

Evangelism #03: The New Creation

by Ernest C. Reisinger

The sermon emphasizes the importance of evangelism, conversion, and the role of testimony in sharing the gospel, highlighting the dangers of making one's own experience the norm and glorifying sin instead of the Savior.

Duration: 55:08

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 5:24

Topics: "Evangelism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on his parental responsibility and the lack of religious upbringing for his son. He also shares about a man named Elmer who was a true witness for Jesus, even in his everyday work on a construction job. The speaker then mentions a poem that expresses the experience of conversion and shares a personal testimony of being influenced by his grandfather's funeral. Overall, the sermon highlights the importance of personal testimonies and the providence of God in shaping one's faith.

Transcript

Again, I want to take this opportunity to thank your committee for inviting me and entrusting me with the awesome task of trying to preach. It's a serious thing to life and death, matters that have to do with... to see each other. It's the last year in Grand Rapids where we have another chance to minister together.

It's been a joy to... it's always a joy to be with him and his personal presence and also to sit under his ministry and know him as a friend and as a servant of God. A person who asks that question where they can get some excellent material that will solve it, it will answer it super duper for you. In Dabney's discussion, Son of a Brother, there's a fine section on that two nature thing.

And also, I don't remember which volume it's in now because it's off the top of my head, but also in Professor Murray's, one of his four volumes has an excellent section on that. And there's some place in John Owen, maybe you can tell him, but I can't remember, but I read something very good about that. Well, this is not question time, I say to you, you've been a patient people.

Anyone who can listen to five messages in a day, you need a gold medal, don't you think Dr. Perkins? But if he's in Christ, he is, in fact, a new creature. Nor uncircumcision... evangelism. Sickness to a low view of conversion in theory.

And all the second works of grace... something else they should have found the first time. This change to a saving change. Two or three, I should say, three full length testimonies of that saving change.

Used for the comfort and the edification of the churches. And I would hate to have a Bible without all the biographical material of the men of the Bible that we learn from and profit from. I would hate to not have David's testimony.

I would not like to have a Bible without that personal testimony. And on one occasion in Psalm 66, David said, Come and hear, come and hear all you that fear God, and I will declare unto you what he has done for my soul. Well, that was personal.

In Mark chapter 5, verse 18 to 20, we find a man there, we know him as the maniac of Gadara. And he had been a recipient of the saving touch of Jesus. And let me read those verses.

And when he was coming to the ship, that is, Jesus was coming to the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him or asked him that he might be with him. The Bible says, Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, or allowed him not. But he said unto him, now that's strange, here's a man that wants to be with Jesus.

But Jesus allowed him not. But he said unto him, Go home to your friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And I read in the next verse, he departed, and he began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done.

They didn't marvel at the maniac, but they marveled at the great things that Jesus had done. And of course, I hardly need to remind you of that vivid story in John 4, where that woman at the well who was a sick man without the benefit of the clergy, when she went back to the city after she had been a recipient of that same sovereign touch of Jesus, she went back to the city, and in the 39th verse of that 4th chapter, it says, Many of the men in that city believed on him because of the testimony of the woman. Now he hadn't called her to be a theologian or a preacher, but to tell what Jesus had done for him.

For the apologetics, for the proper use of testimony, I suppose I should say, I remember last year at Grand Rapids, Dr. Packer, you remember at one of your introduction meetings, you gave some of your testimony. I had at least six men say how they appreciated that. They didn't know anything about Dr. Packer, except that he was a great writer and a great theologian, and didn't know anything about his conversion.

And not because you did it, that's not why I'm doing it, but I trust you. Well, oh boy, when they started interpreting, it was a bad interpretation of the facts. It is making your own experience, your own testimony a norm for Christian conversion.

I preached for a man once who wrote a book, 20 years a Baptist preacher, and he wasn't saved. Well, I read the book, and I read the facts, and I would interpret the facts from the Bible in an entirely different way. But in that church, he made his experience the norm.

