

New Birth & Brotherly Love - 1 Peter 1:13-2:3

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[0 : 00] Father God, we praise your holy name. Thank you for letting us be here. Thank you, Lord, for deciding before the foundation of the earth to manifest your glory by redeeming those who strayed with the blood of your own son.

Amen. All who are in Christ in this room are under no condemnation. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ is more than sufficient to cover every sin.

And we praise your name for the gospel that allows us to worship you this morning. The gospel that brings us from all sorts of different lives and lifestyles and perspectives into one body, one family, through one faith and one Lord and one baptism.

And we pray, God, that even as we open your word today, you'd open our hearts, help this time not to pass in futility, but let the seeds of your word land deep in our souls and produce the fruit intended.

Father, we ask that you would in particular encourage those people who are struggling within themselves, if they were honest, to trust you with their desires, with their desires and their needs.

[1 : 26] Today, Lord, may you show yourself through this text to be more than trustworthy. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

You can be seated. We'll dismiss our kids to children's ministry. If you'll open your Bibles to the book of 1 Peter. We're in 1 Peter this morning. Our text will start from chapter 1, verse 13 and continue into chapter 2, verse 3.

1 Peter chapter 1, verse 13, all the way through chapter 2, verse 3. Last week, if you were here, you heard about the four R's that Peter uses to encourage people as they suffer in this sort of in-between state.

And those four R's are the reign of God. He is reigning. The redemption of God. He has sent his own son to save our souls at great cost.

The resurrection of Jesus, not only telling us that our God is alive, but also that suffering in the Christian life produces glory. And then the return of Jesus.

[2 : 41] And I had seen all of that as I was in my study, but I hadn't actually listed all of the scriptures represented in those four headings. And so here, I know the print is small.

I had trouble with the slides this week. But you can see how, boy, that's a lot of this little book. Those four promises are a lot of this little book.

And not only that, but they are scattered throughout the book. These four themes recur over and over again. Well, let me introduce our fifth and final R. This is the most R-rated sermon series I've ever preached.

And that final R is regeneration. You have been born again. That's the final R of this particular letter. Now, what I'd like to do is I'd like to read, beginning in verse 13, all the way through chapter 2, verse 3.

I'd like to read that out loud to you. If you have your Bibles, please read along. But I want you to go on an R hunt. As we're working through here, it's going to go kind of quick.

[3 : 48] You won't get all of them. But look for these themes. The reign of God. This will show up somehow by describing God's being in control. Managing things.

If you see the word foreordained or foreknew or purposed, those are usually representative of God's perfect and total reign over all things. Look for instances where you see references to the cross, the redemption of God's people through the blood of Christ.

Look for places where you see references to resurrection. Look to places where you see references to the return of Christ or the new heavens and the new earth that comes.

And then also, number five, look for references to the new birth. I know that's a lot to manage. If we had the time this morning, we'd break out in teams and do it.

But I'm going to read the text, and you might as well see what you can do as we work our way through. Beginning in verse 13, There's an R.

[4 : 53] For as obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance. But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.

Since it is written, You shall be holy, for I am holy. And if you call on him as father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you, who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead, and gave him glory so that your faith and hope are in God.

Verse 22. Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart.

Since you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God. For all flesh is like grass, and its glory like the flower of grass.

[6 : 19] The grass withers and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever. And this word is the good news that was preached to you. In chapter 2 now.

So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and slander. Like newborn infants long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation, if indeed you have seen or tasted that the Lord is good.

Well, today we are going to focus primarily on this fifth R, regeneration, arriving first in our text here in chapter 1, verse 23.

Since you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable. But the reference to being born again actually occurred right at the very beginning of the letter. Peter mentions it almost immediately.

And so I want to talk a little bit about what it means to be born again, and to some extent, how do you know if you are born again? I started thinking about being born again through the lens of possibilities.

[7 : 30] And all of the privileges and possibilities that emerge when a person is regenerated and made new and born again. And I was thinking about how you suddenly have freedom from indwelling sin that you did not have before, and you have peace with God that you did not have before, and you have access to God that you did not have before, and you have a hunger and thirst for righteousness that you did not have before.

