

Evidences of the New Birth - Part 3

by Paris Reidhead

Paris Reidhead emphasizes the importance of understanding one's relationship with God through genuine fellowship, the role of the Holy Spirit, and the evidence of being born again.

Duration: 47:41

Scripture: 1 John 2:15

Topics: "New Birth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of having the right attitude towards the world and the desire to please God. He uses the analogy of X-ray images to illustrate different views of the heart and its attitude towards the law and the world. The speaker emphasizes the need to love not the world and its temptations, as they are not of the Father. The purpose of the sermon is to assure believers of their salvation and to encourage them to walk in obedience to God's will.

Transcript

I totally forgot to mention it. And Mrs. Peterson came to me after me at work and stood me up in a corner and read the Riot Act to me. Don't you ever, as long as you live, as long as you ever forget Mother's Day again.

So Mrs. Peterson, wherever you are, I remember Mother's Day. I don't worry about you, it's me. I've got the responsibility.

Well, it's a delight. I'm glad that we do have that general recognition. I think that's great.

I've never been very impressed with the Father's Day part of it, but I think that Mother's Day is certainly a time when we properly rejoice that God has entrusted to the mothers of the world, particularly this land, a tremendous responsibility for shaping a generation. Charles Spurgeon said, this generation of sinners is the product of the last generation of preachers. And there's a sense in which that's true.

This generation of mothers is responsible for the next generation of citizens. And I believe that to the degree to which there's a deterioration in the moral, spiritual strength and quality in motherhood, there is a deterioration in the nation's moral fiber and character. So for all of you who love God and serve Him with pure hearts, who are mothers, our gratitude and our prayers.

Now to 1 John. 1 John, and we're still in chapter 2. The purpose of this letter, as we saw in verse 3 and 4, is twofold. John said in the third verse, that which he had seen and heard, that was referenced probably primarily to what he had seen in his years of association with Christ.

As I mentioned on one occasion, perhaps two, this letter was probably not written until about 85 to 95 A.D. And the Lord had ascended about 30 A.D., 31 A.D., according to our calendar. So there's a lapse of 50 to 60 years. And John is the last living witness to that which had occurred when Christ was here.

He's the last one who had lived, walked, talked, served with the Lord Jesus. And so he declares that this was his purpose in writing, that he might declare to these believers, receive the letter, that which he had seen and that which he had heard, for the purpose that they might have fellowship, one with another with him and with the Lord. And in the fourth verse, he states that his purpose in writing is that their joy might be full.

And we realize that there are today a great many people who are not sure that they have been born of God. And if you allow them to express what's deepest in their heart without fear of being browbeaten one way or another, but just to be totally honest, you'll find many will say, you know, I'm a member of the church, or I've been baptized, or this happened or that, but I'm not really sure that I've been born of God. I just don't know.

People keep telling me, but there's a question in my mind. How can I know? And so this is written, that their joy might be full. How can your joy be full if you're uncertain about the most important question in all the world? Your relationship with God.

Joy can't be full. So this is written, that joy might be full, and that we might have fellowship. You know, so many people don't have fellowship with God.

They only have fellowship with other people about God. Now think of it for a moment. They don't have fellowship with God.

They have fellowship with other people about Him. And there's a great deal of difference. Now, I don't think there's anything wrong with having fellowship with other people about God.

Don't misunderstand me. That's wonderful. It's not enough.

We ought to have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. There ought to be vertical union, vertical fellowship, as well as horizontal fellowship. And so this is written, that we might have fellowship with the Father and with the Son.

Know that we know Him. Not just that we know about Him, but that we know Him. So, we've been endeavoring to have you see how you can do it.

Now, someone very thoughtfully put the five words back on the board for me today, and so I want to review them with you. You understand, a sinner is a sinner by choice. Whatever he's inherited, at the age of accountability, he made a decision.

And it's that decision that gives sin the character of crime. Whatever he inherited, tendencies, inner pressures, appetites, urges, you name it. There came a time when they sealed and certified whatever it was that was inherited by a decision.

We have turned everyone to His own way. All have sinned. And so it gets down to the point where it's a crime.

Well, sin is a crime. First, it's treason. Secondly, it's rebellion.

Thirdly, it's anarchy. Fourthly, it's transgression. And in the fifth place, it's enmity.