And I remember after I preached the first time, I went down from the platform, and there was all the people sitting in the front row, and a man came up, and he says, Brother, pray for me. I'm awakened, but I'm not saved. And I said, Really? I said, How long have you been awakened? He said, About 10 years.

Well, in that church, I found several people like that. Well, the man was making his own experience a norm, and he wasn't a bad preacher, either. He was making his own experience a norm.

So that's one of the dangers. Another danger. And then a fourth danger is glorifying sin instead of the Savior.

I tell you these things so that when you have opportunity to give testimony, you might be guarded by these principles. Glorifying sin instead of the Savior. When we speak of the sin that pained us, it's to point men to the one who healed us last week.

Jesus. Gangsters and bank robbers and that sort of thing. They were just hard working without God.

And I think that that was so valuable in my early days. But as I look back and know the place of the law in conversion, know that there has to be a knowledge of sin before you know you're a sinner, know that you have to know what sin is before you know you're a sinner, I'm grateful that I learned the Ten Commandments. They didn't save me, but they sure taught me that I needed to be saved.

It's customary when you became about 12 to join the church. And I remember in my Sunday school class that I was in, all the boys, it was a little boys class, we were about 12, and they were all from church families mostly, and I was not from a church family. And I remember the Sunday school teacher and the pastor talked to me about joining the church.

And I went home and talked to my mother about that. And she thought that was a good idea and the pastor thought it was a good idea. And so I remember that Sunday morning when I was taken in with the offering.

And I was very serious about it. I was very serious about it. And I think all concern, pastor included, was serious.

It wasn't done in a frivolous, foolish way. But that day I became an unconverted member in the business world where I've spent most of my life. The men that I've met, most of them belong to some Christian church, Catholic, some Christian church.

Many of them belong to a Christian church, you know, but they were like I was. My church believes what I believe. Well, Joe, what do you and the church believe? Well, we both believe the same thing.

So that's the kind of pathetic, pathetic situation you're in. I had a good teacher. He liked sports and I liked sports.

We'd do the current events on sports. If you'd look at his watch, it's a little late to get into the lesson today, boys. We'll take up where we left off next week.

And that's what we did on the current events of sports mostly. But that preacher's long, dry sermons was more than my little 12-year anatomy could take. And I soon found reasons not to go to church.

Well, that's not a good part. Gambling and fighting and drinking and all went with that. Three things that had a profound me.

Some people thought that he thought I was the only one afterwards because we were very close. I was closer to my grandfather than I was my parents. He lived on a farm and he had horses.

And I can remember today riding on the same horse with him over the farm at times. And I remember when he died, where I came from in Pennsylvania. In those days, we didn't have all the fancy funeral

homes and parlors that we have now.

And they kept the body at the house. Some of you young people don't know anything about that. I see somebody nodding their head.

They might know about it. But anyhow, so the body was there in the country, out in the country. And I remember the day funeral.

I remember they put that black wagon there. They took that box and put it in there. And I remember being in the family.

We were the next car after the hearse. And we followed that black wagon about six miles to a little country graveyard. And there I saw those same six men take that box out, walk down through that country graveyard.

And they didn't have all this fancy stuff. Now I have a lot of funerals. And they have the grass and you don't see the dirt or anything like that.

It's all this false grass. In those days, it was just a hole in the ground. And I remember that hole today.

And I remember as a young man, I stood and looked at that hole. And I had some thoughts. Is this it? You work hard and is this it? Is this the end? And that was a question that haunted me.

I've never talked to anyone about it. But in my worst bad moments, in my worst wicked part of my life, at times that scene would come back to my memory. And those questions about is there anything else.

Well, that's one of the things that had a profound effect on me, I believe, religiously. Although I didn't interpret it as religious then. And then the second thing, God gave my wife and I a son.

