



The foundation for God's church is the **truth**, the doctrines of the Word of God, specifically the incredible truths of **salvation**.

God saved me **because** of His kindness, love, and mercy (v.4-5a)

This is the **means**: salvation happens to us **through** "the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit."

"Rebirth" is a translation of a Greek word that is most literally understood as **regeneration**. (Re-generate, new genesis, new birth)

The analogy of being 'born again' describes a reality to which the one born can, by definition, make **no** contribution.

Understanding the doctrine of regeneration starts with the doctrine of **total depravity** because everything else essentially proceeds from there. (v. 3)

The truth of total depravity refers to the effect of sin on the whole person – sin affects **every aspect** of our being – we are not sinners because we sin, we **sin** because we are **sinners**.

Romans 3:9-18

- The supreme motive required of everything that is good is the **love** of God. An act that outwardly conforms to God's Word but comes from a heart alienated from God is not judged by God as a **good** deed.
- In a fallen condition, in total depravity, man may desire the **benefits** that only God can give, but does not want **Him**. Man wants the gift, not the Giver.

Ephesians 2:1-3, 4-5

We were **dead**. God made us **alive**. That's regeneration.

John 3:1-7

You must be **born again**, born from above, by God through the agency of the Holy Spirit to enter the Kingdom of God.

Ezekiel 36:25-27

That is something God and God **alone** can do. (John 3:8)

(John 3:14-16) When it comes to evangelism, don't try to manipulate the heart, that isn't your job, you **lift up Jesus**.

The Spirit has to do His part, but He does not do it apart from the **gospel**, apart from the Word of truth. (James 1, Eph. 1, Col. 1, 1 Pet. 1, Rom. 10)

The source of regeneration is **God** and God alone and He gives it to whomever He chooses when He chooses; and since **we** don't know who that is or when that is, we continue to share the gospel with **everyone** – lifting up Jesus in every way – and God in His sovereign kindness, love, and mercy gives life to whom He will.

"renewal of the Holy Spirit" – The evidence of regeneration is **sanctification** and that is not that different than the natural actions of a newborn child. (JI Packer)

- First – the baby cries. The born again person **prays** – crying to God in dependence and hope and trust as a child to his father.
- Second – the baby eats. The born again person feels a **hunger** for spiritual food – first the milk and then the meat of God's Word.
- Third – the baby moves. The born again person **lives** life in Christ zealous for good deeds.
- Fourth – the baby sleeps. The born again person **rests** in the knowledge of God's protection, provision, power, and presence – leaving outcomes to God and living in obedience.

Regeneration is no more and no less than the work of God in the hearts of totally depraved men which leads to the gospel being wholeheartedly received and then, in sanctification, lived in light of from then on.

- **Remember** the condition we were in – remember that the lost around you are still in that condition – and remember that they are headed to hell in the same way you were.
- **Realize** that only God can give them new birth – only God can bring the dead to life – and realize that He only does so when we share the gospel with them.
- **Renew** your passion for doing life in Christ one step at a time – praying, learning, living, and resting in the God who has saved you!
- **Rejoice** that you can say "It is well with my soul" – not because of you but because "He regarded your helpless estate and shed His own blood for your soul."