

# Heaven

In the last verse of the familiar hymn *Sweet Hour of Prayer*, we find these words:

*Sweet hour of prayer,  
sweet hour of prayer  
May I thy consolation share,  
'Til from Mount Pisgah's lofty height  
I view my home and take my flight*

These words will take on greater meaning if you remember that Mount Pisgah was the place from which Moses viewed the promise land.

Now, may I say, we have a promise land of our own to speak about. It is a heavenly promise land, a place Jesus said he is preparing for us. The songwriter is speaking of that day when we will view our heavenly home and depart to enter our promise land. More than one saint has left a testimony of looking over into the promise land as death approached. In those moments before the call from heaven's portal to come home, they climbed up their Pisgah if you please and began to see over into the promise land.

In the remainder of this message, I was wondering if you might climb up on Mount Pisgah with me and let's try to catch a glimpse of the promise land our Lord is preparing for us. Like Moses, you and I can only look from afar. But from the lofty height of God's Word I believe we can catch a glimpse of what awaits us over there.

When Moses viewed the promised land in his day, he was looking at a land that flowed with milk and honey. Likewise, the place Christ is preparing for us flows with milk and honey. In other words, God's heaven will be a place of plenty, a place of abundance! You will recall when our Lord was here, he feed the multitudes and

there were baskets of leftovers. My friend, in heaven our Lord shall provide for the multitudes from his supply that can never be diminished. God's heaven is a place flowing with milk and honey. What a beautiful picture that is!

Now let's take another glimpse from our perch up here on Mount Pisgah. As we view the land something quite striking comes into view. All those who live in this land are free from all disease, all sickness, and all pain. My! I wish you would look closely at those dwelling in this land. Not one is old or weak. Not one needs a hospital bed, or a wheelchair, or a visit to a doctor. Not one needs glasses to see, or hearing aids to hear, or a walker to move around. Every one of them looks to be in the prime of their youth!

Listen to the following words and I think you will agree these words fit the experience of those living over in the promise land. The Scripture says,

*“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust . . . because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.”*

This is a wonderful promise for us now, but how much more when we go to dwell in the promise land! We have his Word that no evil or any plague can ever touch us there. What a land! There will be no uprisings there. There will be no strife, nor will the land ever be troubled by war. There will be no evil ever worked against a neighbor. What a land this is!

Furthermore, no plague or any sickness can ever come near those living in this land. And as we keep looking, we see that its inhabitants do not defile the land in any way. Rather, all we can see as far as the eye can behold is a land of peace filled with contentment, purity, and beauty. In fact, the Scripture says that *“there shall in*

*no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh evil, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."*

You know, I kind of like it up here on Mount Pisgah. I hate to come down! Let's look on for a moment. And as we keep looking over this promise land, we see families settling down to their inheritance. You will recall the promise land of which Moses caught a glimpse would later be divided among the children of Israel for an inheritance. The families of Israel received an inheritance in the promised land.

I'm glad to tell you that in our promise land the day will come when families can settle into the inheritance Christ has for his own. In fact, we are said to be joint heirs with Jesus Christ! From my vantage point up here on Mount Pisgah, I can see the inhabitants enjoying the treasures of their homeland! These pilgrims were strangers and outcasts in the world, but like Abraham of old, they were in search of a city whose builder and maker is God. Now look at them as they receive the inheritance promised them in Christ.

Look at them as they settle into the land Christ has prepared for them. I see moms embracing their children again. I see dads embracing their sons and daughters again. I see happy reunions of loved ones all over this land! I see a land overflowing with joy as old acquaintances are renewed. Look at the redeemed as they settle into their promise land. What an inheritance is laid up for us in God's promised land!