And boy, it makes obedience a lot easier when you actually desire it. Doesn't make it fully accomplishable, but it's nice to actually desire righteousness.

And so I was thinking about how do I describe the new birth, and I thought, well, you know, all of these possibilities emerge when a new creation is formed in Christ.

But I thought, you know, that's just not strong enough. And so I moved from this thought of the possibilities that emerge to almost this sense of when a new person is made new in Christ, it's almost like they're reprogrammed.

It's almost like they're reprogrammed. Angela and I are, as you know, in the early days of the grandparent stage, and it's so interesting to have the nature-nurture stuff right in our faces.

[8 : 52] I will tell you that seeing, well, Thane's the one who's the most active right now, but you can see behaviors manifesting in this child that you saw in your child.

And, of course, then, like, the main thing that kind of, like, is interesting at this stage is you're kind of, like, interested in how the genetic recipe will bake, you know, how the cake will turn out, you know, especially with Wes and Emily because, like, you've got this tiny little hobbit girl and this big ogre guy.

Like Shrek? And, yes, like Shrek. Exactly like Shrek. Wes will be listening to this. He's working today, but, yes. He's at the fire station right now, but exactly like Shrek, Ivan.

And you look at this, and you're like, well, okay, well, this will be very interesting. Let's see how this cake comes out of the oven. And I have a whole theory about Augie. He, my theory is kind of like

that, like they say about with goldfish tanks, like, you know, if you move the fish to a bigger tank, it gets bigger.

You know, it'll get bigger. I think Augie, he was kind of small when he was born, but I think he was just in a small tank. And he's already put on two pounds, and so I suspect.

[10:10] But these are the kind of things you think about as a grandparent. You're wondering how all of this manifests. And Angela and I have actually been kind of interested in science in general for a long time, but in genetics for a long time.

And we were in St. Louis when the human genome was mapped at Washington University. And Angela, that would be one of her fallback kind of careers in another life, where she would have loved to have been a geneticist.

And so we think about this stuff quite a bit. And now that we're grandparents, we're just interested in seeing this play out, this nature versus nurture stuff play out.

We were reading about this particular gene that codes for one of your dopamine receptors. And if you have this gene in a specific configuration, it produces a much less sensitive receptor to dopamine, and this makes you more inclined to do kind of risky behaviors in order to receive that sort of sense of reward, accomplishment, and pleasure.

And so if you've ever met someone who has to start a bunch of new things, and they're engaged in actively maybe some risky behaviors and so on and so forth, you're like, what's up with that person?

[11:26] Well, one thing that could be is it could just be a nature thing. They could actually be configured that way genetically to just act in that way.

But then, of course, we could start asking, okay, well, what kind of risky behaviors? And then we would want to move out of the camp of determinism and say, well, okay, you know, yeah, there's some nature here, but there's also some nurture because there's a wild difference between deciding to be a missionary and deciding to engage in compulsive sexual behavior, right?

But it could be that that person's nature is similar, like their genetics are similar, but they were raised differently, taught differently, cared for differently, so that now we have a nurture question as well.

And you might think, well, where are you going with all this? Well, you know, I don't know of anyone who's really written a good Christian book that uses the nature-nurture conversation.

And what we know about genetics now to discuss what it means to be born again and what it means to be a new creation. But I'm going to attempt to just walk you through some of what it means to be a new creation using this nature-nurture concept as a way to think about it.

[12:45] I think the basic idea is that genes mean a lot, and there's some deterministic baselines. There are certain family lines that will never produce NBA players, right?

There's a genetic ceiling there, and there's other genetic lines that will likely produce, if you go on long enough, an NBA player. So there's determinism.

If you are of this particular genetic variety, certain features are going to be evident. But there's also something beyond determinism, which is just like choices and nurture and the actions that we engage in throughout life.

And what I think this is helpful for in understanding what it means to be born again is, is that if you are born again, there will be certain markers because you were born of a particular line of spiritual genetics, namely from the Lord God in the name of Jesus Christ.

There will be some family resemblance. That's just inevitable. And so it's reasonable to expect every Christian to bear certain markers that resemble their spiritual lineage.

