

The washing of regeneration

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Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev Alex Murdo Macleod

[0 : 0 0] We shall now look at words in the chapter we read, the epistle of Paul to Titus, the third chapter.

And we may again read at verse 4, in chapter 3 of the epistle of Paul to Titus.

But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

And especially the words at the end of verse 5, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. For the past number of Sabbaths, we have been in the morning thinking, first of all, that has been for a good number of Sabbaths back, we thought of the Passion of the Savior, and afterwards of the Officers, which he fulfills as the Savior of his people.

And since then I had indicated that we might think in particular of the salvation salvation he has brought out for us as a salvation that is now applied to individuals for whom Christ was freshly appointed in the everlasting councils of the Trinity and in the fullness of time for whom he came to live and to die in this world.

[2 : 3 1] And we dealt with the matter of the effectual calling of those to whom redemption is applied.

now this evening I would like to speak not for the first time upon the subject of being born again, the subject of regeneration.

It is referred to here in this epistle as the washing of regeneration. The creation of new life in the soul of a man or a woman or a child.

The quickening of a soul that was dead. A quickening that is called a quickening together with Christ himself.

Now as I am sure I have said before more than once from this pulpit it is very hard to think of any question for anyone of greater significance than the question am I born again?

[4 : 0 6] and always it is essential in answering these questions that we know what we are thinking of and the way in which I personally like to think of this particular subject I shall follow again tonight the order in which I like myself to think of the subject for my own personal interest and also for use is by beginning with the question why is regeneration so necessary why is it so inescapably necessary why should none less than the

Lord Jesus Christ say except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God why should none less than the Lord Jesus Christ addressing still the same passion emphasize and reiterate what he has already said by declaring verily verily I say unto you except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God why is it so necessary regeneration in order to see and to enter the kingdom of God well I suppose there are different ways in which we might go about or at least attempt to go about answering such an important question but what to my mind appeals as the simple way the straightforward way the common sense way is this that you think first of all of what is meant by the kingdom of God and also that you think of what is meant by ye or you the individuals who must be born again in order that they might even see the kingdom of God when we think of the kingdom of God our minds are immediately directed surely to some king certainly when the Bible speaks about the kingdom of God it makes very very clear that it has reference to a particular king as one might expect and of course the king in the kingdom of God is God himself but I suppose it is proper also to say that the king in the kingdom of God is God in Christ God in Christ we saw that one of the officers that Christ fills and executes in which he functions functions as the savior of

his people is his office of king he is prophet priest and king there was a time when all creation we believe was willingly under the subjection under the dominion of God the creator and law and law giver as their king a time when those angels and men as well as the rest of creation moved in accordance with the laws of their creator and a time came when many of the angels the holy angels fell from that estate when they became rebels against the kingship of God or when in other words they formed another kingdom and a kingdom that existed and exists in direct opposition to the kingship of God and whatever else is meant by the fall of man this is certainly of the essence of man's fall that rather than continue as a willing subject of God his creator and lawgiver he rebelled also against him and became subject to someone else and God was pleased now I think it is well worth our while to take particular notice of this truth that God was pleased according to his own eternal and holy counsel he was pleased to set up as it were another kingdom another kingdom his own kingdom manifested as it were in a peculiar manner and a kingdom of grace whose subjects were to be son of the fallen race of man but not any not even one as far as we can understand from the bible not even one of the fallen hosts of angels men now that one thought regarding the kingdom of

[11 : 25] God's grace ought to make us always wonder at the grace of God and always ought to make us humble at the grace of God revealed in the gospel why should God set up a kingdom of grace to include lost rebels of mankind while at the same time he excludes all of the fallen angels that should make man think over this kingdom of grace God has appointed his son as king and God has appointed his son to be king as one who must conquer as it were his royal throne by coming forth to battle against the powers that were ranged against

God and apart from his victory in that conflict Christ in our nature could not have become our savior it is essential to the salvation of sinners that the God man Christ triumphs gloriously and triumphs alone will not even one helper even to encourage him let alone to assist him he must tread the wine press alone and of the people there was none with him Christ by his conflict with the powers of evil and to death in his state of humiliation as the servant of God the father laid the foundation for his glorious throne of kingship of everlasting power and dominion on which he sits in heaven above the king of the kingdom of