And finally, as we look over into God's promised land we find not the old Jerusalem, but a new one. From our Lord's teaching in St. John chapter fourteen we learn that he is even now preparing a place for those who love him. Later it would be the apostle John through whom the Lord revealed some of his building program. John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

This city, which measures 1500 miles in length, width, and height (think about that!), is the centerpiece of the new heaven and the new earth described in Revelation

chapter twenty-one. The throne of God will be positioned in the midst of this spectacular city. Proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb will be a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal. On either side of the river the tree of life will be accessible for all eternity. All the redeemed will freely take part of the fruit it yields each month. Its' leaves are said to be for the "*healing of the nations.*"

Mankind, even in a redeemed, resurrected state must have sustenance from his Creator. We are forever the creature. It will be forever true that "*in him we live and move and have our being!*" This healing speaks of the fact we draw our life from Him. We are forever dependent upon his provision. The Lord will make perfect provision for us as pictured in the tree of life. We will enjoy that fruit and live forever in his presence.

God's provision is such that we will never grow old or run down. The tree of life speaks of the fact that God will never withdraw any of his sustaining power from the creation again. This is another way of saying that death is forever eliminated from God's very good, new creation.

John goes on to say in Revelation chapter twenty-two that all the redeemed shall see his face. My friends, we will have the privilege of looking upon the king in all his glory. Dottie Rambo said it well in her famous song that says, "*We shall behold him!*" Indeed, we shall behold him in all his glory! In heaven we shall see his face!

I say this not only speaks of the joy of looking upon him in his glory, but it speaks also of the fact that he will show us the riches of his grace in the ages to come. You see, he will never hide his face from us, that is, he will never *turn* his face away from us! We will be the object of his redeeming heart while the ages roll on. And it will be our joy to serve the Lord while those ages roll on.

My friend, it will take all of eternity for our infinite God to show us the things he has prepared for us. Praise the Lord! Heaven will forever be a place of anticipation

and newness as our Creator/Redeemer reveals all he has prepared for those who enter his promised land.

I guess for now we will have to come down from Mount Pisgah. For now, like Moses, we can only look over into that land and catch a glimpse of its glories with the eye of faith. But let me close this message with a glorious thought about the promise land. When Joshua and Israel went into the promised land they had to cross the Jordan River. Likewise, for most of the church, entrance into the promise land means the crossing of old Jordan.

One day death will cast the waters of Jordan at our feet. But there is a glorious picture in the Old Testament history that we need to see. When Israel came to the Jordan the first to touch the waters were the priests who bore the ark of the covenant. When the feet of those priests dipped into the brim of the water a miracle took place. The Lord rolled back those waters and the muddy riverbed was instantly made dry. The priests proceeded to carry the ark of the covenant out into the midst of the Jordan. Once there, a nation consisting of two to three million went across on dry ground! Once the nation was safely on the other side, then the priests proceeded to the other side also.

What a glorious picture this is of our Lord Jesus Christ. My friends, nearly two thousand years ago our great high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, placed his foot into the old Jordan River. It was through death he destroyed him that held the power of death, that is, the devil. I am saying to you today that the mighty work of our Savior on the cross has rolled back the waters of the Jordan so that we may cross on dry ground!

Regarding that day when we are called to cross over into the promise land, just where will you find the Lord Jesus? My friend, he is waiting for you and I in the midst of the Jordan. He is standing there, lest the waters of the Jordan collapse upon

us and sweep our souls away. He stands there in the power of the new covenant. He stands there to say we are redeemed and nothing can separate us from the promised land! The waters of the Jordan are now pushed back for us by our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. And we shall enter the promise land unhindered. The songwriter said it this way:

*When I come to the river at the ending of day,  
When the last winds of sorrow have blown;  
There'll be somebody waiting to show me the way,  
I won't have to cross Jordan alone.*

*Though the billows of sorrow and trouble may sweep,  
Christ the Savior will care for his own;  
'Til the end of the journey, my soul he will keep,  
I won't have to cross Jordan alone.*

*I won't have to cross Jordan alone,  
Jesus died all my sin to atone;  
When in the darkness I see, He'll be waiting for me,  
I won't have to cross Jordan alone.*

My friend, when we cross that river, our faith will become sight. No longer will we look from afar or see through a glass darkly. Our feet will touch the other side. We shall enter the land of promise. Amen!