[14:06] And then within that, you get something that's not deterministic, and that is the choices you make will give you some sense of, will influence how dramatically those spiritual genetics express themselves in your life.

And here's a verse that would maybe, if this is a little fuzzy for you, here's a verse. Matthew 13, 8, the parable of the sower. Jesus speaks of the true seed, and he says this. First of all, the true seed will endure.

It will keep on growing. But then he says this. Some will produce 30-fold, some 60-fold, and some 100-fold. Okay? What is that seed producing?

That seed's all the same seed. It's producing all the same fruit. That's determinist. That's genetics. That's nature. Why does some of the seed produce 30-fold and 60-fold and some 100-fold?

That's choices made by the farmer, care given to the seed, different conditions, environmental factors. That's nurture.

[15:14] So let me just wrap this up, and I think this is very important, so please bear with me. Okay? What does it mean to be born again? What it means to be born again is that you will bear some resemblance of the Father, and that is simply the way it is because that's who you were born from.

And within that category, we can now talk about fruitfulness, choices that you make to whether amplify or diminish this code that God has put in you.

But what it means to be fundamentally born again is that there is a fundamental amount of X, Y, and Z that will manifest itself in your life if you have been born of this imperishable seed that Peter is talking about.

So now we have to ask, okay, what is the fundamental evidence of having been born again? Now we've accidentally stumbled into something.

I'd love to take credit for this, but this text actually condemns lying, so I can't. We stumbled into something very interesting, totally by accident. We went through 1 John, Ephesians, and now 1 Peter.

[16:30] And what we've done, again, entirely because I'm this smart, what we've done is we've accidentally sampled all the different ways that the super apostles, you could think of, the major apostles, talk about the Christian life.

And now we're in this weird position as we work through 1 Peter to start kind of adding up. It wasn't that long ago we were in 1 John. We're in a position now to start thinking through, well, my goodness, the vocabulary changes here and there, but they're all saying basically the same thing. And they are all talking about what I'm trying to talk about this morning, and that is, if you are truly saved, there will be certain evidences in your life. And those two evidences, no matter how John talks about it or Paul talks about it or how Peter talks about it, are always holiness and love. Does anyone remember how John talked about that? He would talk about walking in love and walking in the light.

Paul talks about it a little differently in Ephesians 4 and 5, but he makes the exact same argument that if you are born again, there is a certain way to go about doing life.

[17:49] And the two markers of someone who is truly born again, the undeniable evidence that you have this spiritual genome is that you are pursuing holiness and you are engaging in what we'll call horizontal love, loving your brother, loving your neighbor as yourself, and so forth.

Now, just as a little bit of a Bible nerd aside, Jesus is the fulfillment of the law. What did Jesus tell us was the law summarized? To love God with your whole being, that's holiness, and to love your neighbor as yourself, that's horizontal love.

So if you have been born of Jesus, who is the fulfillment of those things, those things will be fruits in your life. That's the argument that every one of the apostles who writes anything in the New Testament is making to the early church.

Have you been born again? How do you know? Two evidences. Ongoing commitment to holiness and an ongoing commitment to horizontal love.

Now, look at verse 22 again. Having purified your souls, we're going to talk about that. What's that mean? Purified your souls. By your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart since you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable.

[19:18] Okay. Though the living, through the living and abiding word of God, for all flesh is like grass and its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.

And this word is the good news that was preached to you. So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and slander like newborn infants long for the pure spiritual milk that by it you may grow up into salvation if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

One of the things that I think is crucial for us to understand this morning is that holiness and love are almost, almost the same thing.

They're really close to being the same thing. As you work your way through 1 Peter chapter 1, he makes one initial command, be holy as I am holy.

And then later on in verse 22, he says, love one another with earnestly from a pure heart. In between there, he says, since you have consecrated yourself for obedience to the truth.

[20 : 28] Friends, Peter's doing something very interesting. He's actually basically reciting a particular passage in the book of Leviticus. Leviticus chapter 19.

Be holy as I am holy. The language of consecrating yourself. This is all flowing out of Leviticus 19. What is Leviticus 19 about? Well, Leviticus 19 falls directly in this little section of neighborly ethics in the book of Leviticus.