God then is God himself it is a kingdom worthy of the name because it is governed and ruled by laws and obviously the laws must inevitably be the laws that reflect not the will of anyone who chooses to try and accept his own authority over his fellow creatures it must be a law that reflects the will of God whose kingdom it is consequently you never find do you never find a conflict between the will of God as God who is spirit invisible infinite and eternal and the will of Christ the God man whatever false people will find in the word of

God or in the Christian religion or in the profession of faith which Christian men and women make in this world nobody can ever discover a conflict between the will of the invisible spirit who is God and the will of Christ they both sit upon one throne both their wills which are in fact one will are the authority behind the laws that govern the kingdom of God and then this kingdom surely is a very special kingdom in the sense that it has peculiar privileges now if I were to ask yourself this question what are the privileges of the kingdom of

God perhaps you would be able to tell me church services the preaching of the gospel the singing of God's praises these are privileges that belong to the kingdom of God rather than to any of the kingdoms of the world although they are within the rule of worldly kings and kingdoms in a sense yet we know that they belong to the kingdom of God but then have you discovered that there are privileges which are very especially peculiar to the kingdom of God that are invisible and do you know that these invisible and intangible privileges are of the very essence of the kingdom of

[17 : 18] God for all who enjoy for all who see and who have entered the kingdom of God that they have entered upon privileges that you cannot see that you cannot handle because they are spiritual privileges and I shall just name a few of them to illustrate to you what I am talking about forgiveness of sins no one can with his bodily eyes see that his sins are forgiven no one need expect to hear a voice a human voice addressing him or her telling him your sins are forgiven nobody need expect to see his name written in a book and a declaration made authorizing him to believe that his sins are now forgiven by

God with his own or her own name written down in ink so that he sees with his eyes in writing that his sins are forgiven justification what greater blessing can a sinner enjoy in this world or in any world than justification by faith he never sees it and again he never hears an audible voice telling

him you are a justified sinner he never with his bubbly eyes sees his own written as the bible describes the elect of God they never see that he knows written in hand rafting in the book of life they have fellowship with

God with the father as John declares fellowship is with the father and you must remember that John is talking there about fellowship of men and women and children too who are sons and daughters of God our fellowship is with the father as the father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our father who sees fellowship between a sinner and God the father as his or her father in heaven even if you were to look around this congregation just now could you pick out those of whom it is true that they are having fellowship with

God the father and with his son Jesus Christ as distinct from all the rest and they themselves will agree that nothing can distinguish people from others here or anywhere else tonight more wonderfully than that some should have fellowship with God the father and his son Jesus Christ as against others who have no such privilege and who have never yet enjoyed such a privilege these are just a few of the privileges of the kingdom of God and they are all holy everything that I have mentioned devised by holiness holiness you remember when

Isaiah saw the Lord in his own temple hanging and lifted up sitting on the throne of his glory and when his train filled the temple and the seraphim who believe are sinless beings doing his presence wailing their faces on their feet with their wings crying holy holy holy the Lord God of hosts the whole earth is full of his glory the king of the kingdom is holy the laws of the kingdom that reflect his will are holy all of them are spotlessly holy whatever faults you find in the church of Christ in the world remember that the laws that govern all the subjects of the kingdom of

[22 : 54] God are holy as God is holy and all the privileges enjoyed by the subjects of God's kingdom as holy privileges the forgiveness of sins which I mentioned is a holy privilege perhaps people do not always think of these especially those with direct bearing upon sin and the guilt of sin and the filth of sin but you will notice you will remember in the version that we read Paul speaks of the washing of regeneration the washing of regeneration there is holiness in the new birth there is holiness attached to every atom of privilege that sinners enjoy in the kingdom of

God when they are pardoned it is a holy pardon just as surely as the law that transgressed is holy the pardon they receive through the holy blood of the saviour is a holy pardon when they are justified it is a holy act judicial act of God the Father when he imputes wholly the righteousness of his holy son to unholy sinners the grace of justification is holy it's a reflection every aspect of it a reflection of the beauty of holiness which pertains to the nature of God and the fellowship of God's children with the Father and with his son is a holy fellowship ye must be born again except a man be born again he cannot see he cannot even see the kingdom of

God first of all think of him the unregenerate sinner in relation to the king of this kingdom what is his relationship of heart and mind spiritually to the king of God's kingdom well I ask you do you think yourself it is always I think helpful to people to be encouraged to address questions to their own hearts and minds and I ask you is it your opinion of a sinner as such as such that he looks upon God or upon Christ in an attitude of loving reverence and adoration the way one would look to a king and one would acknowledge worthy to be king and worthy to be my king is that the attitude of a sinner to