A traitor, a rebel, an anarchist, a transgressor, and an enemy of God. And that's what's implied in that I'm going to do what I want to do. That committal of the will to the principle of self-pleasing is the governing principle of life.

I'm going to do what I want to do. So, we discover that that is the state of all men. There is not two classes.

All of us have sinned. All of us have the same attitude. Oh, perhaps the cultural differences are there.

But it's like weaving, you know. We all have the same warp. Maybe the wolf is canvas or velvet.

That's immaterial. The warp is the same. And whatever the cultural chain differences are, they're superficial.

It's the warp that holds it together. That is the same for all of us. We're all traitors.

We're all enemies. We're all rebels and anarchists and transgressors and enemies. Whatever the soft or coarse fabric above was, it's still the same warp.

So, God has to do the same thing for everyone. It isn't easy to save some people and others. It's always the supernatural power of God that does it.

Because the first thing He has to do is to brood over us the same way He did in Genesis, the first chapter, and in a sense say, Wake up! Light be! Awakening. That's when the work of the Spirit of God causes the individual that has been sleeping in death to realize the danger and to stir them up within. Awakening.

Now, that's just a vague discontent, a general unhappiness, an inner misery, a dissatisfaction. The things that are unsatisfied don't. And it's not to be confused with something else.

It may occur with business losses. It may occur with death in a family. It may occur with success.

It may occur with good health. It may occur with great prosperity. It may occur with total bankruptcy.

You never know what God's going to use to achieve it. So, don't go around setting it, you know. You say, well, if I can just wreck His business, then He'll come to the Lord.

No, it doesn't work that way, you see. It's a miracle. It's God brooding.

And the Spirit of the Lord said, Light be! Not mother-in-law or father or friends or somebody else. It's God that awakens. Now, there are some things we can do, we see.

We can live Christ as a sample of His grace. We can intercede. And we can witness.

But that's all we can do. From then on, it has to be God and the sinner. Those are the two that must work together.

So, awakening is that inner state of alertness. What's the matter with me? Why am I not happy? Why are the things I once enjoyed so much are just like ashes in my mouth? Awaken. Now, some people rush in when they see that and say, oh, believe on the Lord and you'll be saved.

So, what's happened? They're short-circuited. They go into a superficial profession before they've been convicted. Awakening is a sensitivity.

Conviction is when the law of God revealing His holiness is applied to the conscience. See, there's two laws. There's the law in the Word and there's the law written on the heart.

Now, before you can get grain to be ground, you've got to have two stones. You just pour grain on the bottom stone and it gets a merry-go-round ride. But it doesn't grind.

What you have to do if you want the grain to grind is bring the upper stone down on the grain and the lower stone. Then the grain in between the two stones has the hull knocked off and is ground very fine. So, we've got two laws.

The law written on the heart. Every human being has from God the law inscribed on the heart even as He inscribed it on the tables of stone. Then you've got the law of the Word.

And so, it's when the law of the Word, the Word of God, comes down and it lays against the law written on the heart that the conscience has the hull rubbed off, if you please. It's broken. That's the grinding process.

Conviction. It's the work of the Spirit of God. Using the law of God pushed in upon the mind of the sinner, and then grinding the human spirit.

Now, here's the law and the Word. There's no problem that we all agree. This is the revelation of the holiness of God.

The law is written on the heart. God is here and in Him we live and move. Why aren't more people convicted? Well, because there are so few that are living Christ as samples of His grace, so few that are interceding, and so few that are witnessing, especially to the holiness of God.

You see, when a hundred years ago certain Bible teachers said the law is Jewish and not for this day of grace, they took out of the hands of the Holy Spirit the only weapon that He ever armed Himself to bring men to a sense of their need. If I had my way, and obviously I don't, probably for very good reason, I would declare a moratorium on the preaching of the plan of salvation for at least ten years in America. And I would preach the holiness of God and the righteousness of God and the law of God until some people began to cry out, what must I do to be saved? And then I would take them aside and very carefully whisper to them, so no one that wasn't ready could overhear it, the how to be saved.

But what we've done is gospel-harden a generation of sinners by telling them how before they knew why. And so this is why we have so many people in our churches that have been awakened, they've been led into a profession of faith, they're members, but they say there's something isn't right. Of course, because it was short-circuited.

