



How God Converts the Human Soul

Twin City Fellowship
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This morning, I'd like to hold general questions until the end of the material. If you have a point of clarification or you'd like to point out a valid implication or application, please raise your hand and we'll send the mic over so everyone can hear.



How God Converts the Human Soul

- Introduction
- External Means of Preaching
- Internal Work of the Holy Spirit
- Modern vs Biblical Gospel
- Total Inability
- Regeneration
- God's Grace

God Converts the Human Soul -

- Through the external means of Gospel preaching
- Through the inward work of the Holy Spirit

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The way that God creates the new birth in the hearts of those who will be saved is first of all through the **external** means of preaching the Biblical Gospel. That's the part we can see. Secondly, He uses an **internal** means of an inner, supernatural drawing to Christ by God the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit. That's the secret, mysterious, wind-like part that we can't see. Sometimes this is described as the universal call and the inward or effectual call. An example of the outward calling is found in Acts 17:30 and an example of the inward calling can be found in John 6:44.

External Means of Gospel Preaching

- 1 Cor. 1:21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, **God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.**

4

Let's look at a passage in 1 Cor. Chapter 1. This is Paul's first letter to the Corinthian Church. The first chapter begins with a greeting in vss 1-3 and then talks about spiritual gifts at Corinth in vss. 4-9. Paul then talks about sectarianism being sinful in vss. 10-17. Then he begins a section in vs. 18 that talks about Christ being the power and wisdom of God. Vs 18 begins, "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

Notice that God uses the message preached to save those who will believe it. It does appear to defy logic in one sense but that is what God uses for His eternal purposes. Romans 10:14-15 says, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"

Inward Work of the Holy Spirit

- John 1:12-13 (ESV) But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, **who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.**

5

Now I'd like to turn to John's Gospel, chapter 1, starting in verse 12. Notice John begins with talking about the Word (vss 1-5) which designates God the Son with respect to His deity; "Jesus" and "Christ" refer to His incarnation and saving work. Vss 6-13 talk about John witnessing the True Light. Vs 10-11, "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him."

Notice that they believed as a result of being born of God and not the other way around. They didn't believe and then become born of God.

Modern Gospel vs Biblical Gospel Review

- The modern gospel says in essence, “Come to Jesus to have a better life.”
- Usually lacking (at least in emphasis) in one of more of the Gospel essentials.
- Typically obscures the Gospel message, manipulates people and creates false converts.

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While it's certainly true that the external method of preaching the Gospel is the method that God has chosen to use in order to convert human souls, the problem is that the modern church today frequently leaves out the **internal** method. To clarify, they tend to minimize the role of the Holy Spirit down to more of an assistant role rather than the sovereign-third-person of the Trinity that he really is. The fact is that the inner working of the Spirit of God comes along side the external method of the preaching of the Word of God. That combination is the key **determinative** element in the salvation and conversion of men's souls.

We want to be careful of our message as what we preach can lead to false conversions. If we're communicating anything other than salvation by grace alone through faith alone through Christ alone, we can lead people astray. If we're even giving the impression that they need to jump through a 'hoop' of some sort (praying the sinner's prayer, signing a card, coming forward to the altar) this can mislead and is something we should strive to avoid.

The Modern Gospel Quenches Both Aspects

- There is a de-emphasis in the preaching of Gospel essentials.
- The role of the Holy Spirit to save people completely is often minimized.

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- Quench means to stifle or suppress. There is a de-emphasis in explaining who Christ is, what He did and why someone would need Him. The role of the Holy Spirit is to convict people of sin, righteousness and judgement. That is why we carefully lead people through the commandments to bring about that conviction of sin. Share story about talking with two people at the mall on the third floor with someone who had never been witnessing before. The question she asked afterwards was, "Do you think we should have prayed the sinner's prayer with them?" I sat down with her and explained why we don't want to get in the way of a supernatural act of God. I told her that if God was doing a work of grace in their hearts that He would finish that work in which He began. Hebrews 7:25 says, "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." Hebrews 12:1-2a Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; Philippians 1:6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

The Role of the Holy Spirit in Salvation

- John 3:6-7 Causes us to be born again.
- John 16:7-8 Convicts of sin, righteousness and judgement.
- John 6:44 Draws us to Christ (see also Jeremiah 31:3; Hosea 11:4; John 6:65; John 12:32)
- Titus 3:4-5 Regenerates us

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All the preaching in the world, even from the very Son of God Himself, no matter how precise it is, no matter how powerful it is, and even if someone had miracles to confirm the message and authority, all of it is useless **until** or **unless** the Father draws you to Me (Jesus). Until that secret, mighty drawing power of the Holy Spirit to be put forth upon your heart, you will not come, you cannot come, no man can. There must be an effectual drawing before there is a genuine “believing.” In other words, unless there is a supernatural, enmity overcoming, soul transforming power exerted internally by the Holy Spirit in the human heart that is being asked to respond in faith, that heart will not respond.