And my son was starting to grow up. And my wife and I were very, we were so non-religious we didn't get married in church. And I suppose I wouldn't doubt that when we got married, we didn't know what religion we were.

So that's about as non-religious as you can get. But I, as my son became four or five years old, I started to think about my parental responsibility. And here he is.

He never heard anyone pray. He never knew anything about Jesus. Never knew anything about the Ten Commandments.

Never knew anything about religion. Period. Four or five years old.

And I used to think of my parental responsibility. And about that same time, the third important thing, I believe, is significant in the thoughts. And he took Syria out these days.

South America, his mission field was a construction job. But nevertheless, that's where his field was. And that's where he told me the gospel.

And I'm glad he hadn't taken one of these canned courses where you ask somebody a few questions. You know, you know you're a sinner? Sure, everybody's a sinner. You believe that the wages of sin are death? Sure, I believe that.

You believe that God commended his love to all the rest of us? Not at all, we're sinners. Christ died for us? Sure, I believe that. Pat you on the back and tell you you're saved and send you on to hell.

I'm glad he hadn't known anything like that. He had a Bible and thank God he read it. And he learned in that Bible some things about me that I didn't know about myself.

He knew I needed to be converted. He knew that true conversion included evangelical repentance. He knew that when God converts a man, he makes a new creature out of him because he had been converted himself.

And he knew that something had to happen on the inside. Well, he used to invite me to Sunday school. This is an inspiration for some of you who have friends who are Christians.

Be patient with them. That's about all he did, invite me to Sunday school, but he did it faithfully. School class one time, he was in a class and he didn't come.

And I said, Reuben, I missed you last week. Oh yes, he said, I had to go and visit my son. So the next week he wasn't there and I saw him go in the week.

I said, Reuben, I missed you last week. He says, yes, he said, I left my shoes over at my son's house. And my motives are right.

So I said, Reuben, I missed you last week at Sunday school. He said, yeah, I had to go back and get my shoes. Well, I made excuses like that, foolish excuses.

But I did go to that Sunday school with no thought for myself, only to get my son inside of some kind of religious training. And it wouldn't matter to me much what kind of religious training it was. But I got him there.

And that day we sang a hymn that I remember singing when I was 12 years old about. What a friend we have in Jesus. All our sins and griefs to bear.

When I got about that far, I closed the hymn book. And I thought, what a liar I am, standing here singing to God something that's not true. And I don't even mean it.

And I closed the hymn book. Well, people would take care of him. Religiously, I'm now seeing that my son is getting some religious training.

So all those things that bother me, which didn't bother me before. Sunday school, and that day when I went back, I remember seeing my friend there. He met me at the door, and he put out his hard, rough carpenter hand to shake hands.

And when I looked at his face, big tears were rolling down his cheeks. And I thought to myself, there's nothing emotional about shaking hands. And I'd never seen any unusual emotional thing about him at all.

He was an excellent carpenter. So I started to read this book, and Mark, at least four times in those early chapters of Mark, where he was moved with compassion. And I believe I'm safe in telling you today, or all those years afterwards, that those tears were a result of walking with Jesus, and a real living, live relationship to Jesus.

Went to Sunday school. I went to him afterwards. And I said, Elmer, you've got what you've got.

Sunday school, a lady Sunday school teacher. And I want to tell you, there was one thing, sure, that I didn't want to become one of these fanatics that totes the Bibles around places. I wanted to try to be a better husband and get my life.

They talked to me, and they talked to me about, I believe in God. I don't know the day in my life that I didn't believe in God, who appeared in the pages of history called Jesus Christ, and he left his marks in the sand of time like no other man. I don't know a day that I didn't believe that.

So when they went over many of these things, I did give more than mental assent. I gave serious assent to that. But they got to another point, and they all talked about being saved, whatever that was.

And they testified to that. But they think they do. And I thought, well, I'd settle for that.