It's like taking a stillborn baby and getting it perfectly embalmed and keeping it clothed and then having a doll made on an assembly line. They've got everything but life. It won't work.

So conviction is when He, the Spirit of Truth has come, He will convict why? He uses the truth of the revelation of the holiness of God and the truth of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and He catches the human spirit in between and He just grinds the skin off of it until the sinner says, God be merciful to me, a sinner. He's convicted. Hey, that's what we need to see.

You know what we need? Oh, we need a revival of the preaching of the holiness of God until men see they're lost. And then on the basis of that is repentance. And repentance we've seen is that change of mind from I'm going to do what I want to do to Lord, what will you have me to do? And on the basis of the genuineness of repentance, then God quickens faith.

Not just an intellectual assent, not just an emotional response, not just a submission to ritual, but a heart faith that reaches back 2,000 years in time and savingly embraces the Son of God. Heart faith. For with a heart man believeth unto righteousness.

With a head man is convinced that the Word is true. But with a total being, body, soul, and spirit, and total commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, on the basis of heart faith, there's the witness of the Spirit.

So, this is what John is talking about. When the Spirit of God comes in to bring life, what happens? He tells us that we are born of God. Now you see, we are born of the Spirit.

It is the Spirit of God that does all of this. It's the Holy Spirit that awakens sinners. It's the Holy Spirit that convicts sinners.

It's the Holy Spirit that stirs us to repent. It's He that quickens in our heart faith. And it's He that tells us you can call Almighty God Abba Father, but you do not even need to know that there be a Holy Spirit to have all of that happen.

It's all the focus on Christ. On the eternal, glorious Son of God. Not on the Holy Spirit.

I'm telling you because you're part of the force who's doing it. But you don't have to tell the unconverted that. You don't have to say, now it's the Spirit of God awakening you.

That's not important. That's not germane. To you it's important because you're the force.

You're the working force in the field. To you, you've got to know that it's not you, that it's God. And it's God who makes real salvation, pardon and forgiveness in the fact that Christ is in one.

And He's the one that enables one to say, Abba Father. But you don't need to know that it's the Holy Spirit doing it. That's the point I'm making.

There comes a time later on in your pilgrimage when you see, this is the Spirit of God presenting Christ to the sinner. You understand? But the focus is on Christ. And later on it says, He that comes after me is preferred before me.

That's Christ. Then it talks about the Holy Spirit for the saint, for the believer. So there's a difference in emphasis.

But here the whole focus is on the Lord Jesus Christ. Okay? Now, the third, the first evidence for you that have just joined us is in 1 John 1.6 and verse 7, but particularly verse 6. If we say we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and we do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, He is in the light.

So the first evidence, someone says, I'm not sure I'm saved. How do you walk? How do you want to walk? This is where it is. Walking, as we've said, is falling under control.

Falling is walking without control. So walking is that step-by-step, deliberate purpose. How do you walk? Do you want to walk in darkness and you occasionally fall into the light? Or do you want to walk in the light and are subject to the possibility of stumbling into darkness? But you walk.

Number two that we saw last week is in chapter 2, verses 3, 4, and 5. Hereby we do know that we know Him if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. So the second evidence, someone says, I'm not sure I've been born of God.

What's your attitude toward the law? Do you want to please God? Or are you still rebelling against thou shalt not? What's your heart? Is your heart to obey Him or is your heart to disobey Him? Do you want to please God and everything? Do you have a new heart? New spirit? New life? Born again? Well, if so, then you've partaken of His nature. And what was the nature of the Son, the Lord Jesus? I delight to do Thy will, O God. And what's yours? Have you been born into the family of God? You too, like your elder brother, delight to do His will.

You want to please God. When you should displease Him, disobey Him, it's a source of grief and heartache to you, not a source of gloating pleasure. Look, I got by with something.

Because you know with God you never get by with anything. You follow? You see, there's a tremendous difference. How do you walk? Now the third evidence is in chapter 2, verses 15, 16, and 17.

Chapter 2, verses 15, 16, and 17. This is evidence number 3. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. The world passeth away, and the desire thereof. But he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

So, you're talking to someone, you've come to evidence 1, you've explained that, they've stood in front of the x-ray machine, took a picture. Come to evidence 2, another view. What's your attitude? First is of a foot view.

