

The Dispensation of the Gospel - Lesson 1

by Robert Wurtz II

The genuine born-again experience is a process of being gloriously transformed from being a child of disobedience to a child of God, requiring great wisdom and the leading of the Spirit to deal with unrepentant sinners.

Duration: 37:30

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 3:3

Topics: "Divine Intervention", "Spiritual Awakening"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses how God sometimes intervenes in people's lives to get their attention. He uses examples from the Bible, such as the stories of the Butler, the Baker, Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, and Daniel, to illustrate this point. The preacher emphasizes that God uses various means to reach out to lost individuals and urges sinners to consider the different ways God is trying to gain their attention. The sermon also explores the three states of unrepentant sinners (careless, awakened, and convicted) and discusses the importance of being born again of the Spirit to see the kingdom of God.

Transcript

We're beginning a new study this morning that I've entitled The Dispensation of the Gospel. And the first lesson that we're going to deal with is the genuine born-again experience. It is the most foundational thing that we understand what it really means to be born again of the Spirit.

I have shared this topic with our young people and I've seen God move mightily. So it's my prayer this morning that God would use the things that are contained in this message, this lesson this morning, to really touch your life. Our text is, Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

That's John chapter 3, verse 3. Salvation is the process by which a person is gloriously transformed from being a child of disobedience to a child of God. The children of disobedience are lost and have a different spirit than the saved. The lost live according to the ways of this world and according to the prince of the power of the air.

Those who have been born of water only are fleshly or carnal. But those who have been born of the Holy Spirit are spiritual. Unless a person is born again of the Spirit, they cannot see the kingdom of God, neither

in this world nor in the world to come.

In this particular lesson, I want to look at three things. First, to examine the three states of unrepentant sinners, okay? Secondly, to explore the methods of dealing with each state of unrepentant sinner. And thirdly, to explore the initial evidence of the born-again experience.

Now, I'd like for you to memorize these three things so that you will always know them. You will always remember them and be able to identify the three states of unrepentance. First, there is the careless sinner.

The careless sinner. Secondly, there is the awakened sinner. And thirdly, there is the convicted sinner.

The careless sinner can simply care less about their soul's salvation and their need for God. They feel they are opposed to their own salvation. Some of them will get hostile or even violent at the proposal of them being saved.

Sinners are very creative in finding ways to ignore their need for God, and they press Him as far back into their minds as they possibly can. They do not like to retain God in their knowledge, and they prefer to sin unabated or unhindered. These people are enemies of both God and themselves.

Some are quite subtle and simply ignore God and believe that they are good people. Yet others may be in some form of false religion, but no matter which category they fall into, they are quite careless about their souls. They are deceived by Satan and are fearlessly confident in their sinful condition.

They feel no need to consider the vast number of ways in which God is trying to gain their attention. They ignore the sight of a church. They skip past Christian TV and radio when they are skimming channels.

They ignore Christian-related billboards and bumper stickers. But more than that, they do always resist the Holy Ghost that is using these and many other means to arrest their attention. They surround themselves with worldly things that bolster their deception and hasten their damnation.

You see, they create an environment around themselves that protects them from God, that keeps them from being able to hear what God is trying to say to them in their life. The awakened sinner is someone that has been shocked into at least considering their need for God. This happens at times when tragedy strikes, such as a loved one passing away or being suddenly killed.

It happens at times when the individual may suffer some kind of a calamity, like being diagnosed with cancer or they fall into financial crisis. It can happen at times of great distress and fear, such as the events of 9-11 or the great tsunami disaster. It can also happen in times of sudden danger, such as a tornado warning or threatening weather or anything that would cause them to be fearful and consider their life and their estate.

The job of the minister, one of them at least, is to awaken sinners by the truth of the Gospel. Occasionally, God sovereignly shakes a sinner from slumber with prophetic dreams. We've seen this with the butler, the baker, and Pharaoh in Genesis 40 and 41, and of course, Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel chapter 4. So God will sometimes sovereignly step into your life to gain your attention.

You know the story of these men that said that the dreams that they had in their night of rest greatly troubled them, and they sought after someone that would give them an answer to these things. Just one of the many different means that God is trying to gain the attention of people who are lost. Jonathan Edwards

once said, Sinner, you should consider how many different ways God is trying to gain your attention at any given moment.

He's coming from all different sorts of kinds of directions, especially in our day. He's coming from this angle. He's coming from that angle, from this angle, every way he can to try to get your attention.