Story of Lazarus and the Topic of Inability

- John 11:1-4
- John 11:12-15
- John 11:17-26
- John 11:38-44

9

To set the context, in John 10, Jesus is addressing the Pharisees and uses an illustration of Him being the Shepherd of His people. Sometimes known as the Good Shepherd Discourse. Interesting to note that in verse 26 in chapter 10, Jesus tells the Jews surrounding him in Solomon's porch, "But you do not believe because you are not of my sheep." Notice it doesn't say, "But you are not of my sheep because you don't believe." Vss 1-6 talk about Jesus being the True Shepherd, vss. 7-21 talk about Jesus being the Good Shepherd. Vss 22-30 talk about the Shepherd knows his sheep and 31-39 talks about renewed efforts to stone Jesus. Chapter 11 is a new section talking about a certain man Lazurus.

Total Inability

- The Gospel commands dead men to respond.
- The Gospel commands dead people to do what frankly they can't do.
- Only when the Spirit of God comes along side the preaching of the Word can an unregenerate person respond

10

The first thing to grasp is that man, in his raw, natural state as he comes from the womb is morally and spiritually corrupt in disposition and character. Every part of his being – his mind, his will, his emotions, his affections, his conscience, his body – has been affected by sin. The second thing to understand is that unregenerate man is totally or pervasively corrupt, he is incapable of changing his character or of acting in a way that is distinct from his corruption. He is unable to discern, to love, or to choose the things that are pleasing to God. This is what I'm putting under the heading of 'Total Inability'. Jeremiah says, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 13:23).

Total Inability

Passages on Fallen Man		Passages on Inability
Genesis 6:5-6	Isaiah 64:6	Matthew 7:18
Genesis 8:21	Jeremiah 17:9	John 3:3, 5
1 Kings 8:46	Luke 11:13	John 6:44, 65
Psalms 14:1-3	John 5:42	John 14:17
Psalms 51:5	Romans 1:29-32	John 15:4-5
Psalms 58:3	Romans 3:9-23	Romans 8:7-8
Psalms 130:3	Galatians 3:22	1 Corinthians 2:14
Psalms 143:2	Ephesians 2:1-3	1 Corinthians 12:3
Ecclesiastes 7:20	Ephesians 4:17-19	James 3:8
Ecclesiastes 9:4	1 John 1:8, 10	Revelation 14:3
Isaiah 53:6	1 John 5:19	

From these and other passages, I do not mean that people act as bad as they really are by nature, since they are prevented from doing so by several manifestations of God's common restraining grace such as their innate awareness of God and his judgments (Romans 1:20–21,32), the works of the law written on their hearts and consciences (Rom. 2:15), and civil government (Rom. 13:1–5).

Ephesians 2:1-3

- And you were **dead in your trespasses and sins**, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly **lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind**, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

12

Paul's letter to the Ephesian Church. Paul talks about the redemption we have in Christ beginning in chapter 1 vss 3–14. In vs 7 Paul writes, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence." Vss 15–22 is a prayer for spiritual wisdom. Vs 18 says, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints," The last two vss in Chapter 1 read, "And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." In Chapter 2, the theme is salvation by grace through faith.

Ephesians 2:4-5

- But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, **made us alive** together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

Notice the divine intervention of God.

Inability of Man

- Colossians 1:13-14, 21-22 For He rescued us from the **domain of darkness**, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ...And although you were formerly **alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds**, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—

14

Paul's Epistle to the Colossian Church addressing the issue of believers struggling with a Greek-influenced form of Jewish philosophy that viewed Christians as still vulnerable to spiritual forces (otherwise known as the Colossian Heresy). Paul starts the Epistle by giving thanks to God for the saints and faithful brethren in Colosse. Vs 3, "We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints;" Vss 9-14 Paul intercedes for the Colossians. Starting in vs. 9 and leading to our text, Paul writes, "For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light."

Inability of Man Continued

- Colossians 2:13-14 When you were **dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh**, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

15

The purpose of Paul's ministry and his interest in the Colossians is outlined in 1:24–2:7 and beginning in vs 8 talks about the sufficiency of Christ, "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead."

Inability of Man Continued

- Colossians 3:5-7 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them.

16

Beginning in chapter 3:1, Paul is admonishing the church to put off the old humanity and put on the new. Starting in vs 1 and leading to our text, Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

Inability of Man Continued

- Titus 3:3 For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

17

Paul's letter to Titus. Paul wrote this letter to Titus from Macedonia at the time to encourage him to bring his ministry on the island of Crete to a close. Specifically, Paul wanted Titus to complete the organization of the churches (1:5–9), deal with false teachers who were present (1:10–14; 3:9–11) and give instructions to the churches on proper conduct (2:1–3:8).

