christian, you're just as alive from the dead and new and fresh today as the day you became a Christian.

That's who you are. You're one who's alive from the dead. Present yourself to God right now as not as somebody that has to be defeated, but as somebody who's alive from the dead.

Nothing can stop you. The flesh cannot stop you. The world, the devil cannot stop you.

You're a child of God, born of God, born of the Spirit. His seed is in you. You've become a new tree.

You're not that old tree anymore. You don't have to bear those thorns anymore. Now this is renewing of your mind, you see.

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Be not conformed to this world. You don't have to be.

Be transformed. Be renewed in the Spirit of your mind. Put on the new man.

Put on these deeds that the new man does as those who are beloved of God, holy and beloved, elect of God. Put on all this stuff because that's who you really are. Before you become a Christian, you're just putting on.

But now you can put these things on because that's who you really are. Well, Lord willing, we'll go on tomorrow and try to look at three more of these designations of regeneration.

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