Then thirdly, the convicted sinner is a person who after hearing a gospel message and having been dealt with greatly by the Holy Spirit is convinced of their need for God and the gospel. They are convinced they are a sinner and need to repent. They are convinced that they need to trust in Jesus Christ and turn everything completely over to him.

To a lesser or a greater degree, they understand the gospel. They're familiar more or less with God and his word at least enough to be born again. Keep in mind we're talking about a convicted sinner.

The Holy Spirit has brought them to that place where they are trembling in awe of God and are halting between two opinions. See, God will bring you to that place. He will bring you to this place to where you will be at the altar or somewhere in your life where you will have to decide which direction you're going to go.

They're at the crossroads. They must choose whom they will serve. At this time, the Holy Spirit is in the role of Jesus Christ.

Understand that that is what the Holy Spirit is doing in our day. Jesus said, It is expedient that I must go, but I will not leave you alone. I will send the Holy Spirit to you.

You've got to realize that while the Holy Spirit is here, he is playing the role of Jesus Christ. If we would come to the altar here and we begin to pray and seek the Lord for salvation, he is going to play the role of Jesus. When the rich young ruler came to Jesus, he said, What must I do to be saved or to inherit eternal life? Jesus told him, and then he said, One thing you lack.

Then he said, Go sell all that you have. See, Jesus knew what was at the essence of his rebellion. He knew that thing that he was holding on to, and he pointed it out to him.

When you come to the altar and pray, the Holy Spirit is going to take that role. He's going to say, Here is what is standing between me and you. It is this certain thing, and I want you to lay it down.

And it's at that point that we, like the rich young ruler, will either submit or we will go away sorrowful. This is the place or this is the state of a convicted sinner. He is showing them the Holy Spirit is in their mind's eye.

What they must submit in order to be saved and have treasure in heaven. This is a one-on-one with the Holy Ghost. This is where the great striving and wrestling happens.

See, the Holy Spirit knows what is standing between him and them, and he is showing it to them. He's showing it. See, people don't get up from the altar when they decide, really, not to turn everything over to God, not knowing what it was that was between them.

They get up knowing full well what it is between them and God. The convicted sinner is made to know exactly what he or she is trading for their immortal soul. See, no one goes away ignorant of these things.

The Holy Spirit shows us, and we all who have been saved can testify to that. I know when I came to the altar, the Holy Ghost was showing me certain things. This is what's between us.

You've got to be willing to lay that down. And until I said, Lord, I will lay it all down, I was not born again. I was only ever a convicted sinner.

See, I could pray off conviction. I could pray it off and get up, and everything's all right. I could even act like I wiped my face a little bit and fool everyone in the room.

But I did not fool the Holy Ghost. And therefore, I am not born again. Therefore, I go off, and chances are, say something like this.

Well, it didn't work for me. Hmm? Well, it's not really for me. It didn't work for me.

No, the reality is you did not submit when the Spirit of God showed you what thing was between you and Him. Secondly, the method of dealing with each state of unrepentance. First, careless sinners require great wisdom to deal with.

Let me give you an example. Never try to witness to somebody when they're angry because people hate God already. And if you start talking about God when they're angry, they're liable to go into a rage.

Careless sinners require great wisdom. Proverbs 11, 30 teaches, He that winneth souls is wise. Since the careless sinners are opposed to themselves, they're like dealing with someone who is suicidal.

Think about this. Careless sinners are ready at a moment's notice to turn on themselves and harden themselves even further from God. At a moment's notice, they will turn on themselves.

You've got to be careful when you're dealing with them not to back them continually in a corner where they harden themselves. It takes great wisdom to deal with a careless sinner. Dealing with them requires not our wisdom but the wisdom of God.

And this is why prayer is so important, and the leading of the Spirit is important. See, sometimes preaching will arrest their attention. Sometimes personal witnessing will do it.

Dealing with sinners is always on an individual basis. There's no cookie-cutter way to deal with them. That's why it takes great wisdom.

He that winneth souls is wise, and it takes the wisdom of God to deal with them. Awakening them with the Gospel or waiting for an opportunity to minister to them will require great wisdom and timing. Did you know that there are times in people's life when God is visiting them, and He has put you in their path to deal with them at that time? We must not miss the Lord's day of visitation for people.

I've had it happen in my life. I was working with a young man about 12 years ago, and I looked over, and I could articulate now what was happening. He was an awakened sinner.