Starting in Chapter 3, vs 1 and leading up to our verse, Paul writes, “Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.



Total Inability

- Question: If all men have an inability to come to Christ and are spiritually dead then why are some people saved and others not?
- Only when man understands that he is sinful and incapable of helping himself will he seek help outside of himself.
- As a result of the Fall, man lost his ability to obey God but not his obligation to obey God.

The Order of Salvation

- 1) Election (God's choice of people to be saved)
- 2) The Gospel Call (proclaiming the message of the gospel)
- 3) Regeneration (being born again - a work of God)
- 4) Conversion (faith and repentance)
- 5) Justification (right legal standing)
- 6) Sanctification (right conduct of life)
- 7) Glorification (receiving a resurrection body)

Adopted from Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, (Zondervan, 1994), pg. 670

19

It's an important to realize that regeneration comes before saving faith. That is why we pray when we go out to evangelize that God would move in the hearts of people that the Holy Spirit would come along side the Gospel message and that people will believe the message. Acts 16:14-15 records the first convert in Europe, "A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us."

Regeneration

- Regeneration is a secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to the believer.
- This is sometimes called “being born again” using language from John 3:3-8.

Adopted from Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, (Zondervan, 1994), pg. 670

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Regeneration is the gift of God’s grace. It is the immediate, supernatural work of the Holy Spirit wrought in us. Its effect is to quicken us to spiritual life from spiritual death. It changes the disposition of our souls, inclining our hearts to God. The fruit of regeneration is faith. By the way, the Bible teaches that God grants both repentance and saving faith. 2 Timothy 2:23 “The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, [if perhaps God may grant them repentance](#) leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses *and escape* from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.” Philipians 1:29 “For to you [it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him](#), but also to suffer for His sake,”

John 3:3-5

- Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is **born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.**” Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

21

John Chapter 3 begins with a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, coming to talk with Jesus. We'll pick up the text in Chapter 2, verse 23, “Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man. Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”

Notice the Jesus is teaching that no one can even see the kingdom of God without being born again. This implies that regeneration precedes faith.

John 3:6-8

- “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is **born of the Spirit** is spirit. “Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ “The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Regeneration - A Work of God Alone

- Unlike conversion and sanctification, we have no active role in the work of regeneration.
- It is entirely a work of God upon the human heart.

23

Monergism: In regeneration, the Holy Spirit unites us to Christ independent of any cooperation from our unregenerated human nature. He quickens us through the outward call cast forth by the preaching of His Word, disarms our innate hostility, removes our blindness, illumines our mind, creates understanding, turns our heart of stone to a heart of flesh -- giving rise to a delight in His Word -- all that we might, with our renewed affections, willingly & gladly embrace Christ. The Prophet Ezekiel inspired by the Holy Spirit asserted "I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. **Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.** They will be my people, and I will be their God." (Eze 11:19, also 36:26) The Apostle Paul said, "For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because **our gospel came to you not only in word**, but also in power and **in the Holy Spirit** and with full conviction." (1 Thess 1, 4, 5).

James 1:17-18

- Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. In the exercise of His will **He brought us forth by the word of truth**, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

24

James writing to the twelve tribes scattered abroad (vs 1) talked about persevering in the face of trials in Chapter 1 vss 1–27. Profiting from trials in vss 2–8, loving God under trials in vss 12–18. Vs 16, “Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.”

1 Peter 1:3

- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy **has caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

25

Peter writes in his Epistle to encourage persecuted and bewildered Christians and exhorts them to stand fast in their faith (5:12). To that end he repeatedly turns their thoughts to the joys and glories of their eternal inheritance (1:3-13; 4:13; 5:1, 4) and instructs them about proper Christian behavior in the midst of unjust suffering. Vs 1 leading to our text, “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.”

Ezekiel 36:26-27

- “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

What Does a Regenerated Person Look Like?

- The regenerated person freely and joyously does the will of God.
- A person born again will exhibit fruits of the Spirit according to Galatians 5:22-23
- A person who has encountered Christ will have a changed life according to 2 Corinthians 5:16-17

27

Someone truly regenerated by the Spirit of God will have a love for the things they once hated or ignored, namely God. They'll also have a hate for things they once loved, namely sin.

Understanding Grace

- Unmerited favor.
- Grace as defined in the Tyndale Bible Dictionary, “The gift of God as expressed in his actions of extending mercy, loving-kindness, and salvation to people.”
- Grace - God is granting to us something that we don't deserve.
- Mercy - God is withholding something that we do deserve.

Titus 3:4-7

- But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.