

EVIDENCES OF THE NEW BIRTH

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 • TV-052B

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By

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2 Corinthians 5:17

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

My subject today is entitled: **“EVIDENCES OF THE NEW BIRTH or EVIDENCES OF REGENERATION.”**

Just a few days ago I received a letter from a preacher friend who has been serving as a missionary for over 14 years about 1,500 miles north of Toronto Canada, way up in the cold country.

We write occasionally. But he wrote me a letter a few days ago and he said, “I wish you would send me your thoughts on this subject; **“Evidences of the New Birth.”** And I sat down and answered his letter, and in answering the letter I prepared this message and I sent him the outline of the message, **“Evidences of the New Birth.”**

I’m going to read from **2 Corinthians 5:17**: *“Therefore, if any man be in Christ.”* Now note it doesn’t say if a man be in the church or in religion but in Christ; *“If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. Old things are passed away. Behold all things are become new.”*

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Now every professing Christian ought to be, should be, and I believe will be, interested in this subject today, **“The Evidences of the New Birth.”** And I especially feel, I especially feel that this subject is timely for this day.

Why for this day; because this is the day of much religion. This is the day of much religion and little understanding of the living God. Now you know that; it doesn't take a wise man to figure that out. This is the day of much religion; religion is everywhere, but there is so little understanding of the living God.

Now I'm going to give you five definite evidences of the new birth, but before I give them to you I want to sound two warnings. I want to warn you of two dangers.

First of all: It is not an experience, it is not a feeling that we're seeking, but a person! Now remember that. It is not an experience, it is not a feeling that we're seeking but a person, and when the preacher talks about the evidences and experiences of those of whom God has saved, some are prone to seek the experience.

Some are prone to try to produce the results. Some are prone to seek the feeling rather than looking to Christ who is the source of all experiences, who's the source of all evidences, who's the source of all grace.

Don't look to the feeling. Don't try to produce the results. Don't try to find in yourself those evidences; look for them as they're revealed in you by the presence of Christ.

Now that's important. This is what our Lord condemned the Pharisees for; He said, *“You cleaned up the outside of the cup and the platter but you neglected the inside. And the inside is full of dead men's bones.”*

He said, *“On the outside you appear beautiful to men, (you're producing some results. You're producing some evidences. You're producing experiences) but on the inside you're like a tomb. On the outside you appear beautiful but on the inside you are full of dead men's bones.”*

So, I must warn you of that. As I give you these five definite evidences of the new birth, of new generation; be careful you don't seek these evidences rather than seeking Christ.

As I give you the results of the new birth be careful that you don't try to produce the results without knowing the person. Be careful that you don't seek a feeling instead of a person. It's Christ that saves.

The Scripture says: *“Let Israel hope in the Lord for with the Lord there is mercy. Let Israel hope in the Lord. Let Israel seek the Lord for the Lord is plenteous in mercy.”*

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If you get to Him you'll have the mercy. If you get to Him you'll have the blessing. If you get to Christ you'll have the benefits but you have to know Christ.

Secondly: Also, you must remember and please remember this because this is so important; all of God's people do not have the same degree of revelation. That's right! All do not have the same degree of knowledge. All do not have the same degree of faith. All do not have the same degree of growth. Haven't you read in the Scripture that there are babes in Christ and there are young men in Christ and there are elders in Christ Jesus? Just like in your family down at your house.

Now there's grandpa; he's 70-75 years of age. And then there's mother and dad and they're in their 50's. And then there are the sons and daughters and they're in their 20's and 30's. And then they're some babies around your house. And those babies don't have the same experience and the same knowledge and the same understanding that mother and dad or grandpa has.

You can't expect to find the same amount of fruit on a tree that's just been planted as you'd find on a tree that's been there for 30 years. If the tree's been planted for 30 years of course it's going to bear more fruit than the tree you've just set out.

So, all of God's children do not have the same degree of revelation nor the same degree of faith, nor the same degree of grace, nor the same degree of growth. There are babes in Christ and there are young men in Christ and there are elders in Christ Jesus.

But there are spiritual and Scriptural evidences of a work of grace and I believe I can give them to you. Now listen to the Word of God. This is clear from God's Word: *"If any man be in Christ he is a new creature."*

There are some things that are new. There are some clear evidences that he's a new creature. *"Old things are passed away."* Behold, observe, the Scripture says; there's something new about him and that's what we are going to talk about, that something that's new.

Listen to the Word of God: *"If any man have not the spirit of Christ he's none of His."* Now the Bible talks about the *"Fruit of the Spirit."* If the Spirit is present the Spirit is going to give forth fruit just like if there's life in a tree it's going to have some leaves. It's going to have some fruit.

