

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

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Train Up a Child – Raising Our Children as the Lord Raises His

02 – You Must be Born Again

August 8, 2021

Sermon Text: Deuteronomy 6

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119

Pro 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

Last time as we introduced this series on raising up our children in Christ, we read the 6th chapter of Deuteronomy and noticed that the Lord commands us to carefully and constantly instruct our children about the Lord, about His Word, and about the life-or-death necessity of obeying Him.

I want to read this chapter to you once more, and this time let's take note of the emphasis it makes upon *the parents*

being people who have themselves experienced God's redemption.

Deu 6:1-25 “Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, (2) that you may fear the LORD your God, **you and your son and your son's son**, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long.

(3) Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

(4) “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. (5) **You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.** (6) **And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.**

(7) You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (8) You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. (9) You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

(10) “And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build, (11) and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full, (12) then take care lest you forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

(13) It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear. (14) You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you— (15) for the LORD your God in your midst is a jealous God—lest the anger of the LORD your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth. (16) “You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as

you tested him at Massah. (17) You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies and his statutes, which he has commanded you.

(18) And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may go well with you, and that you may go in and take possession of the good land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers (19) by thrusting out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has promised.

(20) “When your son asks you in time to come, ‘What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the rules that the LORD our God has commanded you?’

(21) then you shall say to your son, ‘We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt. And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. (22) And the LORD showed signs and wonders, great and grievous, against Egypt and against Pharaoh and all his household, before our eyes. (23) And he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in and give us the land that he swore to give to our fathers.

(24) And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he

might preserve us alive, as we are this day. (25) And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us.'

See it? The parents are to diligently teach their children *what the Lord had done for them*. They were to speak of His redemption from slavery in Egypt and tell their children what the Lord had commanded them. They were to instruct their children *about what they believed themselves – that the Lord is good, that He will bless us for obeying Him, and that to rebel against Him is disaster*.

....then you shall say to your son, 'We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt. And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

"I was a slave to sin and the devil. But the Lord brought me out of that pit with a mighty hand through Christ's life and death for me. And you can be set free as well if you will hear the gospel and believe in Christ and obey Him." And then, knowing Christ, we are to walk in Christ so that our children see the reality of what we are talking about.

"You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when

you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."

My parents claimed to be Christians. But I can tell you that they never once, except for about 30 seconds one time on the part of my mother...they never once spoke to me about the Lord. I never saw my father pray...not once. We went to Sunday School and church pretty regularly, but the Bible was never opened in our home. This is a grievous and evil sin in the Lord's sight. And it is not rare today among people who claim to be Christians.

What was the problem? Why this disobedience on my parents' part to the Lord's plain command? Why didn't they care about the souls of their children? I can tell you the answer:

...they were not born again. They did not know the Lord. They had nothing to say to their children about redemption because they were still slaves in Egypt. And they were still slaves because they refused to believe and obey the Lord by putting the blood of the Lamb on their doorpost.

No parent can diligently instruct their children about the redemption and salvation of the Lord in Jesus Christ, *if they themselves are not redeemed. If they themselves have not been born again.*

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If you are not born again, *you cannot and will not obey the Lord's commandments and statutes. You will not be able to please Him.*

Rom 8:7-8 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. (8) Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

And again:

Jos 24:16-28 Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods, (17) for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight and preserved us in all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed. (18) And the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God."

(19) But Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the LORD, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. (20) If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm and consume you, after

having done you good."

(21) And the people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the LORD."

(22) Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve him." And they said, "We are witnesses." (23) He said, "Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your heart to the LORD, the God of Israel." (24) And the people said to Joshua, "The LORD our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey."

(25) So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and put in place statutes and rules for them at Shechem. (26) And Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone and set it up there under the terebinth that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. (27) And Joshua said to all the people, "Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD that he spoke to us. Therefore it shall be a witness against you, lest you deal falsely with your God." (28) So Joshua sent the people away, every man to his inheritance.

Some of you, perhaps many who are listening to this, grew up in homes with parents who claimed to be Christians.