May I ask, have you made preparation to cross that river? Only those trusting Christ as Savior are ready. Will you trust him today? If so, pray this prayer from a sincere heart as you surrender to Christ. Pray:

*"Dear Lord, I am a sinner and I need your mercy and forgiveness. I now turn from my sin, and I now accept the death and resurrection of Christ for my salvation. I*

*now put my trust in Him alone for my salvation. Dear Lord save me, I pray. Thank you Lord for loving me, saving me and giving me a home in heaven. Amen.”*

## Four Things You Must Know About Hell

May I ask you a question? Do you appreciate warnings? For example, if your home stood in the path of an on-coming tornado would you appreciate a warning? The truth is, if the authorities knew your life to be at risk due to an approaching tornado and did nothing to warn you the general public would consider that an act of gross neglect.

We preachers could be guilty of much worse. One of the great responsibilities of ministry is to warn lost men and women of the impending judgment of Almighty God. The Lord speaks to this issue in the book of Ezekiel where we read: *“When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.”*

The Apostle Paul certainly felt the weight of this responsibility. In Acts chapter 20 we read: *“Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”* As Paul preached the gospel of Jesus Christ he constantly warned those to whom he ministered. He warned them to repent and flee the wrath of God to come. He said to this same group of people, *“Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.”*

Likewise, every minister of the gospel must warn the lost to repent lest they perish everlastingly. Failure to warn the lost is the worst kind of neglect.

Certainly the Son of God spoke clearly on this subject. Those who read the words of the Savior contained in Holy writ will soon be gripped by his powerful warnings concerning the wrath to come. My friend, you need to be of serious mind. You need to bring forth fruit that demonstrates a heart of repentance. You must have a salvation experience. There must be a turning to God in humble repentance. There must be the exercise of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. You desperately need to be saved.

The Lord Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the lost. In John 5:34 he said, “. . . *these things I say, that ye might be saved.*” Again in John chapter 10 the Lord Jesus said, “*I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved . . .*” Speaking of his mission the Lord Jesus said, “*For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*”

Every one of you will spend eternity either in heaven or in a place called hell. Consider the following contrast of the two.

In heaven there is joy unending; in hell there is constant grief of mind . . . in heaven there is sweet fellowship (family circles will be reunited and a whole new world of fellowship among the redeemed will blossom where all relationships are marked by graciousness and kindness); in hell those who perish everlastingly will be gripped by an unending loneliness . . . in heaven there will be joyful laughter and smiles; in hell only weeping . . . in heaven there is the sound of singing; in hell there is the sound of wailing . . . heaven is filled with the light of His glory, but hell is the place of outer darkness . . . heaven is a place of contentment; hell is a place of distress where the soul longs for just a moment of rest . . . heaven is a place of safety where no harm can ever come and no storm will ever darken the sky; hell is a place of destruction—one eternal storm that the soul can never escape . . . heaven is

filled with the presence and goodness of God; hell is devoid of God's presence and is a world without a single comfort.

Now I want to share four things everyone needs to know about hell. I trust you will listen closely.

The first thing you need to know about hell is that it is a real place. Hell is just as real as heaven. Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14: *“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”*

Jesus clearly speaks here of a “broad way” that leads to destruction. Elsewhere Jesus said that we should not fear those who can take our temporal life, rather he said we should fear God that can destroy both soul and body in hell. In the gospels Jesus speaks of hell as a place of “everlasting fire” and everlasting punishment. My friend, the reality of hell should never be taken lightly. It is not something to joke about. It is real. You need to resolve here and now that you are not going to spend eternity there. With purpose and singleness of mind you need to forsake whatever stands between you and the Savior. Get off of the broad way that is leading to destruction and travel the narrow road that leads to life.

The next thing you need to know about hell is that real people are going there. Every man is now a creature of eternity. While the endless drum beat of eternity goes on and on you will experience a conscious existence in either the bliss of a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, or you will languish in the grip of the second death in a place where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Jesus described the plight of the lost rich man in Luke chapter 16. His teaching there certainly means that real people will either be comforted upon departing this life, or they will open their eyes in a place of everlasting torment.