If it doesn't have any leaves and doesn't have any fruit it's because there's no life in it. And if any man hath not the spirit of Christ he doesn't belong to Christ. Listen to the Scripture, *"He that loveth not knoweth not God for God is love."*

If a man knows God you can tell it by his love. *"By this shall all men know you are my disciples if you love one another."* If a person is filled with hate, malice, envy, jealousy, and all of these things; he doesn't know God. It's evident he doesn't know God. It's clear that he doesn't know God. His works reveal he doesn't know God.

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Why, he may profess to be a Bible believer and he may be a Bible thumper. He may be what you call, “A Bible preacher.” But if he’s full of hate and bigotry, prejudice, and malice; he doesn’t know God. There’s no evidence that he knows God at all. Listen to the word of the Lord; *“He that loveth not knoweth not God. How can you say you love God who you’ve never seen if you don’t love your brother whom you have seen?”* Huh? Well you just can’t do it. Paul said, *“If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.”* So, here’s an evidence that a man is saved; he keeps on going. If he draws back it is clear evidence that he doesn’t know the Lord.

Now let me give you these five evidences of the new birth. And if you want to write them down, you can do so, and you can go back and study the Scriptures. Here are five evidences of the new birth, of regeneration:

First of all: A regenerated man, a born again person will have a deep sense of sin. That’s right; he will have a deep sense of his sin!

Was not that the experience of the apostle Paul? Listen to Paul; *“I am less than the least of all the saints.”* That’s what he said; *“I’m not even worthy to be called an apostle.”* Paul, while others bragged on him and praised him and thanked God for him; he had a very humble and low opinion of himself.

He said: *“O wretched man that I am, (that I am, not I was, I am) who shall deliver me from this body of death?”* He said, *“Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the chief.”*

That’s right; a regenerated man will have a very humble opinion of himself. *“I beseech you brethren by the mercies of God that you present your body a living sacrifice unto God and be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*

And in that same Scripture Paul says this; *“And let not a man think highly of himself.”* That’s right! This was the experience of Isaiah. He said, *“When king Uzziah died I saw the Lord and I cried, woe is me; I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.”*

That’s right, a sense of sin. Wasn’t that the experience of David in **Psalm 51**? *“Have mercy upon me O God. Blot out my transgressions. Wash me with hyssop and I shall be clean. My sins are ever before me. Against thee and thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight. Behold I was shapen in iniquity, conceived in sin, brought forth in iniquity.”* That’s a sense of sin.

Wasn’t this the experience of the apostle Peter who cried: *“O God depart from me I’m a sinful man?”* Wasn’t this the experience of Job who saw the Lord in the whirlwind? God appeared to him and God spoke to him; do you know what He said?

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He said, *“Lord I’ve heard of you by the hearing of the ear. Now mine eyes seeth thee. I hate myself, and I abhor myself. I repent in sackcloth and ashes. O Lord; once have I spoken, yea twice, things too wonderful for me. I’ll never open my mouth again; I’ve seen the Lord.”* That’s right!

And I’ll tell you this, we come to Christ as sinners. We continue the same way. That’s who He came to save. *“Thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sin. And if any man say he hath no sin he deceives himself and the truth is not in him. If any man say he hath not sinned he makes God a liar and God’s Word’s not in him.”*

And I’ll tell you this; this may shock you but I want you to listen. Will you listen to me? The burden of our guilt and the burden of our sin does not get any lighter as the years go by.

Oh, Christ becomes more precious of course. His blood becomes more precious. Our confidence and assurance in Him becomes stronger but not in ourselves. Our confidence in the flesh grows weaker and weaker. And our burden of our guilt and of our sinfulness gets no lighter.

You know what? Now you listen to me; there are three reasons for that. The man who has been saved 40 years is more aware of his sinfulness than the man who’s been saved 40 minutes. The man who’s been saved 30 years is more conscience of a burden of sin and a burden of guilt and a sense of unworthiness than the man who has been saved three days.

And you know what? There are three reasons for that:

First of all: Is because the more we understand of God’s holiness the more we see and understand of God’s holiness and God’s righteousness, the more we see our failure and our unrighteousness.

That’s right! As I grow in grace I also grow in the knowledge of Christ. And as I grow in the knowledge of Christ I grow in the knowledge of His holiness and His glory, not just His benefits and blessings but His glory and His holiness.

And the more I see of His holiness the more I see of myself. The closer you get to that light the more blemishes and spots. The dimmer the light the fewer blemishes you’re going to see. Turn the lights down real dim and you can’t see any dust on the floor, any cobwebs along the corners, or any dust on the wall.

But turn that light up bright, the brighter it is, the brighter it gets, the more dust you see, the more blemishes. And the brighter the glory and holiness and righteousness of God is revealed to a man’s heart the more he cries, *“O wretched man that I am.”*

How far short I fall of the glory of God. That’s one reason why the burden never gets any lighter. This man that keeps telling you he’s getting better and better and closer to God and more

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like God all the time, is getting further and further away from any knowledge of God. Now that's the truth.