He was awakened by the fact that this distress that had happened between him and his mother, and he was awakened, and he was sitting at the table in the lunchroom at work, very solemn, and I felt the gentle nudging of the Holy Spirit to go over and witness to him. But foolishly, as so often times we do, we just procrastinate and say, Well, I'll talk to him tomorrow, or I'll do it later, because the boldness just wasn't there to share the Gospel. In other words, I wasn't really where I needed to be with God in order to have

that oomph to go do what God asked me to do.

And what ended up happening? The young man, the next day when I seen him, was less and less solemn. He was more joyful. Before it was over with, before the week was out, he was filled with all kind of frivolity, and trying to reach him with the Gospel would have been an impossibility.

And I realized at that moment, and I even taught that following Sunday in Sunday school class, or maybe sometime later, that I had missed that young man's day of visitation from God, at least at this stage in his life. I pray that God has reached him somehow with someone else. But we need to be careful.

When we see somebody in our family that is in an awakened state, something's happened, tragedy has struck, or a friend of ours, something has awakened them, and they're considering very seriously their soul. We need to step in at that moment and begin to use the wisdom of God and prayerfully allow the Holy Spirit to lead us, to lead that person to salvation, because it is their opportunity. Sometimes there will seem to be no real opportunity, and you must witness, knowing there will be great resistance or worse.

Sometimes the Holy Spirit will say, I want you to witness to this person, and you're looking at them going there, and no one is ready to hear what I've got to say. But the Holy Spirit is saying, witness to them. God will use your words to awaken them.

Sure, it may create a situation. I know of people who are very hostile to the gospel. I've never seen a hostility like I see today.

The world is growing cold, church. The church is growing cold also. But the world is growing cold.

And when you do try to speak to people about their soul, I've seen people get hostile, cuss you out, act crazy, and all kind of stuff that I've never seen before. But it's because people are getting harder and harder and harder. And it takes more and more wisdom, more and more of the power of the Spirit to reach these people.

Secondly, awakened sinners, awakened sinners also require great wisdom in dealing with as not to miss the opportunity to share the gospel with them while they are in an awakened state. The enemy is working double time to stop their conversion when he sees them in this condition. C.S. Lewis talks about it in Screwtape Letters, the first letter.

How many different ways that when God starts dealing with someone that the enemy will start trying to distract them and point their attention in other kinds of ways. If you ever get a chance, that book's only probably five or six dollars. You can get it and read it.

It's a pretty good read. The enemy works double time to stop them from being converted. He will distract them and fill their minds with all sorts of rhetoric and lies.

He will give them a multitude of excuses why they should not listen to God and yield to the Holy Ghost. Listen, this is the time to take them through the scriptures leaving nothing out nor selling the gospel short of its requirements. Don't do that.

Don't leave things out of the gospel. That's happened for years now. Years and years.

And that needs to stop. A person needs to understand their condition and what salvation is as much as possible. They need to understand what they're doing when they get saved.

They need to understand that you are turning your life over to Jesus Christ. You're coming into a covenant relation with Him. You are turning your life completely over to Him.

We need to explain these things to Him and take the time to do it. Nothing is more important than this time. Spend the time required to bring them to genuine conversion.

Listen, this is not a drive-thru process. Hear me. This is not a drive-thru process.

People do not pass from death to life in a matter of minutes. They don't take off the old man and put on the new man in a matter of minutes. They don't get metaphorically married to Christ.

They don't answer to the Holy Ghost when He's dealing with them in just a matter of minutes. The enemy is always saying, Hurry up! Hurry up! Hurry up! You hear me? He's saying, Hurry up! Hurry up! But things don't happen that quick. I've seen six children born and none of them were born in four minutes.

There was a lot of travail. There was a lot of tears. There was a lot of wrestling.

There was a lot of wrangling. There was a lot of crying. There was a lot of travail.

And that's the word we need to realize. The tragedy of our day is that we do not take the time for reflection in the service or at the altar. Hear Brother Birch talking about this is the time for the Holy Spirit to move.

This is time. Give God a chance to move. That means you don't distract your neighbor.

It means you don't become a means or a tool in the hand of the devil to distract somebody when God has them engrossed in this deep thought. He's showing them in their mind's eye what they must do to be saved. He's showing them what is the controversy between Him and them.

It's that these times they need to be focused. There needs to be caution. There needs to be reverence in the service.

It's a very serious and solemn time. Birth is a process. This is the time where they will decide their eternal fate.

Think of that. They will decide where they will spend eternity at these times. Either heaven or hell will rejoice when it's all said and done.

Don't yield to the temptation to take shortcuts for any reason. The enemy will fill your mind with thoughts such as hurry up or this is taking too long. He will keep you looking at your watch.

