

Evidences of the New Birth - Part 4

by Paris Reidhead

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the process of awakening, conviction, repentance, faith, and the witness of the Spirit in the new birth.

Duration: 48:35

Scripture: Acts 17:30, Ephesians 4:17, Hebrews 9:27, 1 John 1:6, 1 John 2:3-5, 1 John 2:15-17, 1 John 3:8-10

Topics: "New Birth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of how we walk when we are alone and no one is watching. He refers to 1 John Ephesians 4:17 to understand the meaning of walking. The speaker emphasizes the need to keep God's commandments and warns against loving the world and its possessions. He also cautions against presuming to know someone's relationship with God, as only God truly knows the heart. The sermon explores the evidences of the new birth found in 1 John and highlights the significance of repentance and faith.

Transcript

We've been considering the evidences of the new birth as found in 1 John. We'll continue that, but I want you to be particularly concerned about these five words as it relates to this fourth evidence of the new birth found in 1 John chapter 3 and verses 8 through 10. You'll notice that the process here of awakening, conviction, repentance, faith, and the witness of the Spirit seems to be an oversimplification, and indeed it is.

Any outline is an oversimplification. That's what we have it for, merely to indicate the salient points. Now, awakening is that work of the Holy Spirit on the sinner, causing them to become alert to the fact that they have a problem.

So many times we're praying for people to be saved. Perhaps you are. That's like praying for someone to be married.

Well, it's alright to pray that they'll be married, but you know, you might start out by at least praying that they're awakened to the desire to be married. That might be one first step. Or that they meet someone that stimulates their interest in marriage.

Or that they, you see, praying for salvation is praying for the whole lot. There's phases in the divine operation. So, if you find someone that's totally disinterested, absolutely unconcerned, and you want them truly to come to a personal relationship with Christ, I think you would do well to realize that praying for salvation is lumping it all together.

It's like trying to get to the balcony in the church by jumping from the center aisle. Now, maybe there's someone here that can do it. But I would think most of us at our early age of 39 would find it somewhat difficult.

But if we can go around to the left through the hall ambulatory, do you call it, through the entrance hall, and then find the stairs and go one step at a time, it's not all that difficult. So, when we're talking about someone coming out of death into life, let's understand that there are phases of the divine operation. And there are appropriate scripture verses for each phase.

And if we're going to be effective workers, we ought to know the verses that are appropriate for each phase. So that we can be, you know, we're laborers together with God. Well, let's be effective laborers.

Can you imagine the consternation of the surgeon if he has someone there as surgical nurse who's never seen the instruments on the tray? Doesn't know which is used first? Doesn't know which end to hand to the surgeon? Doesn't know what the surgeon is asking for? You can imagine that that operation might have complications thereafter. Because why? Well, because the surgeon was incompetent? Well, because the nurse that was there had had absolutely no understanding of the process of surgery. Now, you don't expect the nurse to do the surgery, except on MASH, on reruns.

But other than that, you don't expect the nurse to do the surgery. The surgery is done by the surgeon. But the nurse, the surgical nurse, is extremely important in putting the appropriate tool in the hand of the surgeon at the time it's needed.

So, we are laborers together with God. And therefore, we ought to be putting the scalpel of the word, you know, sword is one kind of a cutting instrument. It's called the sword of the spirit.

And, of course, the function of a sword is to cut, to cleave. Well, I think we could also talk about scalpels. Because not all of God's divine surgery is done necessarily with a two-edged sword.

Some of it's done with a small scalpel. And if you understand what the phase of God's work in the life, then you're going to understand the kind of Scripture verses that you can use. Now, you know, the Scripture says that we are to have our speech seasoned with salt.

Seasoning with salt. You know, you don't just take a pound of salt and put it on two eggs in the morning. You're out of balance.

Just a few grains sprinkled appropriately will do the job. So with witnessing, so with laboring together with God. You don't take a whole short course in personal work and plunge it into the person that gives you a moment of receptivity to something you're saying.

I've had people say to me about some, you know, oh boy, tell you. I told them I was getting interested in this thing about Jesus and salvation. And, whoa, for an hour did I ever get it.

