

Four R's of the Gospel: Regeneration

by E.A. Johnston

True regeneration is a supernatural act of God that gives dead men life and changes the will of God to be central in a person's life, resulting in a life lived out in holiness unto God.

Duration: 20:22

Scripture: Matthew 7:21, Luke 14:33, Acts 2:38, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:8-9, Hebrews 12:14, James 2:17

Topics: "Gospel"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of preaching the Gospel in its proper order and purity. He believes that the law must be preached before grace so that sinners can realize their lost condition and their need for a Savior. The four key doctrines of the Gospel, which are room, redemption, repentance, and regeneration, must be preached with authority. The preacher also highlights the significance of genuine regeneration, stating that a true Christian is someone whose heart has been changed by the grace and mercy of God.

Transcript

We've been bringing a series of messages on the four R's of the Gospel. Rune, Redemption, Repentance, and Regeneration. We believe that the Gospel must be restored to its purity and proper order for our day.

The law must be preached before grace so the sinner can be awakened to the fact he is lost and is in need of a Savior. The Gospel demand for repentance must be declared or man will stay in his sins and be misled into thinking he can still go to heaven as a rebel against a holy God. But God will have no rebels in heaven.

And in your day and mine, few in our churches are truly regenerated and born again. Many have just made a decision with their mind to become a Christian but have never experienced the heart change involved by being a subject of grace and mercy. A Christian is someone who's experienced change.

Today, friends, we will bring forth the last in our series of messages on the Gospel preached in its purity and proper order. We have spoken of these great four R's of the forgotten Gospel. Rune, Redemption, Repentance, and Regeneration.

Today, our message is on the doctrine of regeneration. Listen to the following story. There were two college students in a dorm room.

One was a Christian and his roommate was not. The Christian invited his roommate to go with him. One evening to a evangelistic meeting, which he reluctantly attended.

The evangelist that evening said something which stuck in the unconverted boy's mind. The evangelist said, Tonight, friends, please go home and take out a piece of paper and write on it one of two words which best describes your condition before God, saved or lost. The boys returned to their dormitory and the Christian sat down by his bed and took out a piece of paper and wrote the word saved on it and stuck it in his Bible so his friend could see it.

And he said, Good night and went to sleep. The unsaved roommate took out a piece of paper as well, and he wanted to be honest with himself and do what the evangelist had asked. But he just could not write the word saved because he knew he wasn't saved.

But yet he would not write the word lost because that word lost bothered him. It made him restless and the thought of it gnawed at him all evening. Finally, in desperation, he went over to his friend's Bible and opened it and began to read it.

And he began to question God and wrestle with God and seek God. And before the morning light, he was able, by God's grace and mercy, to write that word saved. For he had found faith in Christ.

That young man knew he had experienced change. Jesus said, Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. George Whitefield, the great British evangelist, toured America during the Great Awakening, and his preaching startled thousands.

And his main message was, Ye must be born again. A New England minister approached Whitefield one day and asked him, Mr. Whitefield, you have been among us now for a week of preaching, and your message is always the same. You keep preaching, ye must be born again.

When will you preach a new message? Whitefield replied, Sir, when ye are born again. You see, in Whitefield's day, many believed in baptismal regeneration, that one was converted through the rite of baptism. Whitefield cried out against that and preached, ye must be born again.

Whitefield knew there had to be a supernatural work of grace in the heart for one to be born again, and that this act was a work of God. Man couldn't do it. Sprinkling water on somebody's forehead couldn't get the job done.

No, sir, God had to do this supernatural work in the heart to change a man and save him. One day Whitefield was preaching on Boston Common to 20,000 people in the open air, and a Boston pastor approached him and asked Whitefield how many converts he had had since he'd been preaching in America. To this, Whitefield replied, I don't know, sir, but I shall return to these parts in a year or two and shall look for the evidence of their salvation.

The evidence of their salvation. It used to be, friends, that in the churches of America some years ago, they would not let you join the church unless you were able to present the credible evidence of your salvation. Regeneration is a supernatural act of God, as supernatural as when God raised Jesus from the dead.

For regeneration is God giving dead men life. He takes a man who was dead in trespasses and sin and so radically changes that man that the will of God is now central to that person's life. There is then credible

evidence of their salvation through a life of faith and obedience to the word of God.