You know, the x-ray machine goes down, takes an x-ray of the feet. Where do your feet go? And the next one is your heart. What's your attitude toward the law? You want to please God? You want to obey the law? Now, this is a side view of the heart.

First was a front view. We're taking another x-ray picture here. And it's the attitude of the heart toward the world.

Isn't it interesting? Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loved the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For, all that is in the world.

Now we understand what we're talking about. The desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life. Those three things.

That's the sum total of it. And these were the three basic idolatries that led Israel into their awful judgment from God. You had the worship of Ashtaroath, which was the desire of the flesh.

Ashtarti. That was when Nimrod, so we would gather from Isip's research and others, Nimrod was a mighty hunter in the King James, but actually the Hebrew rather would say he was a mighty rebel against the Lord. And he built the tower as a throne on which he enthroned as queen his father's wife Semiramis and dedicated the whole worship to sex, sexual indulgence.

That God was now being replaced by someone they could see who would give them license and make it a religious service to satisfy all of the appetites of the heart. So that was one form of idolatry. And then there was another one.

There was the worship of Moloch. Moloch has three Hebrew and Arabic radicals, MLK, and the Arabic word with which I was familiar was Melek. We were in Egypt when the Egyptian king went by for the opening of Parliament and you could hear the people on the sides crying out, Melek Kabir! Melek Kabir! Great King! Great King! Well, that's the radicals of Moloch.

Melek. And there was a very large statue carved out of rock in one area. There are probably many others, but the one that I've seen archaeological remains of and pictures of was a large statue of a royal regal figure and thighs together and hands across the thighs so as to make the lap a basin.

There were channels carved in the stone and behind it were bellows with skins of goats that could be used to force the air in. And it went up the channel and charcoal would be put in the lap. This would be maybe a four foot square lap, very large.

And then the people would come and bring their firstborn, eight to twelve days old, and would stand there and make their petition to Moloch. Now this had to do with the pride of life. This was power.

Power over people. Power over enemies. Power of position.

And the mother and father had to come together and the priest would hear the petition and let's say, see if Moloch accepts the offering. And then the father would stand there with the little child and would try to get a trajectory like putting a basketball through a hoop and then would send the little infant arms and legs flailing up, hopefully to land right in the bed of coal being brought to red heat by the bellows operated by the priest behind. Where the parents were willing to sacrifice the children for their own ambition.

They said, well that's horrible. Oh, it's being done all around us in Northern Virginia. I don't know about Maryland, but in Northern Virginia parents are sacrificing their children to their ambitions regularly.

I think they are in Maryland too, and all over. But it's being done. It's the pride of life.

Power. And then the lust of the eyes. And there you have that third form of idolatry where when the Israelites came into the land and took it over, you remember they looked around and they saw in the corner of the field some stones piled up.

The fields had been cleared, fences made with the stones, but here would be some stones and it would have brown, dark brown spots running down it. And they'd say, what's that to the ones who they'd replaced? Because they didn't all get killed. You've got my field, but I don't think you know how to make it produce.

What do you mean? When you see that pile of rocks, the only time we ever got a crop was when we sacrificed to that. Put a sacrifice. Well, we worship God.

We said, well, let's see what your God can do. We had to sacrifice because there's a spirit that owns this field. And if you don't sacrifice, that spirit's going to bring hail and it's going to bring drought and it's going to bring lightning to burn your crop and you won't get a crop.

And so one or two years, the Israelite doesn't get a crop. And then he says, well, I've got to have a crop. My wife's after me to buy that stuff she needs and those things, and so I've just got to have a crop.

And besides, I got debts down here for the seed. And so he happens to be out there and it just happens that that goat stumbles against a knife and his throat gets cut. With all accidents.

Like the man who said the law was unjust. Why? He said, my uncle was on the street corner peeling an apple. And he said, a fellow ran around that street corner, that corner, and bumped into him and stabbed himself with my brother's, my uncle's knife 14 times.

Well, there's a sense in which it was an accident the first time. But you know, they got a good crop. Got a good crop.

The next year, another accident but a little bit more deliberate. And the third year, no bones about it. Boy, we're going to do that.

And they just did it. They didn't stop going to the tabernacle in the wilderness. They didn't stop worshipping Jehovah.

No, the Scripture says they feared the Lord and served the gods of the land. And that's why God judged them and wanted both. So what are we talking about here? We're talking about idolatry.

The lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of the flesh. And what's he saying? Does he say you can't have two suits of clothes or two pair of shoes or two automobiles or two houses? Is that what he's talking about? You can't have the world? No, that's not what he's talking about at all. Well, what makes you happy? What kind of an animal you've got on your banyan t-shirt? Is that what makes you happy? I've heard about people who bought their coats on 7th Avenue and then went over to 5th Avenue and bought labels and sewed them in upside down so when they threw them back over the coat in the theater, why, somebody could read.

What makes you happy? What makes you happy? The world? Approval? Or your relationship to the Lord? Where's your joy? Where's your satisfaction? Where's your fulfillment? Paul had the answer. He said, I know how to abound. I also know how to be abased.

And my happiness doesn't depend upon either. I was having dinner at the Conrad Hilton Hotel in Chicago and just become left being Stevens and became Conrad Hilton and was Ray McAfee who was the associate pastor to Dr. Paul Toms at Park Street Church in Boston. He was then in Chicago with Dr. Tosin.

And I was there on another meeting and staying at the Conrad Hilton and so he came down to join me for dinner and it was very nice. Crisp, stiff white tablecloth and gleaming silver and lovely crystal and a beautiful room and excellent service and good food. And I said, Ray, isn't it marvelous that we can enjoy

this but our happiness doesn't depend upon it? He said, a month ago I was in Zaire going from one station to another having two-day Bible conferences with Dr. Tosin.

And we were trekking and I was sitting on the top of a trek box eating my supper out of a tin plate with a spoon. He said, I want you to know that I didn't feel any less happy and fulfilled and satisfied there than I do. Oh, I enjoy this, but I enjoy that because I was where the Lord wanted me to be.

There and here. Do you understand? Love not what your attitude toward the world. That's what we're talking about.

Not how much of it you have, but how much it has you. And if you understand that when you've been born of God you have God's attitude toward the world. You see, there's nothing wrong with position or power as long as it is a stewardship from the Lord.

That you serve Him. Whatever you do in word or deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. I am here because He wants me to be here.

There's nothing wrong with things, possession. There's only a few people, or not as many as I wish there were, that He can trust to be stewards of possession. But there's nothing wrong with having them as long as you understand that they are a trust.

Not necessarily to give away, perhaps to manage, to hold and to use wisely, well, for all the purposes that are there. Nothing wrong with that. There's nothing wrong with the appetites and urges that God has given us the flesh, if you please.

That is not wrong. But you see, the proposition that was presented to Mother Eve in the garden was this, to satisfy good appetites in a bad way. That's what temptation always is.

The proposition, temptation, you better get this now, is the proposition presented to the intellect to satisfy good appetites in a bad way. And sin is the decision to do it. But the appetites aren't bad.

That's the point I make. When God gave us the appetite for food, for knowledge, for position, for pleasure, for sex, for everything, He looked at the man, the person He'd made, and He said, it is good. Not it is bad.

It's good. But you see, there's a proper way. And the world says, ratify these appetites according to my standards.

That's idolatry. So we come to this third evidence. What's the evidence that you've been born of God? Well, one of them is your attitude toward the world.

What's in the world? The lust of the eye, the desire of the eye, if you wish, the desire of the flesh, the desire of the mind. That's one of the evidences. Certainly, I can use it.

I can have it. I can even hold it in trust. But it doesn't have me.

They say everyone has a price. You can buy anybody if you just pay enough. Is that true? I suppose it is.

I know the Lord Jesus bought me, and I trust He bought you. I'm sure He did. It cost Him a lot.

He gave His own self for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity. And if the world can come along with more than that, we might consider it. But until the world can come along with someone that loves us

more than life to endure the agonies of hell to pour out His soul unto death for us, and without anything other than just out of love, sure, I'm surprised.

I've been bought. I don't make any bones about it. But I'll tell you, it sure makes it hard for the rest of these guys to ante up enough to equal what He paid.

I haven't been able to figure out, oh, what a tragedy it is. Some people are willing to sell out for a mess of potty. He saw what.

It's astonishing to me how little it takes to buy certain people at certain times. Already bought by the precious blood of Christ. And they've forgotten how much it costs the Lord to redeem them.