Even if I didn't have it, if I could think I did, that wouldn't be bad. Let me tell you how serious I was about conversion. Let me tell you how serious I was.

I decided that I would never work another day until I could dismiss religion from my mind altogether, or until I had what they claimed to have. And the next morning, the man there to take me to work, I rode with another man, and he was used to seeing my wife there at the door saying, he's not going today. That was not unusual.

But he wasn't used to seeing me there, saying, Lou, I'm not going today. And that day, that Sunday school teacher, and this was a good providence of God, had one of those tracks in those days, why they rejected Christ, and why they were outside the fold. I didn't understand that.

The life of a converted man is saved. And I'd open it up, and it would say, so-and-so beget, so-and-so beget, beget. And it's funny, but it wasn't funny then.

This is actually what happened. And I said, oh, God, if you be, and I'd open it up. And finally, I opened it up to, it was a little thin track on cheap paper.

It's not the kind you'd pass out, and you'd be ashamed to do it. It had an awful title. It said, what must I do to be saved? I'm going to do exactly what this thing tells me.

I'd be desperate if it would have said, swim across the Chesapeake Bay. When you get on the other side, you'll be saved. I may have tried it.

But it didn't say anything like that. And so, it told me to get on my knees to John. And I found John, and it referred me to John 5.24. Verily, verily, verily, I say unto you, When my Catholic Bible says, Amen, amen, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth in him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation.

I've talked to men in missions where the scriptures were printed around the walls, and these missions where the drunks go, verses around the wall. But I believe the Spirit of God that night took the word of God and spoke some peace to my heart. I found myself weeping before that open Bible.

Today, I'm not taking that flask today. And this little tract says, read the Gospel of John prayerfully three times. I put a little Bible in the lunchbox.

I didn't want them to think I had a few bricks less than the full load or anything like that. So I got behind the lumber pile, and I'm reading that Gospel of John. I had to.

I wanted to know what it said. I wanted to understand it. I just wanted to know so much so soon.

And I noticed I wasn't swearing. And I noticed, and I'd say, Jesus Christ. It would bother me.

It was like talking about my mother. And I thought, that's funny. Two weeks ago, I was doing the same thing.

I used to see Omer. I'm going to tell my wife. What's she going to think? And I was worried about what she would think.

Well, tonight I'll say it. And I'd get cold feet again. Well, finally, if I think about the third or fourth day, I thought, this has got to be the day.

And I got up to the table. My heart started to go boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, like I was going to rob a bank or something. And all I wanted to do was say, I think we ought to pray.

Well, and finally, I said, honey. I said, honey. For being a spy.

His guards even. And it went all the way to George Washington. He must have been a great Christian from the people who guarded him.

First began the scheme to rescue a fallen man. Hail, matchless, free, eternal grace, which gave my soul a hiding place. But with hands uplifted high, despised the mention of his grace, too proud to seek a hiding place.

Enwrapped in thick Egyptian night, fond of darkness more than light, madly I ran the sinful race, secure without a hiding place. But thus the eternal counsels ran, almighty love arrest that man. I felt the arrows of distress and found I had no hiding place.

Indignant justice, to Sinai's fiery mount I flew. But justice cried with frowning face, this mountain is no hiding place. Ere long he led me with the beaming faith, people of God.

Do you know what that is? To try to help you to determine your relationship to your maker, I wouldn't ask you about your denominational affiliations or your mode of baptism or any other question. If I could only ask one question to help you to determine your relationship to your maker, I would ask you this question. Sir, are you in Christ, united to Christ, in Christ as justification, in Christ as sanctification, everything God has for you, but of Him, of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, what He made us about, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

But there is the essence in that little verse of true religion. He is a new creature. But the verse also has something else in it.

What he feels with, decides with, and it is something else. It cannot be less than right thinking in relationship to God. It cannot be less than right feeling in relationship to God.