You see, what should have been done was just to have said enough to have been salt. What's the function of salt? To stimulate thirst, not satiate, not poison. Just stimulate thirst.

Stir up a little interest and excitement to create the opportunity for further conversation. When you answer questions people haven't got around to asking yet, you're not helping them. You're wasting your time and theirs.

And probably making the problem worse than it would have been if you hadn't said anything. Sometimes speech is silver, but silence is golden. So unless you're going to say the right thing, maybe you'd better not say too much.

But it's so helpful to understand what God is doing in the lives of people that we want to see, overall, the big word, saved. We want to see them come to a personal relationship with Christ. But, question, is there any evidence that they're spiritually awake to their need, to their danger, to their problem? If there isn't, don't you think we ought to pray to the point that God will awaken them? Now, I've seen people awakened by accidents, auto accidents.

Boy, that really stirred them up. But don't try to cut the brake line, you know, so that they'll have an accident. Because it doesn't always work that way.

I've seen people lose their jobs. Don't get them fired so they'll be awakened, because it doesn't always work that way. But God uses a whole variety of circumstances.

But when does it work? It works when there's been somebody next to the person that's lived Christ as a sample of his grace. Someone that has interceded. But how do you intercede? They can't say, Oh God, Father of Jesus, awaken that sinner.

Now, do you have a class of scriptures that are appropriate to awakening? You should have. You should be able to go have some scriptures. Well, for instance, it is appointed unto men to die, and after death the judgment.

I heard about a young fellow, a young preacher, First Church. And that was his sermon text. It's appointed unto men to die, and after death the judgment.

And he loved the text, but he didn't know what to say about it. So about every minute or two in his sermon, he would repeat the text. Remember, it is appointed.

Well, afterwards, one of the guests came to him and said, Young fellow, you're started out to be a preacher, but I tell you, you'd better get another job, because you're the worst preacher I ever heard. He said, I have to agree with you, friend. But there's only one thing.

You've got to remember this. It is appointed unto men to die, and after death the judgment. Well, he said, maybe so, but I want you to know this, that if I ever hear your preaching, I will not be any place around.

Well, in that case, you'd better remember the text. It's appointed unto men to die, and after death the judgment. Well, I just think that this church is making a terrible mistake having you in the pulpit, because you are the most boring person I've ever seen.

All you did up there was to recite that verse, it is needed together. They said it is appointed unto men to die. Well, I want you to know I'll not be hearing you again.

It was a little feeling in me. Well, he said, that's all right, but it's just as long as you remember. It's appointed unto men to die, and after death the judgment.

About 3.30 in the morning, there was a doorbell ringing at the place where the young preacher was staying. And the man of the house went down and said, is the reverend here? Yes, he is. Would you please have him come down? I have to talk to him.

At 3.30 in the morning? At 3.30 in the morning. So he came down and he said, what are you doing here? He said, you know, all day and all night, all I can hear is, it's appointed unto men to die, and after death the judgment. You certainly got something more to say than that.

You wouldn't just tell us that and leave it. What else is there? The man had been awakened. It was the sword of the Spirit that awakened him.

Victor Ernest, who followed me, I was pastor of the First Baptist Church of Little Falls, Minnesota. And Victor and Alice, Ernest came and followed me there. And Victor told about his conversion, one of our personal friends as well.

He was, as a young man, extremely independent. He was hippie before there were hippies, rebel before there were rebels, before it was popular. He had a job.

He quit school. He had a job. He did everything his mother didn't want him to do.

But he had one little grain of good sense. He brought his money from his wages to his mother and had her keep it. He got paid on Friday, and if he kept it, there wouldn't be anything Monday.

So he'd take it home to his mother, and then she'd give him two or three dollars for the weekend. That was when a dollar was a big piece of money, remember? We're talking about a long time ago, when he probably got paid \$15 a week. And he'd enjoy that for the weekend.

Well, this particular Friday night, he'd run out early. It had gotten to be about 9 o'clock. He went home.

His mother wasn't there. She was at the revival meeting at the church. So he went down, and church wasn't over.