Listen, stay until you know that their blood is completely washed from your hands. Stay until you know that you have done everything God has required of you to bring that person to that place of salvation. Don't think that you can just touch base with them and that's enough because that's not what God required.

It's a process and we need to realize that. The enemy is going to fight you every step of the way. We're in a hurry, rush, rush society.

Hurry up. Get out of my way. Light turns green.

Everybody wants to go. If the drive-through takes more than a few minutes, people are in a rush. But that's the devil's working and that's one of the great reasons why people aren't born again at the altar.

It's one of many reasons why there's no infillings of the Holy Ghost because we don't give God time. Say, God, if you don't show up in the next few minutes, then I'm out of here. What about carrying at the altar? What about spending time? What about people like back in the days of Evan Roberts and the Welsh Revival, a 26-year-old young man.

They heard that he was preaching and God was moving and people would go into town where they heard they were and pack every church out just hoping to get the right one. But they said that he walked into a church of 800 one time, walked from the back to the front, knelt at the altar right in the front, prayed for three hours while 800 people looked on and they sat there. He stood to his feet, preached for 15 minutes.

It was like God just jumped into the crowd. It was like God just leaped into the audience when that happened and revival broke out. He got up from the altar when the service was over, went to his room and prayed all night for the following service.

Think about that. How much different is that today? God, if you don't hurry up and show up, we're out of here. We're not going to see a move of God like that church.

We may have changed but God has not changed. The methods have not changed. We need to realize this in our times.

Thirdly, bottom section, convicted sinners are convinced of their need for God. They know they are in sin and they need to repent. They understand what is required of them.

The Holy Spirit is showing them what thing they lackest and they are striving with Him. Listen, do not give them a place of refuge if they start rationalizing or minimizing their sins. Oftentimes, you're praying with someone at the altar and they'd say, well, you really think that doing this and such a thing is really all that bad? Can I be a Christian and still do this? Listen, what are they saying? The Holy Ghost is showing them stuff and they're wanting to get you to side with them and then get them to have a place of comfort and refuge.

Don't go there. Don't do that. Don't do that.

Listen, flush them out until you know what it is why they will not submit to God. Give them time. Listen, and they will tell you what it is.

I have found in witnessing to people if you let them talk long enough they'll tell you all that's in their heart. Just let them keep talking. Just keep listening.

Give them enough time but before it's over with they'll be like, well, you know, what the real thing is is this. You'll get to it. Just give them time.

They'll talk themselves into conviction. Maybe it's a pet sin. Maybe it's bitterness.

Maybe they don't want to reconcile with some old enemies or make restitution for someone they've harmed. Listen, if the Holy Ghost is telling them to do something or lay something down, don't dare tell them differently. Don't give them a place to hide.

He knows what it is that is holding them back and so do they. What if they go away sorrowful as the rich young ruler did? Well, what did Christ do? He let them go. You say, why did He let them go? Listen, don't fight against the Holy Ghost by comforting them.

Don't do that. Don't do that. Whatever you do, let them feel the full weight of what they are doing because it's their only hope.

It's their only hope. Let them feel the full weight of all that they're doing. It's their only hope.

James Dobson would call it tough love. Tough love. Let them feel the weight of it.

Don't encourage them. Don't take away the sting of what they are doing. Let them feel the full weight of what they're doing.

Let them dwell on it. Do not give them a false assurance. Listen, the devil will use your comforting words to fortify them in their sin and eventually damn their soul.

Well, Brother Roberts said it wasn't that bad. Listen, Jesus didn't tell all the rich people to sell all. He told Him to sell all.

They may be telling you something that in general is not something wrong for everyone, but it's what the Holy Ghost is saying to them. Tell them this. If the Holy Ghost is telling you to lay it down, lay it down.

He has a controversy with you. Lay that thing down if it's standing between you and God or go away sorrowful as the rich young ruler. That's the only option.

The devil will use your comforting words. Salvation is not a process at this stage. They have been through the process and they know what they must do.

They are in rebellion. Be not partakers of that rebellion no matter how much the devil tempts you to do it. Lay it all on the line.

Listen, no matter what I say to them, I cannot make the straight and narrow gate any wider. You hear me? It will always be true. Straight is the gate and narrow is the way.

Few there be that find it. There's nothing I can say that's going to broaden that gate. Nothing.

God says it's right here and that's where it's going to be and the Holy Ghost is dealing. I cannot come in and try to open up that gate any wider. I have to let God deal.