Wake up my friend! Many of you are but a heartbeat away from this place of destruction.

The next thing you need to know about hell is that it is an expression of God's Divine wrath. Unfortunately, a great many people place God on trial and find fault with Him for creating a place of everlasting punishment. However, I must warn you today that God is not on trial—rather you are. And if you refuse God's call to a place of repentance where He can pour out His mercy and grace upon you, then you will die in your sins. You will be lost. You must then face the Lord Jesus Christ in judgment and receive full retribution under the Law. Will not the Judge of all the earth do right? Indeed he will! You will face the Divine wrath of God leveled against your sin and your open defiance of His will. You will face the full weight of God's holy and just wrath against every offense reckoned against His holiness. You will face the consequences of refusing his offer of salvation through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

Every generation has its notorious blasphemers who impugn the character of God as they struggle with the concept of an eternal hell. They falsely accuse God of unfair judgment and excessive harshness. But the same crowd would have the head of a local judge who refused to lock-up hardened murderers for life. Isn't it strange that we cry out for justice now, but when the unrepentant are compelled to face God at the end of this life they find fault with Him for administering justice and properly condemning them to their place in hell. My friend, you must wake up to the fact that we are dealing with eternal verities here. Do not make the mistake of supposing your sins do not offend the holiness of God. Sin uncovered by the blood of Christ will separate you from God in eternity. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is time to flee the wrath to come. It is time to enter the ark of safety while the door is still open. In Christ you will be delivered from the wrath of God to come.

And finally, the fourth thing you need to know about hell is this: *there is no hope there*. Think about that. There is no hope of salvation or deliverance once confined there. Those who face the sentence of the second death will be tormented day and night forever and ever with no remedy for their lost condition.

Lost! How horrible is this word! Lost! Let the thought grip your heart and do a mighty work in you: lost with no hope, no joy, no comfort, and no relationship with God. No light of hope will ever shine in the eternal darkness that engulfs the realm of the doomed.

I close with a story shared by a gentleman named H. G. Bosch. He writes:

*“There is a certain horror about absolute darkness that throws a chill over the human soul, for man was made to live in the light! Heaven is always depicted as a place of eternal brightness where there is “no night.” The psalmist, however, declares that the wicked shall “never see light”; and Jesus warns that they shall be cast into “outer darkness.”*

*What a horror of blackness that will be when each doomed soul is curtained off from every other in an eternity of utter loneliness! Recently, I was in a cave in Kentucky. When we had gone deep into the bowels of the earth through many winding passages, the guide suddenly turned off all the lights and said, “I alone know the way out. If I were to leave you in this dark chamber, you would probably never make your way to the surface. Those who have been lost in this cavern have become insane inside of a week from the oppressive loneliness and the maddening, incessant drip of water from the roof. Be quiet for a moment and “feel the darkness.”*

*I remember my youngster clutching my arm. Soon terror began to edge its way into all of our hearts. After about thirty seconds, someone in the party could endure the ordeal no longer and whimpered piteously, “Turn on the light! I’m going crazy*

*NOW!” The guide laughed, but none of us will ever forget that eerie experience. I thought of the “outer darkness” of an eternal Hell and shuddered!*

Friend, will you escape the eternal darkness of Hell? In order to escape you must believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

For a moment will you allow me to take you by the hand and lead you to a hill called Calvary. And as we approach the scene unfolding there you will notice three crosses in the distance. Upon the middle cross the man Christ Jesus is dying. Mockers at the foot of the cross slam him with mean spirited words: “he saved others, but himself he cannot save.” They were unknowingly right on both counts. Jesus Christ is the Savior and during his public ministry he forgave sin saving those who came to place their trust in him. But if he chooses to come down from the cross there will be no salvation for His elect. Indeed, in order to save others he cannot save himself.