God and to Christ well if you were to say yes that is the attitude of some sinners at least even though they are not in the kingdom of God or saved well I ask you if that is so why was Christ crucified because he was in a world inhabited by sinners sinners who would not have this man to rule over them sinners who expressed their attitude to God by crying out crucify him crucify him sinners who exhibited for every generation to the end of time that when their nature as sinners works itself out in its attitude to

God to its inevitable conclusion it would remove God from his throne of holiness and glory as divines have been saying in every generation sin and that's what distinguishes men as sinners sin is desired it would not have God to exist at all if it were to have unrestrained freedom God would not be what is the attitude of sinners to the laws of God's kingdom well I ask you how would you define sin how would you answer the question what is sin sin you have learned is do you remember it is want of conformity to the law of

[29 : 03] God it is transgression of the law of God there is no way in which you can define sin apart from the law of God you cannot define sin in terms of the law of the land you can define crime in terms of the law of the land but if you are to define sin you must look at the light of God's law and it

is a direct contradiction of God's law and here you have a kingdom in which God's law rules and here you have a creature whose essential moral character is sinnership can you not see that there is a difference that there is in fact a conflict a conflict and when you think of the privileges that

I have referred to that belong to the kingdom of God invisible privileges so you can a sinner can appear at least to have a kind of delight in certain privileges of the kingdom of God the ones that are visible and tangible in which he can engage in a bodily sense and even in a mental sense but when you think of the purely spiritual blessings of the kingdom of God what is the relationship of a sinner as a sinner to them is a sinner very deeply appreciative of the blessing even of the forgiveness of his sins well there is one very simple and obvious test that everyone can apply in regard to that question they said his habitual or her habitual custom day after day and night after night and year after year whatever else they do in life in relation to God or men do they mourn over their sins do they come to

God's throne of grace in order to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need is that the practice and the delight of sinners as sinners no it is not because they do not even have a taste for the gift of the forgiveness of sins and when you think of the others that I mentioned the justification of the ungodly by a just God well what you find in the world and what you find in the church generation after generation on the part of many is total rejection of what God calls the blessing of justification by grace and by faith alone a total rejection of it well

I ask you if I am chargeable justly with a rejection of any blessing whether it is intellectually and therefore perhaps considered worthy the charitable judgment of others or whether it is by my profession which leaves me more exposed to the criticism and condemnation of others is there not a doubt that I truly appreciate with a hearty moral and spiritual appreciation the blessing of which God speaks when he speaks about justification you cannot say that you reject a thing and at the same time that you appreciate it consider it precious and accept all your spiritual zeal in order to enter more and more deeply into the understanding of that blessing and in order to become more and more assured that it is you there is a big difference between that frame of mind and heart and rejecting it well I dare to say that a sinner as a sinner rejects it rather than delights in it and when you come to the level of fellowship of heart and soul secretly and passion continually and continuously with God the Father and God the Son as the blessing perhaps that one considers so precious that it makes all the creation of God to fade away into nothingness as far as possessions are concerned and that is the judgment of all who have fellowship with God in Christ as their Father in Heaven that their lions have fallen in pleasant places and that there is no privilege even in Heaven itself that shall transcend that privilege but I ask you is that the desire is that the assessment the value judgment of a sinner as a sinner well when you consider what are the ways of sinners where do sinners turn in order to enjoy what they call privileges where do sinners turn in order that they might enjoy fellowship well sinners go to the sensual they go to the carnal they go to the earthy and the worldly the visible and the tangible so much so that a sinner as a sinner if he were admitted into Heaven he would not wish to remain there would he and where he admitted into Heaven

[36 : 29] Heaven would no longer be Heaven it would no longer be a place of being inspired Purity it would no longer be a place of perfect peace and harmony it would be a place of dis-peace and discord it would no longer be Heaven because a sinner is a sinner and the Kingdom of God is what its name declares holy and spiritual not unholy and worldly or earthly they are mutually exclusive the Kingdom of God and a sinner as a sinner unregenerate they are mutually exclusive verily verily I say unto you except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God in the light of what I have been trying to say it is difficult is it not to conceive of two things more exclusive of one another you can think of light darkness of life and of death you can think of holiness and sin in the same kind of category you have to put the Kingdom of God and a sinner in so far as the enjoyment of the one by the other is concerned in so far as the possessing as his own rightful personal and pleasant possession is concerned they are mutually exclusive you must be born again and then there is a question by whom must one be born again who can bring about such a change as that well I think and I am perhaps especially addressing the younger people who in our day are being subjected perhaps to an extent that former generations were not to the influences of the media regarding the activities in which men engage for the good of their fellow creatures politics in other words people are bombarded with the work of politicians with the aspirations of politicians with the pronouncements of politicians whether they are in places of power or not they have great

