

Doctrines of Grace

The Cure: Being Born Again

I. What is our problem?—Review of Total (Radical) Depravity

A. Our Condition—The Bible describes us as

1. **Dead** – dead to God, but alive to our sinful passions
Eph. 2:1, 3 you were dead in the trespasses and sins . . . ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh
2. **Slaves** to our sinful desires
Titus 3:3 slaves to various passions and pleasures
3. **Blind** – unable to see the light of the gospel – the glory of Christ
2 Cor. 4:3-4 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
4. **Hostile** towards God
Romans 8:7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.
5. **Unwilling and Unable** to understand to goodness of the gospel b/c we think it is foolish
1 Cor. 2:14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.
6. Thus, **no one is seeking God** (we are running the opposite direction)
Romans 3:10-11 None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ no one understands; no one seeks for God.

- B. If you don't think it is as bad as all that,** you will likely settle for ideas of the cure that include some sort of self-reformation or generation of faith from within your own heart.

II. What is the Solution?

- A. The New Birth:** *The new birth is the work of God in which he supernaturally creates spiritual life in a person so that the person has a new nature that sees Jesus as trustworthy.*

B. Description of being born again or regenerated

1. **Alive towards God**
Ephesians 2:4-5 God, being rich in mercy . . . ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ
2. **Freed from the enslavement of sinful passions**
Romans 6:17-18, 22 thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸ and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. . . . now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God

3. Given eyes to see the glory and value of Christ

2 Cor 4:6 *God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

4. Made children of God and citizens of his kingdom

Eph 1:5, 2:19 *"he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, . . . ^{2:19}you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God"*

5. Given the ability and desire to believe Jesus and love God

1 John 5:1 *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.*

III. Three Passages That Describe the New Birth

A. John 3:1-8

1. **Why is the new birth essential according to this passage?** (3, 7, 5, compare with Ezek. 36:25-27)
2. **What the new birth is *not*.**
 - a. Mere mental assent to some facts about Jesus (2).
 - b. An improvement of yourself or nature (5-6).
 - c. Something we do or make happen (7-8, see also James 1:18).
3. **How does the new birth happen?** (6, 8, see also John 1:13)

B. Ephesians 2:1-10

1. **Why is the new birth necessary?** (1-3) The new birth is not like the make-up that the mortician puts on a body to make it look more alive.
1. **What is the new birth then?** (5, 10)
2. **How does the new birth happen?** (9, 4-5)

B. Titus 3:3-7

1. **Why do we need new birth?** (v. 3)
2. **What is the new birth?** (5)
3. **How does the new birth come about?** (5)

IV. Application

- A. We need more than self-reformation.**
- B. Praise God for his mercy and grace in giving new life.**

V. Conclusion

- A. We've seen so far.**
 1. We are radically (at the root) sinful. We are running the opposite way from God in our sin.
 2. What we need is radical too – to be born again. Only God can do that work.
- B. Next time:** The effective calling of God that brings us to faith.