So he sat down on the front stoop, waiting for his mother to come out, because he could see her through the window. And no way was she going to get by it unless he gave him some more money, because he just hadn't finished. But that preacher in there was about as one-tracked mind as that fellow I was just telling you about.

And he said that God has hardened the hearts of men, and that is pointed unto wrath, and pointed unto judgment, and he that hardneth this neck, being often reprov'd, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. Well, when he finally got around to that verse, he just played that, saw it back and forth on that one note. He that hardneth this neck, being often reprov'd, shall suddenly be destroyed.

Well, Victor's sitting there. He wasn't feeling too much pain when he came. He'd been sort of soothing out the week's wrinkles there up until that time.

But that got through. That got through. He that hardneth this neck, being often reprov'd, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

He didn't wait until the service was over. He got in his car, and he drove up to a lookout point outside of town. Well, he'd had the gospel all his life.

He'd grown up in the church, but he just never, nothing had ever taken. But that night there, some hours after he arrived, he had opened his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ. He'd been awakened.

He'd been convicted. He'd repented. He'd savingly believed, and he had the witness of the Spirit all in one evening.

I've known others that have taken years. John the Baptist, I mean, John Bunyan. Seven years, if you read his grace abounding to the chief of sinners before he moved from there to there.

Several times he was short-stopped here. He was awakened. They came and gave him the gospel.

He made a profession, but nothing happened. Never gone through to reality. Many times that happens with our children, with our friends.

You see, the only one in the universe that has the right to tell a person they've passed from death into life and have been born into the family of God is the Spirit of adoption, the Holy Spirit. He is the adopting Spirit. He is the one who puts us into Christ, and he is the one who tells us we're in Christ.

Now, we've got to tell sinners how bad they are and how holy God is. We've got to tell sinners what God did for them and what they must do in repentance and faith. But we can't tell them when it's done, because we stand on the outside.

We don't know what's going on. I hear the words, but I don't know what they mean, because I don't know the heart. So I just have to say to the person, now look, this is what you do.

Okay, I'm willing. Splendid. When you do it, God will tell you that you're His, and when He's told you that you're His, you come and tell me.

Well, can't you tell me? Somebody else told me, but did it take? No, it didn't take. This time you'd better settle it with the Lord, because I know better than the last guy was. Robert McWilkin had taught a Bible class like this down in the hotel in Columbia, South Carolina.

Then he went back to Columbia Bible School when the school was downtown Columbia. And as he was walking, he saw somebody sitting there on the, well, town drunk, on the curb, holding his head. And the fellow looked down and says, Oh, Dr. McWilkin, how are you? I want you to know I'm one of your converts.

And Dr. McWilkin says, Yes, you're just a represent about the best that I can do, too. You saved me, I'm one of your converts. Yes, that's a represent just about the best that I can do.

I accept you. Because, now Dr. McWilkin didn't recall the day or the time, but what he was saying was, there has to be a meeting with God. There has to be the witness of the Spirit.

Awakening, that's sensitivity. Conviction is when we take sides with God against ourselves. God be merciful to me as center.

Repentance, that's when we change our mind about who's going to be boss. How we're going to satisfy our appetites. How we're going to meet our needs.

Whether we're going to do it our way or His way. Faith, that's that faith that's released in our hearts upon the basis of genuine repentance that savingly unites us to Christ. Not that we credit the Scripture to be true.

That's presumed. But faith is heart faith. And that faith is always followed and certified by the witness of the Spirit.

What is the witness of the Spirit? Well, we're going to find more about that next week. But this week, let me say, the part of a man that knows the things of a man is the Spirit of man that is in him. And the same part of you that knows that you're here and not somewhere else, and you're married or you're unmarried as the case may be, that part of you is the part that knows you've been born of God.

Because that's the part of you that knew you weren't right with God up here. And when you are right with God, that's the part of you that knows you are. But we'll talk more about that.

But now I want you to understand that on the basis of awakening and conviction, which is, I turn to my own way. I have done what I wanted to do. I am God in my life.

