

How to Be Renewed

INTRODUCTION

- A. This morning, we had discussed the need for spiritual renewal, and I said God can instill us with new life.
- B. But, how does he do so? To that question, we turn this evening.

THE PROMISE

- A. God has promised to renew us.
 - 1. “I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them; I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my ordinances and obey them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God” (Ezek. 11:19-20).
 - 2. “I will give them a heart to know that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart” (Jer. 24:7).
- B. So, God will give us a new heart. But, how will he do it?
 - 1. Will he come, against our will, and just renew us?
 - a. That was the position of John Calvin and is accepted in many mainstream denominations.
 - 1) In his systematic theology, Institutes of Christian Religion, Calvin wrote, “John [the] Baptist, on seeing the dullness of his disciples, exclaims, ‘A man can receive nothing, unless it be given him from heaven’ (Jn. 3:27). That the gift to which he here refers must be understood not of ordinary natural gifts, but of special illumination, appears from this - that he was complaining how little his disciples had profited by all that he had said to them in commendation of Christ. ‘I see,’ says he, ‘that my words are of no effect in imbuing the minds of men with divine things, unless the Lord enlighten their understandings by his Spirit.’” (2.2.20).
 - 2) In other words, if you are to have a new heart - a new understanding - God must come and give it to you.
 - b. You will, no doubt, hear many denominational people speak similar to Calvin.
 - 2. I do not believe that God will come and give you a new heart against your will.
 - a. If God just came and gave us holiness, why did God command us to be holy?
 - 1) “Beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1).
 - 2) “As he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct” (1 Pet. 1:15).
 - b. Obviously, God isn’t just going to come and give us a new heart without our cooperation. How can we cooperate with God?

WE MUST FORSAKE THE SINS OF THIS WORLD

- A. If we want God to renew us, we cannot live in sins of this world.
 - 1. “Come out from the, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:17-18).
 - 2. “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, love for the Father is not in him” (1 Jn. 2:15).
- B. If you live in sin, do you really believe that God can come and give you a new heart?
 - 1. In his earlier years, Jean Francois Millet, the great French painter, devoted himself almost entirely to the painting of nude figures, as was the custom of his day.
 - a. One day, however, he happened to hear the lustful conversation of some men looking at one of his pictures in a store window; Millet vowed not to paint nudes again.
 - b. Millet and his wife were poor, and his decision made it seem as though the family was doomed to starvation.
 - 1) But, he began to paint peasant scenes.
 - 2) Yet, his decision to begin painting peasant brought him much fame and today Millet is known as “The Painter of Peasants.”
 - 2. Because Millet separated himself from worldliness, he had success in his profession.
 - a. If we will separate ourselves from worldliness, we will have success in our Christian lives.
 - b. Have you separated yourselves from worldliness?

WE MUST STUDY SCRIPTURE

- A. If we want God to renew us, we must study his Word.
1. The words of Scripture are to be written upon our hearts.
 - a. "These words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart" (Deut. 6:6).
 - b. "You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul; and you shall bind them as assign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes" (Deut. 11:18).
 - c. If the word of God is in our heart, how can we help but to be renewed? How can we help but have a new heart?
 2. The words of Scripture provide a light in darkness.
 - a. "The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart, the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Prov. 19:8).
 - b. "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to ply path" (Ps. 119:105).
 - c. "We have the prophetic word made more sure. You will do well to pay attention to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts" (1 Pet. 1:19).
 - d. The word of God tells us the errors we should avoid and the way we should go, thus it serves as; light to us. If we pay attention Scripture, our paths will be illuminated, and we will be able to be renewed.
 - e. Chad was a high-school student whose band performed on a Caribbean cruise.
 - 1) One night his buddies tried to entice him into the ship's bar, but Chad, whose mother was an alcoholic, had memorized verses from Proverbs about alcohol abuse.
 - 2) He told his friends that addiction ran in his family, and then he had the courage to quote Scripture to them: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise" (20:1).
 - 3) They replied, "Come on, Chad. Just on beer won't hurt." He replied, "At the last it bites like a serpent and stings like a viper" (23:32).
 - 4) They accused him of rejecting their company, to which he said, "If sinners entice you, do not consent" (1:10).
 - 5) One of the boys then said, "Let him be. He's so full of Scripture we can't do a thing with him!" Are you so full of Scripture that you can avoid what is wrong and be renewed?
 3. The words of Scripture purify our lives.
 - a. "How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to thy word" (Ps. 119:9).
 - b. "You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you" (Jn. 15:3).
 - c. "Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth" (Jn. 17:17). "Sanctify" means to make holy.
- B. Will you open your Bible and be renewed?

WE MUST COMMUNE WITH GOD

- A. Prayer must be an important part of our lives if we desire to be renewed
- B. Men who have walked with God were men of prayer.
1. Jesus spent much time in prayer.
 - a. "And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and went out to a lonely place, and there he prayed" (Mk. 1:35).
 - b. "And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray" (Mk. 6:46).
 - c. When Jesus was facing death, he wasn't off feeling sorry for himself, he was praying.
 2. David would often arise early to pray.
 - a. "O LORD, in the morning thou dost hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a rifle for thee, and watch" (Ps. 5:3).
 - b. "I rise before dawn and cry for help; I hope in thy words" (Ps. 119:147).
 3. Some examples from church history:
 - a. Martin Luther said, "I have so much business I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer."
 - b. John Wesley said, "God does nothing but in answer to prayer," and he proved that statement by spending two hours daily in prayer.
 - c. William Penn wrote of George Fox that "above all he excelled in prayer The most awful, living, reverend frame I ever felt or beheld, I must say was his in prayer."
- C. Why is prayer so important to spiritual renewal?
1. We can go to God and ask for strength to overcome temptation - "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).
 2. We can cast all our cares upon God.
 - a. "Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares about you" (1 Pet. 5:7).
 - b. Thus, as we cast all our cares about the Lord, we can go to him, and say, "God, I'm struggling here. Can you help me? Can you help me to become more like you?"
 3. "Ask, and it will be given you, seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened" (Mt. 7:7-8). Let us ask God to help us be renewed, for we know he will answer us!

WE MUST FELLOWSHIP WITH OUR BRETHREN

- A. Fellowship with our brethren is quite vital to our Christian lives.
 - 1. The earliest Christians “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42).
 - 2. Paul desired to be with the Romans that they might “be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith” (Rom. 1:12).
- B. Why is it so important that we fellowship with our brethren to gain a new heart?
 - 1. Our brethren help us as we strive to live in Christ.
 - a. “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2).
 - 1) We exist as a congregation of believers, in part, to help one another in our struggles.
 - 2) We dare not be too proud to go to a brother or sister and say, “I’m struggling here. Can you pray with me? Can you help me?”
 - b. “Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another” (Js. 5 :16) - Let us be willing to confess sin to one another and pray with one another.
 - 2. A little girl once cried out in the night and awakened her mother. At the child’s request, she was allowed to crawl into bed with her mother.
 - a. “What’s the matter?” the mother asked. “It was dark over there,” said the child.
 - b. “Yes,” replied the mother, “but it’s just as dark over here.” “I know, Mommy,” the little girl said, “but you’re here.”
 - c. As we struggle with life, we’ll still struggle even if our brethren will with us, but they’ll be with us.
- C. Do you need to come tonight and begin being renewed? Do you need come and ask your brethren to bear your burdens? Do you need your brethren to pray with you?