I have to let him be God. Initial evidence, last page of the born again experience. Once a person has fully submitted to God to his satisfaction, a transformation will take place in which there will be a new creature.

I told the young people this last Tuesday, the title of the message. The title of the message was there's room on the cross for you. Do you realize you should be crucified with Christ if you're a genuine Christian? You should be living on the cross, crucified, dead to yourself, dead to your old ways, completely dead to you, dead to everything that you used to be.

There's room on the cross for you this morning. Everyone will know there has been a change. The sin has moved out.

The Holy Spirit has moved in. The heart of stone has been replaced with the heart of flesh. Our new spirit will begin to cry out, Abba, Father.

You know what I told the young people? Here's what I told them. You come back and tell me when you know that you know that you know that you're a child of God. You come back and tell me when you know that you know that you know that your sins are forgiven.

Come back and tell me. And that's when I'll know you're saying. If you were to walk up to me right now and say, Brother Robert, I don't believe you're a child of God.

I'd say I think that you're mistaken, friend, because I know that I know that I know that I'm a child of the king. I don't need you to tell me. I don't need to be comforted in that.

If I'm really right with God, I know that I know, and there's no one that's going to change that thought in me. I know my sins are forgiven. I know I'm washed in the blood, and you would not convince me otherwise.

Why is that? Because I have what is known as the witness of the spirit within me. It's the witness of the Holy Spirit. As newborn babes, they will desire the sin-sealed milk of the word that they may grow thereby.

They will want to know what the will of their heavenly father is so that they might please him. They are satisfied and fulfilled by doing his will, for once they may have been fulfilled by sin. And now, listen, they are contented to do the will and the work of the heavenly father.

That's what contents you now. You're no longer at home in sin. Sin doesn't satisfy you anymore.

This is what they live for. This is what brings them joy. This is the deep craving for God that cannot be quenched any differently than quenching a newborn baby's need for a bottle.

The baby wants milk, and the milk of a newborn believer is to know what is my heavenly father's will inasmuch as is possible for me to fulfill it. What is the first thing generally we tell them? You need to be baptized in water. Okay, great.

That's his will. I want to do it. I want to do it.

I want to do what my heavenly father wants me to do. So they're going and they're being baptized the straight way. I remember, wasn't it Phillip that was leading the man by and he says, What next? Well, you need to be baptized.

He says, Well, there's water. What prohibits me now? See, this is the heart of somebody who's really been transformed. This is somebody who's passed from death to life.

This is not a convicted sinner who prayed off conviction and don't want God and don't know why. Because they passed from death to life. They're truly born again in the spirit.

Their desire is to do the will of God. Newborn babes in Christ, section B, are filled with zeal for the Lord. They desire to share their new selves with others.

New Christians are often a thorn in a careless sinner's side. How many of you know that? Remember Brother Birch talking about getting saved and going back and bringing all these people to church. That is not the characteristics of somebody who prayed off conviction.

That's somebody miraculously transformed. That's someone who's experienced the new birth. They seem to eat and sleep and breathe God.

They want to know where the next church service is. Where will the next prayer meeting be? They are new life to the church. Brother Birch talked one time.

He said that he believed that the house of God should be like a place where the newborn babes are all at, where all the fresh life is. And I thought about how true that is. They bring new life to the church.

They bring fresh zeal. They bring something to the table that forces us to step up to their level of zeal. We need to prepare for them.

We're going to see souls one in 2005. We're going to have to get to a level where we're not going to squelch some newborn believer's zeal. We need to realize that.

They're often unlearned about God, but they are sincere. They may make mistakes, but God knows their heart. John writes, My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

My Father which gave them unto me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. Watch this. Notice this simple progression.

Jesus said that his sheep hear his voice and follow him, and he gives them eternal life. That's the question this morning. Do you have that inner witness of the Holy Ghost? Do you hear the voice of the Lord calling and drawing you near to him? Do you hear his voice? Do you follow him? Jesus said, My sheep hear my voice.

Keep in mind there are three types of people in the church at any given time. Sheep, goats, and wolves. They're the sheep, those that hear his voice, those that love the Lord, truly born again of the Spirit.

They're the goats. They're the people who continually do nothing but pray off conviction and go away, and they're never changed. They get saved every week.

Those are the goats. Then there are the wolves. Those are the people who come in to destroy everything.

They've been planted there by the devil. They wreak havoc in the church. Those are the three types.

The world simply, for the newborn babe in Christ, is not their habitat any longer. Listen, they will never again feel at home in sin. The sinners always return to the pig pen.