Whether one says it in that degree of defiance is not important. But it's the essence of the matter. So what we're talking about then in repentance is a change from, I'll do what I want to do to, Lord, what will thou have me to do? And there's no forgiveness and no pardon until there is repentance.

Twice the Lord Jesus said, except you repent, you will perish. Because there can be no pardon and forgiveness while the mind is still set to do evil. While the heart is still fixed to go its own way, there can be no pardon, except you repent.

So Paul said, I was with you night and day from house to house, teaching repentance toward God, faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. So we now come down to this fourth evidence in 1 John. For you that were not here previously, I simply give the scripture.

Evidence number one is 1 John 1, verse 6. Evidence number two is 1 John 2, verses 3 to 5. Evidence number three is 1 John 2, verses 15, 16, and 17. And evidence number four is chapter 3, verses 8, 9, and 10. Let me read it from the King James.

He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might save us from hell and take us to heaven when we die. Is that correct? Were you listening? Was that correct? No, I was reading from the reverse vision, wasn't I? That gets there quite often.

Now let me re-read it. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Now, whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his Godseed remaineth in him, and he cannot commit sin, because he is born of God.

In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil. Now, that's absolutely what Scripture says. But there's a couple of things that are needed in order for us to make the King James better understood by us.

Committeth. He that keeps on practicing is the strength of the Greek. It's the strength of the word commit at the time.

It was in the sense of a continuing practice. He that keeps on practicing sin is of the devil. For the devil has kept on practicing sin from the beginning.

Whosoever is born of God doth not keep on practicing sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot continue to practice, because he is born of God. Now, I've used the word practice in the sense of repeat as a policy. A policy.

A mode of operation. A plan of life. The governing rule.

Do you see the difference? I didn't say, and it doesn't say, that the person that once, after he's been born of God, once falls into a sin is of the devil. It doesn't say that. Because if you go back to the first chapter, we find in verse 8, if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we say that we have never sinned or aren't capable of sinning or couldn't fall into sin, we deceive ourselves. But there's a difference between the event and the practice or the policy of life, policy of operation. And so, what we have here is that when one has been awakened and convicted and have repented, I remember reading Spurgeon's sermon on repentance, and it was magnificent.

And he said, to be real, repentance has to be entire and not partial. If a person has a thousand sins and truly repents of 999 but holds to the one, it is proof that his repentance was not genuine. It was spurious.

It was simply trying to make a deal with God. It has to be entire and not partial. Repentance, said Spurgeon, to be real has to be permanent and not temporary.

If it's for a period of time to impress God, then it is not. It's spurious. It's counterfeit.

But real repentance is permanent. It's a change that endures. And then he said, of course, repentance has to be hearty and not reluctant.

Not something that one does with great grief, but something one does because of great joy. They've discovered the enormity of their crime against someone who now they wish to honor and serve. So it's not something induced under pressure.

It's something done with delight. Well, that was Spurgeon's preaching 150 years ago, 30 years ago. And I think we need to hear it again.

I don't think we've outgrown it. If they'll give me a version that doesn't say, except you repent, you'll perish, or something to the equivalent, then I might say Spurgeon's outmoded. But I don't think so.

It hasn't come that way yet. So, with repentance, there's a total repudiation of a principle of pleasing oneself in one's own way and at one's own whim. There's been a new policy of pleasing God.

So, that does, what did one carry into the Christian life? We're assuming all of this is true. Genuine conversion. Genuine witness of the Spirit that one's passed from death to life.

Total, complete. All right. What did one carry into the Christian life? Born again, witnesses.

What do you have? What's the baggage that you had to take through customs when you came into the kingdom of God? Well, first, your appetites. All of them. You didn't lose those when you were forgiven and pardoned.

What were some of them? Well, first, the most obvious one was the appetite for food, and then there was the appetite for knowledge, and the appetite for pleasure, and the appetite for power, position, and the appetite for sex. What are some of the others that I might have missed? Do you have any others? Well, let's let that suffice for the moment. We can add to it.

We brought those appetites in. That's right, because God made man with those appetites. There's nothing wrong with those appetites.

He looked at the person to whom he gave those appetites, and he said, it is good. He didn't say it's bad. He said it's good.