It cannot be less than right acting in relationship to God. Well, so the essence, I mean the essence of new creation, but there is something else in that little verse. The evidence, purpose for living.

What is your basic motivation? Years ago he had a sign on the back of his desk, a big A.P.E. A.P.E. Well, my brother knew it wasn't his initials, it wasn't the initials of the business, and he was intrigued, and he says, what does that mean? What's relevant about that sign, A.P.E.? He said, well, that's the secret of my success of my business. Yeah, he said, tell me about it. He says, A is for analyze the situation, the problem, the questions.

A is for analyze. He said, the P is for plan. Plan to do something about it.

He says, the E is for executing. You execute. You know, there are two kinds of failures in business generally, and in life too, as far as that goes.

One is a man who acts and never thinks, and the other fellow is one who thinks and never acts. Analyze this question that I'm putting to you tonight. Is your real purpose in life? For being here, change, and you got a new purpose for living that's imaginary.

Why are you living? Put down three things. Do you know what you have? A new quote. To be the wisdom of God becomes new.

Now his supreme interest is to be found in Christ. His eating and drinking and sleeping and recreation, even his apparel, all with an eye to please God. In other words, he sees that the gospel is so important.

He sees that it's relevant as long as men sin and die, as long as there's a heaven and hell. Let me take a long quote, and I'm not great for reading quotes in the pulpit, but I must hurry, and I'm on third base. I'm headed home.

1564, speaking of the gospel, and this is what he said. A man may lack liberty and yet be happy, Joseph was. A man may lack peace and yet be happy, David was.

A man may lack children and yet be blessed, as Job was. A man may lack plenty and be full of comfort, as Micaiah was. But he that lacks the gospel lacks everything that should do him good.

A throne without the gospel is but the devil's dungeon. Wealth without the gospel is fuel for hell, and I've seen it many times. Advancement without the gospel is but to go higher, to have a greater fall.

Jesus is all and in all, and where He is lacking, there can be no good. Hunger cannot be truly satisfied without manna, and He's the bread of life, which Jesus is. And what shall a hungry man do if he has no bread? Christ.

And what shall a captive, as we all are, cannot be delivered without redemption, which Jesus Christ is? And what shall a prisoner do without a ransom? Well, he goes on. He says, A building without Him is building on the sand, which will surely fall. Riches without Him will have a sweet that is seasoned with the drop of His blood.

He is truly the love, and He is the way. Without Him, He is the life. Without Him, men are dead in trespasses and sins.

He is the light. Without Him, men are darkness, and they know not whither to go. He is the vine, and does not wither to the fire.

He is the rock, and withered. He is the rock. Men not built on Him are carried away with the flood.

He is the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Author and Ender and Founder and Finisher of our salvation. He that hath not Christ hath neither beginning of good, nor shall have the end of misery. O blessed Jesus, He said, how much better were it not to be born and to be born without Thee, never to be born and not to die without Thee, eternally to lack Jesus.

Let me tell you something. Be conscious of, in a different way, I mean, the unconverted may have a conflict between sin and conscience. An unconverted man may have a conflict between sin and conscience.

An unconverted man can experience that conflict. But the new creature in Christ has conflict between sin and will, not between sin and conscience, between sin and will. That's the difference.

Well, I know something about that conflict. To teach that there can come a place in your life, creation, or some experience that there's no more conflict. Don't you ever believe that lie.

In sanctification, he had, I think, three or four messages. And in one of those messages he said something I'll never forget. He quoted Alexander White, who used to say to his congregation, great preacher, by the way, he used to say to his congregation, no one will get out of Romans 7 as long as I'm the pastor of this church.

Well, that's the conflict. Yes, it's a new creation, it's a new preacher. The evidence of saving religion, all things pass away, all things are affected.

Well, it's what we talked about before today, such a thing. In the place where you try to do your, your,

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/29/SID29972.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ernest-c-reisinger/evangelism-03-the-new-creation/>

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