Now you listen to this, the spirituality of God's law becomes more evident, more apparent to us every day. That's right! His holy law has to do; when we first learned His law and look at His law and study His law; do you know what we have to do with, our deeds and our actions?

But the more you study God's law, the spirituality of it; you see that God's law not only has to do with your deeds but your thoughts. Not only does God's law, God's holy law have to do with your actions but with your attitude, not only with your outward acts but your imaginations and your thoughts and your motives.

The spirituality of God's law becomes more apparent and we begin to see sins as not just getting drunk and not just gambling and not just profane swearing but we see sin in thoughts. *"To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him is sin."*

We see sin is not only a commission but omission, failing to love God with all our hearts, failing to love our new neighbors as ourselves, failing to love even our enemies and pray for them which curse us and feed our enemy when he hungers.

Oh my, my, yes sir; when you get to talking in that area do you see why the burden grows greater?

And I'll tell you another reason why this burden never gets any lighter. It's because the glory and holiness of God becomes more apparent and as we understand more of His holiness and glory the more we see our sins.

And the more we understand the spirituality of His law and the depths of that law and the heart dealings of that law; I'll tell you something else, our goals are continually being readjusted, that's right, according to our spiritual growth.

You know, when we first come to Christ we start out wanting to be saved from the penalty of sin and then we want to be saved from the power of sin. And then we want to be saved from the practice of sin and then we begin to pant and to hunger and thirst to be saved from the presence of sin.

When a man first starts out in this thing of faith he starts out with heaven on his mind. And his goal is to make that city. "I've Got Heaven on my Mind." You've heard that song: "I want to make that city."

But you know, as he grows in grace he begins to think less about a city and more about being like Christ. Now, I want to be like the Lord. It's not so much hell that I'm thinking about missing. It's not so much heaven that I'm thinking about gaining. I want to be like Christ.

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I want to be like Him in my attitude, and my language, and my conduct, and my treatment of other people. I want to walk the streets and be like Christ, not just walk an aisle for Jesus but walk the streets for Christ. See what I'm talking about?

And I'll tell you something else. We start out this journey of faith by comparing ourselves with other people. That is characteristic of a new convert. That's right! He just feels so good that everybody else is so wrong. He just criticizes this one and that one and the other one you know.

He compares himself, "Well I don't do that and I don't do that you know." He starts out comparing himself with other people and then he begins to compare himself with the Lord, with the Lord Jesus Christ, in the light of His glory, and then he begins to see that he's the chief offender.

His pride is worse than their outward acts of rebellion, that's right. His self-righteousness is worse than their murder; that's right. The burden doesn't get any lighter, it doesn't get any lighter.

The man who has been regenerated has an urgent, extreme, sense of sin. Can't you offer me any relief preacher? No sir, not if you grow in grace. You'll still be a sinner saved by grace.

You'll still be a sinner with readjusted goals and readjusted attitude. And you'll still be a sinner with a greater glimpse of God's glory and a deeper appreciation for Christ.

Do you know what our Lord said? *"To whom much is forgiven; He loves much. To whom little is forgiven; he loves little."*

Secondly: A regenerated man not only has a deep sense of sin but he has a deep sense of inability to please God.

You know, Paul said; *"In the flesh no man can please God. In my flesh dwelleth no good thing."* A regenerated man has a sense of his unworthiness of God's mercy. These sayings could come from any believer; listen:

First of all: David; do you know what David said in his great prayer? He said; *"Lord, who is David and what is my house that you've brought me hither to?"*

Listen to Mephibosheth as he fell at the feet of King David; he said; *"Who am I that you should show such mercy to such a dead dog?"* Listen to Jacob; *"O God, (I love this) O God I am not worthy of the least of thy mercies and all the truth that thou hast showed to thy servant. I'm not worthy."*

Can you say that? I'll tell you this, if you can find in yourself anything to commend you to God, if you can find in yourself any reason for God's grace, if you can find in yourself any motive for God's mercy you've missed Christ.

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Now I wouldn't offend you if I could get out of it. But sometimes telling the truth we can't get out of it. We have to be offensive. The message of the cross is offensive. But I'm telling you this; the man whom God has saved cannot find from the soul of his feet to the top of his head one reason for God's mercy, not one reason.

Job wrestled with this question; he said; *"How can man be just with God? How can man be justified with God? How can he be clean that's born of a woman? Look at the heavens; the heavens are not clean in God's sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man that drinks iniquity like water?"*

Our inability, thank God, is answered by Christ's ability. Our unworthiness is answered by His worthiness. And our guilt is answered by His obedience. I have an answer. It's not in here in me; it's in Him. Why God saved me is found not in me; it's found in Christ and in God for His name's sake, to the praise of His glory.