So, we brought those appetites into the Christian life. What else did we bring with us? Well, we brought with us memory, learned responses, habituated or habitual responses. All of that conditioning came with us.

Now, we've repented, we've purposed to please God, but what did we bring with us? Habituated or habit responses. Learned responses. Maybe back here before pre-repentance, when because of your appetite for status or power or position, if somebody criticized you, you knew just how to deal with them.

Oh, I can cut them down. Now, maybe that was automatic. Just like that.

Like Zorro's sword. Somebody's criticized you, then you criticize right back. So, you've been forgiven, you've been pardoned, you've come into the Christian life, and everything is beautiful, it's wonderful, but what happens? Somebody criticizes you.

Well, you're not the Christian. Well, what was it? You go back, you're troubled, you're burdened. Am I really saved? What did you bring into the Christian life? You brought appetite for acceptance, for pleasure, for status, and you brought learned responses.

So, what took place? Somebody, and the response took over. Domino theory, if you wish. Now, what's the evidence that you're genuinely converted, that you really love God? The instant that that happened, you judged it for what it was, sin.

You forsook it as sin. You confessed it as sin, both to God and to the person, and you asked forgiveness. And as long as you have appetite, you're subject to temptation.

Everybody I know is looking for an experience with God that will wind their little clock, set it, and it'll never have to be set again or wound again. Or they're looking, let me translate that, everybody I know of is looking for an experience with God so they'll never be tempted again. But I'll tell you something, if you get to that experience, don't be happy about it.

Because all of a sudden it's made you even holier than your Lord. Because He was tempted in all points, like as you are. And when you come to the place that you've reached the spiritual apogee, so that you're so high that you're never tempted, oh friend, you are in trouble.

Because you've somehow left the human race. I don't know where you are, twilight zone is about all I can think of. Because as long as you live, you are going to have appetites and memory, and as long as you have appetites and memory, you're going to be subject to temptation.

And temptation is not sin. Did you hear me? Temptation is not sin. Sin is the decision to satisfy a good appetite in a bad way.

The intention to hurt is murder. That's the decision to hurt somebody is murder. Temptation is the proposition presented to the mind, to the memory, to the intellect to satisfy a good appetite in a bad way, and sin is the decision to do it.

Now, when you've been awakened and convicted and brought to repentance, where you have said, Father, I will please you as long as I live, and you have exercised saving faith, savingly uniting you to the Son of God, and you have the witness of the Spirit, you will not continue to practice sin. That's what the Scripture says. And if someone does, in this are manifest the children of God and the children of the devil.

So what is this verse saying? It is saying that anyone who keeps on practicing sin, regardless of how much theology, someone very graciously offered me the tapes for the previous three messages, and I'm very pleased and grateful to have them. There are people whose human brains have 100% oral recall. I have friends both in Africa and here who have that gift.

I have some that have visual recall. They have photographing memory. They read.

They read something and then they don't try to remember it. I go the old cumbersome way, oh, what in the world was that? No, they just look at it and say, turn the page and start reading the next column. But I don't have that kind of a memory about most things.

Some people have oral recall, 100% oral recall, or visual recall. Just like that tape recorder or that tape has 100% oral recall. And they know the verses and the truth and the theology and they can press the button like the tape recorder and give it back.

But that tape recorder is still a tape recorder. It's not been converted because it knows the gospel. And there are human beings whose minds have the gospel and the plan of salvation and scripture verses like a tape recorder, and you press a button and out it comes.

But because they have facile memories, does not mean they are converted. Do you understand? Does not mean they pass from death to life. Because they can recite, well, he can recite the plan of salvation.

Wonderful, so can my tape recorder. He can recite all of the gospel of John. That's marvelous, so can someone, I don't know who was, someone here two or three weeks ago gave me a recording of the New Testament on tape.

Any of you? Some lady who slipped it in my hand and I thanked her. But I wanted to tell her how deeply, if you know who did it, please express my sincerity. Just as I was leaving to go to speak at the Arlington Memorial Church, they slipped this in my hand and I thanked them, but I didn't have time to stay and find out who it was and write an appropriate note.