Perhaps those parents even thought themselves that they were Christians. But in fact they were just like these people in Joshua's day. Their religion was not in Christ. It was based instead on their belief that they could do it. That they could be good enough. And when they slipped up, well, that is what the cross was about – Jesus loves them and forgives them.

Joshua knew better. He told the people that the thing is impossible. Man cannot serve the Lord. He cannot live up to the holiness of the holy, holy, holy God. But this warning seems to have bounced right off of them – *even though they already had idols among themselves when they were making these confident promises!!*

Mat 7:13-14 “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. (14) For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and **those who find it are few.**”

I suppose there is nothing more dangerous than to grow up in a home where the parents think they are Christians and that all is well between them and God. The idea that perhaps they do not really know the Lord is not even on their mental radar. Such a thing is not even a question that enters their

mind. Of course they are Christians. They go to church. They have been baptized. They believe in Jesus, or so they say. Their children go to Sunday school and summer Bible camp and missions trips. And yet....

When it comes to their ability to sit down with one another, especially on the part of the parents, *they are unable to tell of the misery they were once in under the devil's cruel slavery, how blind they were to the light of Christ, and how wonderful it was that day when Christ came to them, gave them eyes to see and ears to hear and as He did with Lazarus, called out their name and said “Come out of the tomb.”* Parents like this, for all their outward appearance of Christianity, for all the prayers they might say before meals, are empty of what Christians in old times called “experimental religion.” That is to say, they do not know the Lord, they do not love Him. His Spirit is not in them *and hear this: they are actually hostile to Christ and they hate His Word.*

That is to say, *they serve a false Jesus.* Their Christianity is a counterfeit. How can you tell? Just speak to them about the real Christ, about the real truths of His Word, and you will see at best a blank stare and most likely even, if you press it, outright hostility.

This is what the Bible means when it says that the unsaved man is *dead to God*. All of us were once in that condition:

Eph 2:1-3 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins (2) in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— (3) among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

I can say now after nearly 40 years as a pastor, that if I ever have the opportunity to preach in a local church somewhere, my sermon would be “you must be born again, and most of you have not been. You think you are on good standing with the Lord, but you are not. You do not know Him and He does not know you.” And I would be right.

To be dead to God is to be blind and deaf to Christ:

Joh 10:3-5 To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. (4) When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and

the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. (5) A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”

How Can we Know?

You must be born again. YOU must be born again. This is the vital and indispensable requirement which is more important than anything else in this life or the next. *What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, but lose his own soul?* What will it be, in the end, for the man who lays up treasure for himself but is not rich toward God?

How then can we know if we are born again? Jesus Himself said that the work of the Spirit in us, this business of Him regenerating our heart, is like the wind. You cannot see Him. BUT, Jesus said, we can see the effects of that Wind. What are these effects? What are the visible signs and evidences of a man or woman made a new creation? Let me show you.

First, *the new creation loves the new creation. That is to say, when we have been born again, we love and identify with the rest of Christ's flock. We love the brethren. We are able to say “these are my mother and father and sisters and brothers.”* The world, the old

creation and those who belong to it, now seem alien to us. Those we used to identify with and fit in among – are no longer our people. If you are born again, you know what I am speaking of. You have experienced it. The old crowd doesn't really like the change in you. They see it. "What has happened to him? She is different. He's no fun anymore."

Do YOU know anything of this? Has this change happened in you? Listen to Paul tell us about it:

1Co 2:9-16 But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"— (10) these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. (11) For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. (12) Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. (13) And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. (14) The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him,

and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. (15) The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. (16) "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

YOU become a folly to what Paul calls "the natural man." That is, the person who has not been born again. The person who is of this world, just like we used to be. So our old crowd, our earthly father and mother and sister and brother don't understand us anymore. Because Christ is foolishness to them. YOU have become a fool to them. They want you to be the old you again. They like to remind you of who you used to be and they try to convince you that you are just on some dumb, religious kick and you need to get rid of it and return to them. And as time goes along and they see that not only are you not returning to them but in fact are growing more and more distant from them, they shake their heads and lament that you are "lost" to them.