Thirdly: A regenerated man will have a clear view, not only of his sin and his unworthiness, but he'll have a clear view of the person and work of Jesus Christ

Now this is important. For centuries men have carried on endless debates, they always have and they always will about church government, church ordinances, and church discipline.

They've carried on endless debates about law, works, standards and ethics. They've carried on endless debates about prophecies, latter day reigns and second-comings. They've carried on endless debates about who wrote this book and who wrote that book and why they wrote it and where they wrote it.

But there's one area in which every redeemed child of God of all ages is in total agreement and that is who is Jesus Christ? "He's very God of very God." He's our eternal Surety. He's our representative in the flesh.

He came down here to this earth and took our place and took our guilt and took our shame and bore it to Calvary's cross and paid the debt that we owe. And He was buried, and He arose again on the third day and He ascended back to the right hand of God where He is seated having finished the work the Father gave Him to do.

He died for every believer. He put away the sins of every believer. And at the right hand of God He intercedes. He makes intercession. He's the Mediator for every believer. They know who He is and they know why He came and they know what He did and they know right where He is now.

And He's their great High Priest. Moses knew it. *"Moses wrote of me,"* Christ said. Abraham knew it, *"Abraham saw my day, our Lord said, and he rejoiced, and he was blessed."*

And I'll tell you the apostle Paul knew it. Luke wrote in the book of **Acts**, *"To Him give all the prophets witness."* And yonder at the throne of God in the book of **Revelation** it is said, *"They*

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shall cry unto Him out of every tribe, nation, kindred, tongue under heaven, they shall cry unto Him."

All people of all ages of all ranks of all nations of all ages shall cry unto Him, unto Him who loved us and washed us from our sin in His own blood, unto Him be all the glory both now and forever, amen.

That's it, that's it. Now you go on arguing about all your prophecies and your latter day reigns and all and all of your events and advents and all of these other things and arguing about church discipline and church government and church ordinances.

Waste your time and let your people perish and go to hell for lack of a true knowledge of the only one who can save; that's Christ Jesus. You come to Christ and all these other things will fall in line.

But they can't fall in line if you don't know Him. He's the chief cornerstone. How can you build up a building, huh? He's that keystone. How can you build an arch? "Well you silly thing; you left out the cornerstone. You've left out the keystone." That's Christ.

Find that cornerstone and all the building will be built around it. He's the foundation. How can you build a building without a foundation? You talk about putting the chimney up before you ever lay the foundation. Lay the foundation and the building will follow the foundation. Do you see what I am saying?

Do you want to know what's going to happen in the future? It'll follow the foundation; it'll follow Christ. That's right! It'll all be fulfilled in Him.

Fourthly: A regenerated man will continue in the faith!

Now that's right; he's going to continue in the faith till he dies. I'm preaching this: I'm preaching that if a man really believes on Christ in saving faith and is vitally united to Christ by the Holy Spirit he'll still be believing on Christ.

He'll still be united to Christ, he'll still be seeking the Lord, and he'll still be panting after holiness. He'll still be clinging to the cross of Christ when he comes to die.

Now John said, "There's a bunch of folks left us and the reason they left us is because they never were of us. If they had been of us they no doubt would have stayed with us." That's right! The Word of God holds out no hope for the man who walks an aisle and leaves Christ.

It holds out no hope for the man who joins the church and departs from the faith. It holds out no hope to the man who is a preacher or a Sunday school teacher or a deacon or a church member or anything else who is no longer keeping the faith.

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The Bible holds out no hope for him. He's returned like the dog to his vomit and the wallowing sow to his hog wallow. That's right! I'm speaking to myself and I'm speaking to you too. We are of the house of Christ; *"If we hold fast the profession of our faith firm unto the end. He that endureth to the end shall be saved."*

The only man who is going to be crowned is the one who crosses the finish line, not the one who starts and not the one who runs a while but the one who crosses the finish line. The apostle Paul said; *"The time of my departure is at hand. I fought a good fight. I finished my course. I've kept the faith."*

Christ said, *"My people will not depart from me and I won't depart from them."* They've been joined together. *"And what God hath joined together let no man put asunder."* And no man is going to and no man wants to who's ever been brought to Christ.

The only reason that the world looks more attractive to some church members is because they never left it. Lot's wife left Sodom in body but not in spirit. That's what turned her to a pillar of salt.

In closing:

Fifthly: A regenerated man will grow; he'll grow in grace, he'll grow in the knowledge of Christ. Anything that doesn't grow is not alive; he that growth not knoweth not God. This pulpit will not grow, it's dead. But I grow. This physical body changes every seven years. And the believer grows in grace and in the knowledge of Christ!