aspirations and these aspirations are geared to the good of their fellow men if anyone were even to be suspected in our own country during these weeks of having other motives than the good of his fellow men or her fellow men in view with their aspirations and their policies they would be discounted immediately

that would be sufficient to undermine all that they do and say they have the good as far as they know the good of their fellow men in view and the good of their fellow men as far as many of them judges the creation of a utopia it is as if you were to create a heaven on earth for men and all who would come under their rule would to some extent partake of the privileges of that kingdom that they would establish and the intention to create a situation that is for the good of their fellow men activates people not in one sphere but in every sphere of life because there are certain aspects of life that need remedial work you might say that are open to improvements and when you take stock of the progress morally and spiritually of men at this point in time one would think that at that level they had failed would you not have you ever stopped to think some of us have have you stopped to think of that question in the year 1987 after so many generations and after so many leaders having been set up in places of power governing the lives of nations and where are we now as nations morally and spiritually after all the efforts at creating a utopia by means of educational provision there are many and that is the first priority that is the emphasis if you deliver people from ignorance if you educate them you will raise them up to a level where they shall never again be made to suffer from poverty or anything else in this life education but then people suffer ill health pain and disease of so many kinds and you cannot expect people to be happy unless they are cured and therefore you have to engage all the power of the country that can be set apart for that purpose to cure illness and I didn't mention any of the other aspects of life that people in power seek to resolve for the good of their fellow men and imagine many of them that this is all that is meant by the kingdom of God this is what is meant by advancement by elevation of the condition of men in this world good now all the things that I have mentioned and generally speaking all the things that rulers in old land establish are for indeed they are for the material good of people but the terrible fallacy that diminishes the good in fact that does away in terms of our eternal destiny with any good in these things is this false idea that many have if our material circumstances are improved so that we have no longer any left to worry about for ourselves or for coming generations well we have attained the pinnacle of achievement now I ask you as an individual when you contemplate the moral and the spiritual condition of the western nations that have been regarded as civilized nations and even as christian nations what is your view are we as a generation throughout the nations of the west or of the east more morally and spiritually advanced than generations that have gone before us are we this

Britain tonight the enjoyment of the kingdom of God requires the new birth and not only are material wounds wholly insufficient for elevating men in nonsense but even those who teach them the very word of God are not sufficient you might have a persuasive preacher with you sitting by your side all your life you might have a persuasive father or a mother or a day school teacher or a Sabbath school teacher all the days of your youth but all that power put together was insufficient to bring you into the enjoyment of the kingdom of God because the new birth is the outputting directly of the power of God himself

God himself directly and because God himself directly he is in no great need nor indeed of any need of any help he doesn't require self to accept itself you just imagine the fallacy in the belief of people who attribute the transition from death to life to a sinner and God cooperating with one another how could that be if a sinner as a sinner is what God's word declaration to be not loving God the king not submissive to the laws of the kingdom not appreciative of the privileges of the kingdom but despising them incapable of understanding them let alone of feeding his soul upon them as his very necessary food and as the very feast that his life enjoys all his days in this world no it is

[48 : 49] God God the Holy Spirit and the nature of the new birth that's another question what exactly do you mean by the new birth God well I think I have said sufficient already to set aside our own personal ability to bring it about or the ability of any of our fellow men to bring it about whether in the secular field or in the kingdom of God himself no created power can bring it about but then it comes about as a result of God's activity and we understand from the word of God himself that it is an event that happens mysteriously now there is some disagreement amongst God's people I suppose there has been in every age regarding the extent of that mystery that surrounds the new

birth the view of many is that when it happens the subject of it does not know it has happened it is understood to happen in the subconscious and not in the conscious thinking primarily of the individual and it is not difficult to believe that whatever effect it has in one's conscious thinking that it might still remain outwith the understanding the ability of the subject to recognize it as the new birth because it is something that he has never experienced before how can he know that it is the new birth that is spoken of in the word of