Chapters 18, 19, and 20 are all about how to treat other people. And the rejoinder, the reason, brought up over and over again in the book of Leviticus is, be good to others because I am the Lord. Be holy because I am holy. Be good to others because I am the Lord. It's always the same refrain. If you are born again of the Father, you will have a pursuit of holiness and horizontal love that will be naturally expressed in your life and observable by others just like I as a grandparent can look at this child and say, that's obviously from these kids.

That's what Peter's talking about. It's funny, you know, it's crazy how if you don't know the Old Testament well, there's all sorts of things happening in the New Testament you're not even picking up on.

[22 : 01] Mark Twain once was, he was, a reporter had written to him because a newspaper had accidentally published his obituary. And they're like, do you have any comment about such and such a newspaper accidentally printing your obituary because clearly you're not dead?

and he just wrote back that the news of my demise has been greatly exaggerated. Friends, unfortunately, we're growing in a particular period of church history and evangelicalism where the Old Testament is almost pretended to have gone away or been made somehow irrelevant by the New Testament and so forth.

But the news of the Old Testament's demise is greatly exaggerated. Here we have Peter, the founder of the church in some respect, the foundation, not the founder, but one of the initial leads of the church got Catholic there for a second here.

Extensively citing the book of Leviticus to some Gentiles saying, this is how we live, friends. What's he using?

He's using the law. He's using the law to lead these people into walking out the gospel. And what is he saying, really?

[23 : 26] He's pointing to this chapter in Leviticus that's all about being good to one another. Leviticus 19 is basically a handbook on how we are to treat others.

Leviticus 19.3, to honor your father and mother. The next section, Leviticus 9 and 10, 19.9 and 10, that's the passage where we're told to leave the edges of our field unharvested so the poor and sojourner have food.

Next comes the command not to lie or deal falsely with one another. Next comes the command not to oppress your neighbor or withhold your workers' wages. Next comes the command, one of the funniest ones I think that's in Leviticus, you can't curse a deaf person.

Like, can you, this is how we are. God had to tell us, don't take advantage of someone's disability for your own jollies.

Don't curse a deaf person, don't put a stumbling block before a blind person. Verse 15 of Leviticus 19, don't be partial in judgment, and then 19.16-18.

[24 : 35] Don't slander, don't hate your brother in your heart, don't take vengeance, don't bear a grudge, so on and so forth. Right in the middle of all of that, verse 18 of Leviticus 19, is you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

And oh, by the way, in this chapter we see be holy as I am holy. What I want you to walk away, if nothing else, is I want you to understand that if a very sincere, biblically oriented man decided to pursue holiness as his chief agenda, and he was led by the Spirit and understood what the Word actually said about holiness, and a very godly, biblically committed woman decided to pursue biblical love as it's defined by the Bible with all of her heart, mind, and soul, and those two both walked that out, they would wind up in the exact same space.

I'm not saying that they're the same thing, but I'm saying they occupy the same space, and that space, by the way, is our Father God. This is who he is.

Okay, so let's think about that a little bit, because if there's anything that we need to clear up, it's this whole confusion about the nature of love and the nature of holiness. First of all, I want to talk

about, as an example, as an illustration, Adam and Eve.

And I want to suggest to you that this is a great place to be reminded that when love is not holy, it is not love. When love is not holy, it is not love.

[26 : 18] In the garden, Eve takes the fruit and shares it with her husband. On the surface, based on kindergarten ethics, this is a sharing act, a caring act.

The wife includes the husband, in a new discovery. This looks like love as the world defines it. But it is not love because Eve has abandoned the pursuit of holiness and is acting out that abandonment in ways that look like love.

Likewise, Adam joins her. Adam joins her. Again, from the outside, looking in, from the world's perspective, what Adam does looks like love. He joins her. He supports her.

He shares her dream. On the surface, this looks like solidarity. The husband is not letting the wife bear the weight alone.

But this is not love. His external act of support is indifferent to the Lord's decree. He is not loving Eve. He is confirming her destruction. So I'd like to say, one thing, please stop telling the person you're sleeping with outside of wedlock that you love them.