Suddenly at high noon Mount Calvary is engulfed in darkness and for three hours the sun refused to shine. During the agony of those hours unseen to the natural eye the Lamb of God bore our sins in his body on the tree. In those hours of darkness his soul was made an offering for sin and there by the grace of God he tasted death for every man. Hear him as his soul experiences the full wrath of God upon our sin: “My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me!” My friend, the Son of God went down into the valley of death and died for you. He experienced the darkness of your hell so that you could go free. Jesus paid it all! Hear me! Christ died for you. And through his death God has placed a road block on the road to hell. If you perish in a devil’s hell you must climb over the cross to get there. You must tread underfoot the blood of the Son of God to get there. God so loved you and I that He came to earth in the person of His only begotten Son to satisfy His holy wrath against your

sin and mine. He purchased your redemption with his own blood and He now offers you the free gift of eternal life if you will repent.

But hear me! If you reject His offer of pardon, if you reject the call of His Spirit to surrender to Christ, then there is nothing left for you but a fearful day of judgment and the darkness of eternal separation from the presence of the Lord.

Call on the name of the Lord today! It is urgent that you be saved today.

## Are You Born Again?

I begin today's message with a question. Are you born again? In perhaps the most important chapter found in Holy Scripture Jesus emphatically declares that no one can enter the kingdom of heaven apart from a spiritual birth that occurs by trusting him as the unique Savior of the world. In the first eight verses of St. John chapter three Jesus states no less than five times that one must be born again, or born of the Spirit, to possess eternal life!

The importance of these words cannot be over emphasized. These words come from the most important book in the world—the Bible! And they fell from the lips of the most important person in human history—Jesus, the Son of the living God! My friend, what will become of you, your loved ones, your children, and your neighbors who do not experience the new birth? *All must be born again to enter the kingdom of heaven!!* The new birth is essential for all those who pass the stage of innocence and are awakened to the guilt of sin. There are no exceptions. All who enter God's heaven and live joyfully in the everlasting kingdom of Almighty God *must* be born again. Since we must be born again to possess eternal life, it seems apparent this subject should be given the highest priority in the thinking of every man, woman, boy and girl. Are you *born again?*

My friend, I must say this kindly: *you cannot be a Christian without the new birth!* As a minister of the gospel, this is my greatest concern. I am afraid there are many among us who are religious, but who are not born again. I am afraid that too often our own children grow up in Christian homes without experiencing the new birth. Such children are destined to take their place in a world that will perish. I am afraid that many grow up in our various Christian denominations without the reality of the new birth. They have a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof. Such people become *nominal* Christians. That is, if you ask them if they are Christians the answer would be *yes*. But their life betrays their confession. Christ is not their life at all. As a matter of fact, many who call themselves Christians have no inner peace about their own relationship to God. Personal assurance about their own salvation is missing because they have not been born again.

May I ask you another question? *Is it possible to experience the new birth and not know it?* My friends, I think not! You *must* be born again! And you must possess an inner witness to that reality. I beg you, do not rest until you know that you are born again. It is my prayer that the remainder of this sermon will open your eyes and bring you to new life in Christ.

Let's begin by reading 1 John 1:1-7:

*1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;*

*2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)*

*3That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

*4And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.*

*5This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

*6If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:*

*7But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

Please note in verse six the insistence of the apostle John that it is not possible to have fellowship with God and walk in spiritual darkness at the same time! Said another way, it is not possible to walk in spiritual darkness and be born again at the same time! Now, let's proceed through several passages from this letter and allow John to expound upon what he means by *spiritual darkness*.

First, look with me at 1 John 2:22-23:

*22Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.*

*23Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*

Then in chapter four John goes on to say, "*Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.*" Again, he goes on to say in chapter five, "*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.*" My friends,

the new birth can only be experienced by those who are willing to confess that Jesus is the Christ, and as such is the unique Son of God! The new birth occurs as one believes upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now I ask each of you: *do you confess that Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah, who died for our sins and rose bodily from the grave? Do you confess that the Messiah is God come in the person of Jesus the Christ, which is exactly what the Bible means by the title "Son of God?"* All those who honestly open their hearts and believe that Jesus is the Christ are born of God!

Those outside of Christendom who refuse to acknowledge the person of Christ are not born again. But the same can be said for a great host of so-called "Christians" who constitute a growing number of people inside Christendom! No one is free to re-define the person of Christ. Failure to believe that Jesus is the unique Son of God leaves one dead in their sins, estranged from God. My friends, to experience the new birth you must come to God in humble repentance and with faith in his only begotten Son.