God something that he has never known in his life so new to him that every time he read or heard mention of it it was like to him like a foreign tongue to him talking about the new birth you remember the question of Nicodemus to the Lord shall a man enter again into his mother's womb and be born when he is old it is a mysterious act of God and then it is an act of God that affects the innermost heart of a man and that is where we are disease ridden in the heart not first of all in our brain or in our conscience or in our will or in our affections but in our heart and it is because we are what we are in our hearts that all the other faculties of our souls are malfunctioning as they are

God word so that we are his enemies rather than his friends his opponents and rebels against his throne rather than willing subjects of his rule because our heart is desperately wicked out of it are the issues of our lives the moral condition of my heart determines the condition of my will and understanding whether it has light or whether it is in darkness determines the condition of my affections is God the first the supreme object of my affections or is he demoted or is he cast out wholly from my affections because of my love for countless other objects in

God's creation it is my heart that determines my moral and spiritual condition but when God blesses me with salvation he gives me a new heart a new heart he as it were removes from the throne room of my being that principle of hostility to God which is spiritual death and replaces it with the spirit of love to God which is spiritual life God gives a new heart if any man be in Christ he is a new creature all things are passed away behold all things are made new because his heart is changed and not only is it in the heart but it is a change that comes about when a man is passive not only was he able to bring it about himself but when it has come about it has to be attributed unqualifiedly to the God who blessed him he was not active in bringing it about to any extent not only was he not engaged with God to a large extent and so gaining a large measure of the credit he has no credit at all he was passive and then there is the question how can this be known how does it show itself in a person's life the mysterious work of the act of the Holy Spirit which was instantaneous which was so sovereign that the Lord likens it to the wind that blows where it blisters thou hearest the sound thereof and knowest not whence it cometh nor whither it goeth so is everyone that is born of the [55 : 34] Spirit how do you know as it were that the wind of the Spirit has blown and hiked the sinner into life who was dead in trespasses and in sins James Buchanan who was a professor in the free church about 140 years ago now he listed these several ways in which the new life in the regenerate soul manifests itself he is in a new state because he is now a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ the wrath of God has turned away from him he is justified by God in Christ and being justified by faith he has peace with God he has acquired new views and new views that are as it were so comprehensive that it would be in a sense easier to answer the question of what has he not got new views he has new views of everything he has new views of himself not a very exalted view of himself but a lowly view of himself because he has come to recognize himself for what he is in a sense as he is sinned by

God a rebel against God's throne and God's law who needs God's mercy he has new views of his own life rather than see himself as someone whose life is endless as if eternity did not enter very much into his perspective at all he sees eternity so near and time so short and especially his own portion of time as if it were a vapor that appears for a little moment and then shall vanish away he sees not only life but the world around him in a new light something similar to the vision of the wise man who declares vanity of vanities says the preacher all is vanity all who are born again no longer regard the world as a source of soul satisfaction and pleasure for time or for eternity as they would save there is an eternity

God forbid Paul says that I should glory save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ to whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world they have new views of truth they have new views of the spirituality of truth and of the certainty of God's truth and of the magnitude of God's truth and of the importance of God's truth and every other of professed claims to truth fullness are made falsehoods and lies that are of no avail for their everlasting salvation they have new views of God they have new views of sin and they have new views of salvation and surely to summarize their

new view of salvation and state it in a few words they have come or they shall come to see and they shall increasingly more vividly see that there is one way of salvation that brings glory to God and that there is none other name given under heaven whereby men must be saved Jesus Christ and him crucified they have new affections they have new desires and aims they have new enjoyments and habits they have new hopes and they have new experiences and I recall that the well I'm sure I'm correct in seeing that the very first experience that Bacon mentions is the experience of inward conflict when men are made alive spiritually they discover that there is another power within the power of death and these can never be in agreement they can never be reconciled the power of life and the power of death the power of inward holy spiritual power and the influences remaining of sin and corruption a conflict which made Paul cry out in that cry of pain from the depths of his soul oh wretched man who shall deliver me from the body of this death but then Paul goes on to say I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord now can you say that I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord he is my hope do you say and my saviour he is my lord and my master he is the one whom to know is life eternal in whom I put all my trust and confidence and whom I am assured will perfect all that concerns me these are the sentiments of all who have faith the saving faith which is the effect of the watering of regeneration [62 : 13] Christ becomes that all and in all may God bless these thoughts to us