[27 : 32] You don't. You hate them. You're handing them poison fruit. Stop.

Stop. Stop pretending that affirming other people's sin is a loving act. You are using them to feel good about yourself.

Stop. You're just being bad. That's all that this is. However the emotions feel in the moment, you're just being a wicked person.

Stop abandoning holiness with some sense that you're being loving. You're not being loving. You cannot get to love without holiness.

Now think about it the other way. because the other's true as well. When holiness is not loving, it is not holiness. In Mark 3, Jesus enters the synagogue and there is a man there with a withered hand and oh shucks, it's on the Sabbath and the Sabbath, the Pharisees are watching.

[28 : 48] Not watching the man, watching Jesus and they want to see if he will heal on the Sabbath so they can accuse him. And Jesus looks at the man, tells him to come forward and heals that withered hand and turns to the Pharisees with a question.

That question being essentially, can you be holy if you don't love people? And the answer is no. Whatever use of the law you're employing to be a jerk, to ignore the needs of those that God has placed in your life, to excuse your own dogmatic temper, your own idealistic, angry, whatever. You're not. You're not holy. You're not right. You're wrong. If you don't have love baked into your holiness, it isn't holy.

We'll get to Isaiah eventually at the end of this year. And toward the end of Isaiah, God says to the people, my goodness, folks, you're gathering to do this worship thing and this fasting thing.

And boy, meanwhile, you oppress your own workers. You step over the needy on your way to the worship service. You abandon all of your obligations to your brother and to your neighbor.

[30 : 14] And the whole point is, it's like this isn't holy because it lacks love. See, this is the, this is why we have to be born again too because it's not possible for us to constantly be evaluating holiness and love, holiness and love, holiness and love in real time as we deal with people.

we have to have it in us. That has to be the nature of things. It has to come from our spiritual genetics.

So the main thing I want you to take away today is that there is really no way to be loving without holiness or to be holy without love and that that is by design.

Because we want to give glory to the one who makes it possible for every person in this room to call out upon his name and be born again. I want to keep this thread going.

I just want to make sure we are together on this. In Galatians 5, again, I love now that we can sample all three of the big apostles and how they talk about things. In Galatians 5, Paul says this, that sexual immorality and impurity and sensuality and idolatry and sorcery and enmity and strife and jealousy and fits of anger and rivalries and dissensions and divisions and envy and drunkenness and orgies and things like this.

[31 : 49] These are wrong. Are they wrong because they aren't holy or are they wrong because they aren't loving? It's impossible to answer that question.

There should be no or in that question. To do these things is both to be unholy and to be unloving. And then he goes on with the positive list, of course.

And he lists all the fruits of the Spirit. Love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and faithfulness and gentleness and self-control. Are these acts of love or holiness? The or doesn't work in our understanding of what's happening here. We can only get ands here. In the first list, we have to say these are both wicked and unloving things. And in the second list, we have to say these are both holy and loving things. True holiness spills out on the horizontal.

[32 : 56] Inevitably and observably. the reality is is that when you and your pleasure become the center of the universe, people suffer. And you can call that anything you want.

Just don't call it love. holiness. And also, when you and your contrived pieties become the center of the universe, people suffer.

And you can call that anything you want. Just don't call it holiness. Now, how does this passage lead us into particular action?

Go back to verse 22. Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love. Not a fake brotherly love.

A sincere brotherly love. Love one another earnestly from a pure heart. What is brotherly love? I think it's marked by two things in Scripture.

[34 : 02] And the first is loyalty. Brotherly love is marked by loyalty. Proverbs 17, 17 says that a friend loves at all time and a brother is born for adversity.

Actually, the way that a Bible, the Bible measures brotherhood is through the lens of adversity. It looks at the worst day of your life and asks, who is standing with you? One of the fundamentals of brotherly love is loyalty.

Loyalty to your brother over your own preferences and even secondary convictions. Loyalty to your brothers. That's one of the key marks of brotherly love.

Loyalty. But it is also marked by purity. Brotherly love is marked by both loyalty and purity. Peter is working, as I mentioned before, out of what I think would probably be described as the central textbook on sexual ethics in the Torah.