Now look with me at 1 John 2:3-6.

*3And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*

*4He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

*5But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*

*6He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

Have you noticed that the apostle doesn't mix words here. He says that those who claim to know Christ but have no interest in obeying him are liars! May I say

this clearly: *those who are born again have a new desire to follow and obey Jesus Christ.* Do you have that desire? It is obvious those born of God exhibit a love for the Savior; a believer may need to love Jesus more, but he already loves him more than anything else!

Furthermore, let me ask: *Do you respect what Jesus Christ teaches in his written word?* Those born of the Spirit will possess a deep reverence for the commandments of Christ and for the Word of God in general. If you are born-again you are not at war with any of God's commands; we do not seek to rewrite them, or redefine them, or to explain them away; rather, with the mind we serve the Law of God—albeit with the flesh the law of sin (Romans 7:25). Those born of God obey him because they love him! Such believers will exhibit the spirit of Christ in their own lives in a growing measure. Those born of God desire to walk even as he walked. In chapter three John states it this way, *“And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him.”* The born-again experience produces a heart that is willing to obey Christ. Are you willing to obey Christ and follow him as you learn his will?

Now look with me at chapter three, verses 14 and 15:

*14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*

*15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.*

Earlier in chapter two John also said, *“He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.”* You should take note that John is obviously dealing with the problem of those in the visible church who lack the new birth. The greatest characteristic of those who experience the new birth will be the love that they have for one another. Jesus insisted that this is, in fact, the one way

the world would recognize his true disciples. My friend, it is our love for one another that identifies us as disciples of Jesus Christ. It is impossible to be born again and *not* love the brethren. Think about that!

John is not dealing with the problem of immaturity. He is dealing with the reality of the Spirit of God shedding the love of God abroad in our heart as a result of the new birth! There is a common bond between real believers that manifests in genuine love! Do you love God's people? To be born again is to be born of love!

Now, quickly let's look again at chapter three beginning at verse three:

*3And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

*4Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*

*5And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.*

*6Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.*

*7Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.*

*8He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning.*

*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

*9Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*

*10In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.*

In these verses the apostle makes it abundantly clear that those who experience the new birth *cannot* embrace what God condemns! It is obvious from chapter one

genuine believers must confess their sins (1:9) and so John is not saying here that those born of God will never suffer personal failure. Rather, he is insisting that whosoever is born of God cannot practice open rebellion against the known will of God. I think one of the clear examples of this in our present culture is the push to legitimize sodomy. My friends, the Lord condemns that practice and those who are born again will not attempt to legitimize what God has clearly condemned! It is one thing to struggle with temptation and perhaps even fall into wrong behavior. It is an entirely different thing to willfully embrace and proceed to practice what the Lord condemns. Do you see the point? John states this same principle at the end of chapter two where we read, *“If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.”*

## Conclusion

Are you born again? Do you confess that Jesus is the Christ, the only begotten Son of God, God come in the flesh for your salvation? Can you point to a definite experience when you trusted him as Savior? Did that experience give you a desire to follow Christ in humble obedience? Do you demonstrate an obvious love for fellow believers? And do you possess a reverence for what God says is right and wrong? Do you practice righteousness because your heart sides with God against sin? These are not trivial matters. If you claim to be a Christian, then these things *will* be real in your life! Now, I ask you again: are you born again?

I am finishing this message with a verse from this letter that puts the finger on why so many remain in darkness. It is found in these words from chapter two, verse 15: *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”* You will never be born again as long as you love this world. We must overcome this world. The apostle says in

chapter five, *“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”*

My friends, the world lies in spiritual darkness. The world is full of the spirit of anti-Christ. The world embraces many false gods. The world denies the Lordship of Christ, and they neglect so great salvation! But the world will not escape the judgment of God. Except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Tragically, those who do not enter the kingdom will be cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. My friend, it is time to repent and to give your heart to Christ.