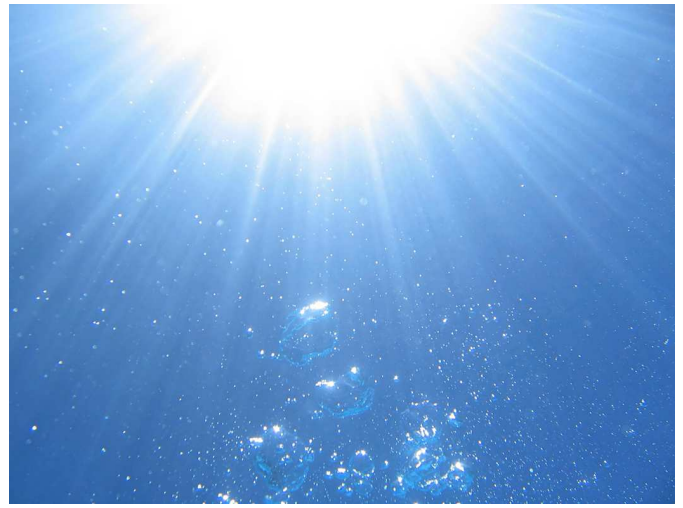


'The Son of God and the Lord of Glory Series'

Sermons in the Gospel of John

Message 8 - 'Being Born Again' John 1: 13



In this verse we can consider how it magnifies the work of the Godhead in planning, securing, and then applying salvation to a sinner, and as such gives the believer an unshakeable foundation on which to rest. We can see that the New Birth is a spiritual miracle worked by heaven in the life of a spiritually dead sinner. John's Gospel speaks much of the new birth, of being born again, and it is a wonderful reality that was wrapped in those words. I want us to look at two things:

1. The Ways a Person Cannot be Born Again - John is trying to clear away, in the three parts of the verse that are negative, the reality that there is no human part in the new birth, rather it is of God. The first speaks of not being born into God's family by blood. Certainly this refers to physical birth, and whilst we would not easily speak of birth so often in this day and age speaking of blood, it was a fairly common reference in the world of the Jews. John's first statement makes it clear that spiritual birth does not come by blood, or in other words, that there is no way that the new birth can take place by any human process of regeneration. Secondly, John speaks of, '*Nor of the will of the flesh*'. So just as John points to physical birth, he then underlines that we cannot be born again by exercising our emotions. The Bible however makes it very clear that a surging of emotional experience does not produce rebirth. You can be reduced to a teary state in a meeting, but that alone will not make you new or make you one of God's children. Now, let me qualify something, we are emotional beings, and we are not to be dead in orthodoxy, or so deadened emotionally that the wonder of the Gospel never moves us. May it never be! However, only God can regenerate someone and make them new. John speaks of the final negative, '*nor of the will of man*'. In other words you cannot be born again by the power of a positive mental attitude, or through a determined approach to do your best. For a person to be a child of God, it takes God to give them spiritual life. This life can only ever come from God and is imparted to a person purely on the basis of God's bounteous grace.

2. The Way a Person is Born Again - Jesus Himself states it in no uncertain terms, 'You must be born again!' But why? God holds the initiative entirely. It is all of Him. How did you contribute to your birth? You didn't! You were brought into the world under God's hand through the actions of your parents. You only realised what had happened after it had happened. Can you see why God uses this image? He writes it on a grand scale in His Word that He and He alone is responsible for your salvation! You believe only because He has first moved to create spiritual life in you. This glorious truth is reiterated throughout the Scriptures, that the basis of our position as God's children lies in His wonderful electing love. What impact should this have? The first thing is to stand amazed and pray that we might become increasingly aware of the greatness of God's wondrous love and immeasurable mercy to sinners such as us. It is all of His mercy, not of anything human, and we should marvel at God's love and mercy that He should save any sinners who deserve His wrath, and to save them in such a way as to send His only begotten Son to die on a cross in pain and shame. How we should love Him, how we should serve Him! Grace fuelled living that places love for Christ, and appreciation for all He has done as the fire for holy living. That is why a clear understanding of the new birth is so essential, it gives a heavenly perspective on a the heavenly gift of salvation that draws the reality of the love of God ever clearer into our thinking.



Penzance Baptist Church

'Upholding the Ordinary Means of Grace'

Pastor Jonathan Stobbs