But at any rate, it's the New Testament and it's wonderful on cassettes. So, somebody says, well, I know he's a Christian, he can recite the gospel of John. So can my cassette that I just got on the gospel of John, he can recite it.

But that doesn't make it a Christian, it's just a cassette. And some human brains are just cassettes. That doesn't mean because they can do that, that doesn't mean that they've passed from death to life.

No. So if you say, well, look, I know my husband is there because he knows the plan of salvation. No, that's not the evidence.

How do you know? You stand on the outside, you don't know what's going on in the heart. God looks on the heart, we look on the face, we can't see the heart. The Lord knoweth them that are his, and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

So what do we have here? He that keeps on practicing sin is of the devil. Clear, explicit. Whosoever is born of God does not keep on practicing.

Didn't say couldn't fall into sin. Didn't say couldn't be overtaken in a fall. Didn't say anything like that.

He said practicing, going on practicing. How long? I don't know. I'm not going to try to go into the Talmudic and try.

I don't know. I'm trying to just say what it says here and try to understand what it means. Whosoever is born of God does not keep on practicing sin, for his seed, the Spirit of God, remaineth in him, and he cannot keep on practicing sin because he is born of God.

So now we see that we have a problem. I remember going into a church for a week's Bible conference, and I told the people at the first service on Sunday morning that I was there to help them, and that if they wanted times of personal counseling, if they'd let me know, I would arrange for it. And I was, any way that I could spiritually, I would endeavor to be of service and assist.

First person that met me was the lady that asked me to pray for the recovery of her backsliding husband. Well, I get a little bit nervous on that word, backsliding, because it's not in the New Testament, and I don't know much about it. I don't know.

I guess I've done it, but I don't know how to define it. But I do know one thing about backsliding. You can't backslide until you front-slid it sometime.

You've got to go forward in order to go back, you see. I mean, you've just got to. So I said, well, tell me about your backsliding.

I said, well, we had a meeting here in the church, and I finally got my husband to come, and a lot of pressure was being put on him. Two or three men came, and they went with him to the altar, and he prayed, and he said the words they wanted to say. And then they gave him a verse of Scripture, and the speaker said, now, called him by name and said, now, if anybody ever comes to tell you that you're not a Christian, you take this verse of Scripture and you wave it in their face.

So every time I talk to my husband, he just takes that verse of Scripture and waves it in my face, like the evangelist told him to do. Well, I said, what's his problem? Well, first, he still gets drunk about once or twice a week. And secondly, he still gambles.

He spends about half of our money gambling, and it's made real profit for the home. And I don't think he's actually very faithful to me. I don't know, but I don't think so.

And swear. Oh, I have to stop him swearing around children. But every time I talk to him, he takes that verse of Scripture and waves it in my face.

And remember what the evangelist told me. Don't worry about me. I'm all right.

He said, now, please pray for my husband's recovery from backsliding. I said, I'm sorry I can't. He said, I'm the first one here.

You've told all of us that you're here to help us, and yet I ask you to do something, and you tell me you can't or you won't. Well, I said, can't means won't. I can't because I won't.

That's why I won't. I can't. Well, she said, what's that mean? I said, I don't know much about this backsliding business, but I just don't think your husband has ever gone anyplace.

He can't backslide because he never front-slid. He's never gone anywhere. I will pray that God will awaken him and convict him and bring him to repentance, that God in grace will save him, because I don't think anything's happened to him except somebody's put some words in his mind.

She said, well, I've been suspicious about that. I said, how long's this been going on? She said, over about nearly four years. Well, I think she had a right to be suspicious after four years, don't you? I mean, if something's got feathers like a duck and a bill like a duck, webbed feet like a duck, waddles like a duck, quacks like a duck, you don't have, but you're not being critical and unkind to suggest that maybe it's not a canary.

It's a duck. Just because it says canary and has got canary stamped on its chest doesn't mean it's canary. It's a duck.

And so here, whosoever is born of God does not keep on practicing sin. In this is manifest the children of God and the children of the devil. So what are we talking about? We started out by saying there are people all around us that will come to you and say, I'm not sure I'm saved.