Oh, friends, how we need to get back to that in our churches today. A tree is known by its fruit, and too many church members today have joined the church and know some gospel facts, but they've never been the subject of regeneration, and they are not born from above and washed in the blood. I was an unconverted church member for years.

I knew my Bible, but I did not know the God of the Bible. When a man is born again, he's given a new nature. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new. A person who has experientially known Christ has experienced change, and I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you, and I will take the stone of heart out of their flesh and will give them a heart of flesh.

Let me ask you, friends. Why are so many in our churches today who don't act like Christians? Why are they not more doers of the word? Why do so many just give lip service to God? Why do so many in our churches today walk in bondage to sin, yet still claim to be a Christian? Jesus never preached a sin in religion. Allow me to hit this note home with you until it rings in your ears.

One way to know for sure if you are on the church roll, but not yet in the Lamb's book of life, is the stark reality of a lack of holiness in you. For when we are saved, God plants within us a disposition for holiness. We must heed the biblical warning from Hebrews, for without holiness, no one will see the Lord.

We have to stop excusing our relations by saying, well, you know my son Bill may not be living for the Lord right now, but 30 years ago he accepted Jesus, even though he's been away from the Lord these many years. Look, friends, it's time for honesty. Salvation is not resting on a past decision or a past experience, but it's a vital union with the living Lord in a day-by-day exercise of faith and repentance every day.

Salvation is not resting on a past experience from years ago, but being in a living union with the risen Lord. And if your life does not produce spiritual fruit that brings glory to God, then it's time to heed the Apostle Paul's warning. Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith.

Prove your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except you be reprobates. True salvation is Jesus Christ in you, the hope of glory. It's a vital union to Christ.

Regeneration means we've experienced change, no change, no salvation. Listen, friends, when Jesus was here in his earthly ministry and he entered villages, those who came in contact with him experienced change. Their lives were transformed and Jesus told them, go and sin no more.

In your day and mine, we have made a surrender to the Lordship of Christ, an option extended to those Christians who wish to go deeper with God in a life of victory. This modern concept is not biblical, for no one can truly receive Jesus as Savior without recognizing him as his Lord. Jesus Christ does not give salvation to rebels who stay rebels.

We must insist to all sinners, as we preach the gospel in its purity and proper order, that sinners bow their knee and lay down their shotgun of rebellion and submit wholly to Christ as King over their life. That untruly saved life will produce a holy life, but many don't want to believe that. They fight against holiness today.

But listen, friends, if you claim to be a Christian and you can sleep well at night with any known sin in your life, then you must wake up out of your spiritual slumber and realize you may be resting your hope of heaven in a hole in the wall. Allow me to quote the Puritan William Grinnell on the evidence of a sincere heart through a life of holiness and faith. Listen to his wise words.

The spirit of holiness comes into the heart, and the scepter of Christ, which is a scepter of righteousness, bears sway in the life. Truly, friends, you will find that the blood of Christ himself will not cleave to a soul that is in league with any way of sin and unrighteousness. In vain do men think to shroud themselves under Christ's wing from the hue and cry of their accusing conscience while wickedness finds a sanctuary in them.

Christ never was intended by God to secure men in their unrighteousness, but to save them from it. But friends, we don't hear that kind of preaching much today. We hear talk of the carnal Christian who just needs to keep confessing and confessing those old nasty sins and still come to church on Sunday, but on Monday be knee-deep back in those filthy sins.

Listen, friends, that person's never seen a high and holy God who sits on a throne of majesty. That person's never been awakened to the wretchedness of their own heart and shown they are lost and outside of Christ and in a perilous position of condemnation from a holy God who hates sin and who will punish sin. That person has never received a revelation of Jesus Christ as a living Lord who saves His people from their sins.

And that person who claims to be a Christian but who refuses to be separated from their sins knows nothing of the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hell is a broad highway full of rebellious, lawless church members who refuse to bow their neck to the King of Kings. There are many, I'm afraid today, who have never encountered a living Christ but believe themselves to be saved through a decision they made in the past.

Yet they rest on a false foundation and have never been the subject of grace and never have had a regenerated heart. Will God receive those who claim to be converts and who still live in sin? No, sir. Listen to 2 Timothy 2.19 as it declares who is a true Christian.

Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal. The Lord knoweth them that are His, and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. Dear one, a true convert is one who has a sincere heart toward God.

That person is one who wants to flee from sin so not to dishonor God or rob Him of His glory. They love holiness and they love the will of God, and the will of God is central to their lives. Listen to the solemn words of God from Titus 1.16 which describes a false convert.

They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. Listen, friends, I know of which I speak. For years I was a lost church member.

But listen, God, who is rich in mercy, gloriously saved me. I looked good on the outside as a consistent church member, but on the inside I was a rebel against the Holy God until my heart had experienced change. You may be able to fool your spouse friend.

You may be able to fool your friends. You may be able to fool your congregation, but you can't fool God. The foolish virgins were shut out of heaven because the lamp of their profession had no oil.

Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Listen to Romans 8.9. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. A person who is truly born again knows Christ in an intimate way, and his one desire is to please Him in a life of obedience and holiness, to bring glory to the Father.

It is no superficial change or partial reformation, but a sincere heart which has experienced an inward change and a transformation. A person who belongs to Christ is His sheep and has broken away from their sins, giving themselves wholly up to God and who live in holiness unto Him. If that is not your case, then heed the warnings of God and seek Christ and repent of your sins.

Listen, hell is full of unconverted church members. May I recommend a book to you friends? I highly recommend it. It's called An Alarm to the Unconverted.

It's written by Joseph Alleyn. He was a Puritan writer. It's also under a new title called A Sure Guide to Heaven.

Allow me to read you what this wise Puritan had to say on the difference between a sincere believer and a hypocrite. Now, here you will find the hypocrite sadly deficient. He speaks, it may be like an angel, but he has a covetous eye, or the gain of unrighteousness is in his hand.

His hand is white, but his heart is full of rottenness, full of unmortified cares, a very oven of lust, a shop of pride, the seed of malice. It may be with Nebuchadnezzar's image, he has a golden head, a great deal of knowledge, but he has feet of clay. His affections are worldly, he minds earthly things, and his way and walk are sensual and carnal.

The work is not thorough with him. The new man takes a new course. His conversation is in heaven.

No sooner does Christ call by effectual grace, but he straightway becomes a follower of him. When God has given the new heart and written his law in his mind, he henceforth walks in his statutes and keeps his judgments. Though sin may dwell in him, truly a wearisome and unwelcome guest, yet it has no more dominion over him.

The sincere convert is not one man at church and another at home. He is not a saint on his knees and a cheat in a shop. He does not pretend piety and neglect morality, but he turns from all his sins and keeps all God's statutes, though not perfectly accepting desire and endeavor, yet sincerely not allowing himself in the breach of any.

There, friends, is a good summation of the Christian in his life and conduct. It's a shame that many today in our churches do not let their profession interfere with their daily conduct. But Christ died to make men holy, and the most damning thing in our nation today is the philosophy that's taught in our pulpits, which allows people to think they have an interest in the death of Christ without being vitally joined to him in their daily walk.

True regeneration is when you are vitally and really and experimentally and actually joined to the Lord Jesus Christ. Listen, friends, God Almighty is not out to improve on your old sin nature. The only thing he's going to do is deal with a death blow and give you a new nature, and that new nature will have the principle of holiness planted within the heart of an old rotten sinner, and that will result in a new way of

walking that is pleasing to the Lord, not a life of excusing or excuses or blaming others for our bad behavior, but a walk in harmony with God through peace and holiness.

One of the greatest miracles in the world is a sinner saved by grace. He who was once a slave to sin is now a bond slave to the Lord Jesus Christ, and the evidence that a work of grace has been made real in the heart is a life lived out in holiness unto God. A man who doesn't have that evidence doesn't have any evidence but an empty profession.

When we preach the gospel, we must preach the law before grace so a lost sinner can realize his lost and ruined condition and his desperate need of a savior. The four great doctrines of the gospel must be held up and preached with authority, and these are the four R's of the gospel which are Rune, Redemption, Repentance, and Regeneration. Leave out one of those, friends, and you have a partial gospel which results in partial conversions.

Let us preach the gospel in its purity and in its proper order, and let us preach it with umption from on high to convert others, and let us weep real tears over the lost and go out into the highways and byways and bring them in all to the glory of God. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24536.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ea-johnston/four-rs-of-the-gospel-regeneration/>

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