This is why Jesus said:

Mat 10:34-39 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. (35) For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter

against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. (36) And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. (37) Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. (38) And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. (39) Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Because, you see, when we have been born again we will love Christ and follow Him and we will not turn back to the world even though our own father and mother or son or daughter do all they can to make us turn back to them.

Do you know anything of this? Have you experienced your old crowd or your unregenerate earthly family members (who, by the way, may claim to be Christians) showing their displeasure at who you have become in Christ? Are you on the same old peaceful and comfortable terms with them, or have you become a fool in their eyes?

If you are just as comfortable with your earthly family and friends as you have always been, if you are still one of them, if you still fit in with them, and if they are just as comfy with you as always, then be sure of this – you are not born again.

I particularly labor this point for everyone listening, but especially for those of you who grew up in a family that claimed to be Christian. For those of you who went to church and Sunday School and you were in the youth group, and maybe even the church was the central focus of your life as you grew up. And perhaps it has never really crossed your mind to even consider the possibility that you are not a Christian, that you do not know Christ. That is the very condition I was in for a long time. I wish our friend Curt Austen was here – I would have him come up here and tell you how this happened to him for years and years.

Understand this – *these things I am speaking of are not something UN-usual. They are not the experience of just some Christians.*

“And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.”

So, beware. Be honest. Ruthlessly honest with yourself. Have you lost anything or anyone as a result of Christ? *Has your claim to be a Christian ever cost you anything at all?*

Php 3:7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Has this great change really happened in YOU?

And then, here is the second primary way that you can discern if you have been born again. Listen to it in Psalm 119-

Psa 119:97-105 Mem Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day. (98) Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me. (99) I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation. (100) I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts. (101) I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word. (102) I do not turn aside from your rules, for you have taught me. (103) How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! (104) Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. (105) Nun Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Let's talk about you and God's Word. About you and the Bible.

When a person is born again, when Christ by His Spirit create us into a brand new person, this new creation we become *loves and hungers for God's*

Word. I will do my best to describe this for you in several ways.

Before you are born again, even though you might think you are a Christian and you carry a Bible to church and so on...before you are born again, God's Word does not speak to you. Or rather, you do not hear Him speaking to you. His Word is distant to you. Removed from you. At arm's length to you. It is something for other people, *but it is not yours*.

His Word is not a delight to you. It is not sweet to you so that you **MUST** taste more of it. The Bible is a chore to you and, if you are honest, it does not speak to you.

I have seen this (and still see it today) in the response of people who hear our sermons and Bible studies. On the one hand you have people who can't get enough. Who have been starved for the truth of the Word and now they have found it preached and taught and they can hardly wait for the next installment.

And they digest it. They think about it. They talk about it. They take up their Bible and read more for themselves. They can't get enough of it.

And then there are those – perhaps some of you fit this category – who are like a man who was in our church in

Alaska years ago. He had been to Bible college. He claimed to be a Christian. He was a member of the church. But he came up to me one Sunday after the service and he said “you know, the content of your sermons is very good, but after 12 o’clock, I just shut you off because I can’t listen that long.” That man was not born again.

When you are born again, you cease just listening to others talk about the Bible, you cease having to force yourself to read it lest God be angry with you for not reading it, the book opens up to you and you can *understand* it and you want to tell others what you are learning! Most of whom will blow you off and wish you would just keep that stuff to yourself.

These are the unmistakable signs of the new birth. And unlike the Pharisees’ use of the Scriptures, this new life in you that hungers and thirsts for God’s Word, *produces the fruit of the Spirit in you as you live it and apply it.* It leads you to love Christ and to love His people more and more. *His Word changes you.*

You must be born again. If you are to be the person, the mother, the father that God calls you to be, if you are going to be able to raise up your children in the Lord, *then you must be in the Lord yourself.* YOU must have

experienced Christ’s deliverance from slavery in Egypt so that YOU can do this:

(5) You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (6) And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. (7) You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

All that we are going to find in this series of studies in God’s Word is based upon this vital assumption – that you are born again. That you know the Lord yourself. If you do not, if you have any doubts, then here is God’s absolute promise to get hold of:

Rom 10:8-11 But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); (9) because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (10) For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. (11) For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”