That's their habitat. The mud, that's what they like. But the Son was never at home in that mud.

He was never at home there. He thought and came to himself, You know, I could go back and be a servant in my Father's house and be better than this. He was not at home there.

He was not at home in sin. Finally, the process of actually being born again is a process that does not usually happen in a few moments. Many people simply pray off conviction and are never really born again in the Spirit.

We didn't give them the right hand of fellowship often as though they were children of the kingdom. And when they quit serving the Lord, we say they backslid. Wait a minute.

We don't know whether or not they submitted to the Holy Ghost or not. How am I going to know whether or not they were really saved? How am I going to know? I'll tell you how I know. When I see that desire in their heart for God.

When I see the fruits of the Spirit being evident. When I see a place where I don't have to constantly hound them to serve the Lord. Listen, you don't have to hound a newborn baby to take his bottle.

You don't have to. Listen, when he starts crying, you better have the bottle ready, right? That's the way it is with the newborn baby in Christ. We have to get this.

Because there are so many people that are not born again. And if we didn't pay close attention, Jesus said in John 3, 3, except you are born again, you will not see the kingdom of God. Praying off conviction is not the way.

Listen, if I go down as a mechanic, I used to have a tendency, if I'm going to work on an engine, to take it to the car wash, get it on as hot as I could go, and wash the motor off. That's like getting your sins forgiven. But if I'm going to rebuild the motor, I don't slam the hood and say, it's over.

See, that's the thinking when you think that I'm coming to the altar just to get my sins forgiven. You're coming to get a new engine. You're coming to get a new heart.

You're coming to be transformed, to be propelled from death to life, from the power of Satan to the power of God. You're coming to be transformed by the Spirit, so that there is a new creature. If your thinking is always, oh, I'm coming to have my sins forgiven, that is nothing but Romanism, church.

It's no difference than sliding the thing over and saying, Father, I have sinned. I confess my sins unto thee. I've done this, that, and the other.

Okay, go say four Hail Marys, and you'll be fine. What's the difference? What's the difference? Listen, when you're born again of the Spirit, you'll have an en route hunger for God. And until you reach that point, you need to keep seeking the Lord.

You need to find that place and submit to God, and turn everything over to Him. When they quit serving the Lord, we often say they backslid. But did they backslide, or were they merely convicted sinners that fooled us, but they never fooled God? We must know the difference.

Listen, sadly, some of these folks end up with the false assurance, and the church ends up with someone that does not rightly represent Jesus Christ. Dr. Tozer once said that the gospel in the hands of bad men is worse than error. What's that mean? Somebody who calls himself a Christian, trying to go around and push the gospel on people, but their life does not at all line up.

Dr. Tozer said that's worse than error. And I have to agree. Next to the last paragraph.

If the world is ever going to change, it will only begin when we get back to this most basic thing, the born-again experience at the altar. Ask people if they are saved, and everyone's saved. The question should be, are you born again of the Spirit? What was it like when you were born again? Were you born again in a few minutes? Was there weeping and tears? Did you wrestle with God? Did you surrender all? Did you take the time to really pour out before God? What was the one thing that you lacked that the Holy Ghost said, turn this over to me? Maybe it was many things, but I'm sure there was something.

Finally, many times people will come to God unwilling to surrender all, but they want to know what are the least requirements that they might miss hell and go to heaven. Listen, this is not salvation. They're content to simply feel saved.

Real salvation is the surrender of your person to another person, just as a man would commit himself to a wife. It is a covenant relationship that holds nothing back. Figuratively, listen, you might say that when you were born again, you were married to Christ.

You are betrothed among many to be His true bride, the Church. Listen, He wants our love and our commitment. Our commitment.

The born again individual has had a shift in their affection. They used to have an affection for sin, but now they have a deep affection for God. If you're really born again, that shift is taking place.

And when that shift takes place, it will guide you the rest of your life. That hunger and desire. Listen, you pursue the things you love.

Your affections guide the direction of your life. And your affections have to be wrought in God. They have the beginnings of a great love that will transform their whole desire.

Think of that. Born again of the Spirit. A very basic and fundamental thing, John 3. Three chapters into His Gospel.

What? Thirteen verses before John 3.16. He said you must be born again. Not you prayed off conviction. Not you came to the altar and cried and just, you know, repeated the sinner's prayer.

A lot of people have been saved that way. But that will not save you if the Holy Ghost is telling you, you must do this. You must submit this.

You must be willing to turn over all to me.

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