And someone comes along with a few husks and a little mess of gruel and a few trinkets. Oh, they just fall all over themselves and sell out. At least one ought to get as much as they can.

If you're going to sell out ever, hold out for a good price because the devil knows how much you're worth to the Lord and He'll raise the ante a tremendous amount. Don't just sell out cheaply. But why sell out at all? What's the world got? No.

If you've been bought with a price, if you've been born of God's Spirit into God's family, then you're capable of walking back in the world. And what might have enticed, what might have seduced, what might have enraptured, what might have seemed worth the cost now, in the light of the fact that He loved you, poured out His soul unto death, gave His own self for you, it makes all the other little trinkets. You know, some people criticize the Indians for selling Manhattan Island for \$24 worth of trade goods.

They made a good deal in comparison to sometimes the temptations that come to the dear children of God to sell out for far less. Far more for far less. What's your attitude toward the world? How important it is to know that we're in it and not of it.

Some people, some of us perhaps, love things and use people. That's awful. That's evil.

Some of us who know and love the Lord Jesus Christ certainly ought to love people and use things. Edna Ferber, author of *Showboat* and some other things, said as a Jewish woman, she said, you can always tell whether you're talking with goys or yids, with gentiles or Jewish people. She said, the goys talk most of the time they talk about people.

Smart goys talk about things. But she said, Jews talk about ideas. But isn't that true? You listen to the average conversation in the hotel lobby or at the country club and what are they talking about? They're talking about people or things.

And you listen to a group of Jewish people talking, they may talk about people or things, but sooner or later and often very soon it gets down to talking about ideas. But with those of us who know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, there's nothing wrong with talking about people. There's nothing wrong with talking about things.

There's nothing wrong with talking about ideas. As long as we got it straight that our happiness doesn't come from relationship with people and it doesn't come from things and it doesn't come from ideas. Our happiness comes from a relationship with Him that gives us the basis for a relationship with people and with things.

That's the basis of our happiness. So that's what he's saying. What's the evidence that you've been born of God? That you have a totally new foundation in relation to the world.

Well, I didn't write it. Now all I'm doing is reading it and trying to tell you a little bit of what I think it means. So you bring the person you're talking to up against the Word.

Now, you don't have to say all the things I've said. I'm only saying these things so that you get a little idea of the third dimension of the verse. You see, the two dimensions are very obvious, but there's a third dimension of depth.

And I'm trying to give you that so that when you read it, you are putting into it far more than just the first two dimensions. And hereby we do know that we know Him if we keep His commandments. Pardon me.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. So you're giving this to that person that says, I'm not sure.

You're permitting the Spirit of God to take another X-ray picture. What's in the heart toward the world? Okay. Isn't it interesting? Everything God wants to do is a person with a plan and money.

Have you ever thought of that? Everything God wants to do is a person with a plan and money. Oh, why? Because money is fluid life. Money is crystallized intelligence.

Money is sanctified ability. Money is hardened energy. That's what it is.

So money represents the amount of time it took to get it. You notice when I'm talking about the world, I haven't been in vain against money. I used to do that before I knew better.

But I don't anymore. Anything that is so essential to everything God does has to be properly understood. So I'm not saying money is bad.

I am saying the love of the world, whether it's money or position or whatever, is an evidence of an unregenerate heart. But if you've been born of God, you've got a right view of money and a right view of things and a right view of people and a right view of position because you've got a right relationship with the Lord. That's what I'm talking about.

Father, we thank You for this time together. And we thank You for this privilege we have of seeing and understanding and doing the work that You do to bring us out of death into life and then to fit us to go back into this world that's governed by Thine ancient foe and constant enemy. This one that was defeated in open conflict when the Lord Jesus led captivity captive.

And we follow in the train of His triumph. Father of Jesus, how we thank You for what You've done in our hearts so that we can live in the world and work in the world, have it and not hold it, use it and not love it, and keep the sovereignty of Thy Son in every area of our lives, rightly understanding how we're to relate to the world around us. So to that end, Lord, we're asking You, use the comfort that this comes for everyone born into Thy family to know that they have indeed partaken of Thy love and Thy life.

But should there be those who haven't, to whom this has become as exposing of a wronger, give them the courage to face the worst about themselves, ourselves, while there's still time enough to do something about it. We ask it in Jesus' name and for His sake. Amen.

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