Now, what are you going to do? Pat them on the back? Link arms? Come on, everything's fine. Or are you going to say it's very serious, very important? Now, let's go to the word of God. Let's stand in front of the divine x-ray machine.

That's what the word of God is, because it divides between the soul and the spirit. It shows you what's inside. And you read, if we say we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie.

How do you walk there? When you're just alone and nobody's watching, how do you walk? And you have to go to Ephesians 4.17 and thereafter to find out what walking means. Then you take him to the second evidence. Here, chapter 2, verse 3, 4, and 5. Hereby we do know we know him.

We keep his commandments. What's your attitude toward the commandment? And then we take them to chapter 2, verse 15 and 16 and 17. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

And then we bring them down to chapter 3. Do you see? You're not presuming. Why should you play God in somebody's life? Do you understand? You can't. For you to say to somebody, I know you're a child of God, is to usurp a prerogative that belongs solely and exclusively to God.

The best you know about me is what you hear me say. And the best I know about you is what I hear you say. The best you know about me is how I walk.

The best I know about you is how you don't know my heart. We're not even terribly sure often we know our own hearts. Only thing is we know that our purpose is to please God.

That we can say. Best I know my heart, my purpose is to please God. So, if you have got all these questions about you, now you can know that you're forgiven and know that you're pardoned.

Oh yes, you can know that he's Abba Father. That's what the witness of the Spirit is. But I don't know that you have the witness of the Spirit.

You do, but I don't. I only know what you tell me you have. And you only know what I tell you.

Because we don't look at each other's hearts. Do you understand? It has to be personal. It has to be experiential.

There's a closing in with the Lord in this matter of the gift of eternal life. And the only one in the universe that has the right to tell anyone that they're in the Father's family is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Adoption. That's why the churches, as I cited the first Sunday we started this, why they closed the churches of England to John Wesley? Not because he was orthodox.

No, but because he was saying to the people who were already members of the Church of England that the evidence that they were right with God was that they had the witness of the Spirit. That's why the churches closed. And that's why all these people, these thousands, hundreds of thousands that were converted revolutionized England.

They were all church members. Their minds were filled with theology or with the acceptance of the 39 Articles. But what was the difference? Under Wesley they came into a personal experiential knowledge with Christ.

And that galvanized and dynamically changed their influence with their neighbors. It was that that brought that great move of God in England. And as Macaulay the historian said in the history of England, it was Whitefield had far more converts, quote, far bigger meetings than Wesley.

But Whitefield braided a cable of sand and Wesley wove a rope of steel. And it was through the class meeting that he did it with these people when they had the witness of the Spirit. He used to give them an invitation.

He'd preach in the afternoon or early evening. And then he would say, now if any of you here have reason, you're awakened and convicted and you would like to profess your faith in Christ, you meet with me at five in the morning. You know why? Because if they went home and slept and it was just emotion, they'd be over it.

They'd be over it. But to get up at four and walk several miles in the cold, often smoggy British morning, winter and summer, however it was, to meet with somebody with a couple of candles, sitting there in a house or a barn or a room, wherever it was, to talk with them at five in the morning, no wonder his converts stopped. He winnowed them before they got to him.

And a lot of them he sent back and said, well, you continue to think you're not ready yet. Well, what are we talking about? We're talking about trying to help people that have questions about the most serious subject in all the world. That's what we're talking about.

And we're trying to do it in a way that's simple and clear and with the Scripture so that we're not taking responsibilities on ourselves that we can't carry. See, unless God gives me or you knowledge we don't now have, we'd better not tell people about what their state with the Lord is. Help them, but not tell them.

How's that? Everybody buy that? Let's pray. Father, we thank and praise you now for this time together in your Word and we're asking that thy Spirit will somehow seal that Word to us. And in this week, Lord, each of us, we trust, will have at least one opportunity to talk with someone and bring them to thy Word so that they can, from the Word itself, begin to see the X-ray by thy Spirit.

Into their hearts, and they'll understand their state before thee. Thank you for this people now and our time together in your Word. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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