Chapter 18, 19, and 20 of the book of Leviticus. That's where he is locating himself for this charge. That's the prevailing theme of Leviticus in that particular section.

[35 : 15] And that tells us why in verse 14 of 1 Peter, chapter 1, he says this. So early on in the letter, as obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance.

And then he says, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in your conduct, since it is written, where? Leviticus 18, 19, 20. You shall be holy for I am holy.

He's locating, he's not saying just any old passions, although it would work. He's saying, he's pulling these Gentiles into the, probably at the time in the ancient world was absolutely the pinnacle of sexual ethics in the ancient world would have been Leviticus 18, 19, 20.

And he's saying, brotherly love is both loyal and pure. Brotherly love is both loyal and pure.

You ever read that verse where Paul tells Timothy to treat younger women with absolute purity as sisters? You ever see that?

[36 : 31] Did you know that that's a callback to the incest laws in Leviticus 18, 19, and 20? And that what he's saying there is that as you interact with your sisters in Christ, they are not to be handled in a particular way because they are your sisters in Christ.

Until the Lord makes them something else in your life, that's what they are. So the call to purity here is definitely has sexuality in view.

It's definitely not the only thing in view though because the passage continues into chapter 2. So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and slander. Like newborn infants long for the pure spiritual milk that by it you may grow up into salvation if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

So Peter gives us five explicit behaviors with which we will end. First of one, put away malice. Kikia is the Greek word, it's the settled disposition to see another as the problem.

The settled disposition to see another as the problem. To see the other as someone who deserves comeuppance. Who deserves to suffer because they've done you wrong.

[38 : 07] Deceit, dolos, initially used to refer to bait in the fisherman's trap. This word refers to lying that hides the hook. What happens when a relationship becomes all about engineered outcomes.

Hypocrisy. You probably know this one, some of you. The Greek word for hypocrisy is literally referring to stage acting. the mask worn over your face as you interact with others in the relational

dynamic that you have turned into a theater.

It's not a real relationship anymore. It's a stage play. That's no way to live. Envy.

The pain you feel at another's flourishing. Slander. Slander does not always require a lie.

It simply requires the use of the weaponization of speech for the harm of another. So five vices in one pattern and each one is a personal sin of the heart that violates whatever God's holiness standard is while also violating whatever God's expectations are for us in the realm of horizontal love.

[39 : 32] Are these sins unholy or unloving? Got to use and. They're both. So the new birth is really the foundation of all of this.

Our fifth R, regeneration, is where our entire understanding of what should be expected naturally because we have been born again emerges from this concept that we are all seeds cast by the master's hand.

And yeah, there will be some distinction in the amount of fruitfulness, but the fruit will be there.

The fruit will be there. Now, how do we walk from this passage back into our lives?

first and foremost, we implore the Lord that there be no falsehood in us, first and foremost, any falsehood about our true identity.

[40 : 42] You see how at the very end of verse 3, Peter says, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

boy, it's so hard to do good, deep, spiritual work from the pulpit because on the one hand, you're trying to dislodge those who've been deceived into a sense of false conversion while also trying to keep those who are simply weak and having a bad run at it from doubting God's promises.

And you can see that the apostles struggle with this very same thing. It's not always simple to know how to do that. And so he just registers this at the end of all of these really extremely important commands.

He says, have you tasted and seen that the Lord is good? And I opened the service with that passage from Psalm 34 because I wanted you to see what that meant.

What it meant fundamentally is, are you a person who is looking to God for the fulfillment of your desires? Go back and read the passage. Go read Psalm 34. That's what it means.

[41 : 58] Are you looking to God for the fulfillment of your desires, or are you looking to your own strength, your own situation? That's the question. We have an absolute complete and perfect off-ramp into communion here because we're talking about something that starts not with us, but with the Lord God.

We are being told that we have this option through Jesus Christ, and that's where I was kind of getting the potentiality question from. We're being told that something amazing has happened. knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

God, when the Son of God dies for sinners, He doesn't merely secure a clean slate.

He secures a whole new creation. Jesus says in Revelation, Behold, I am making all things new. He is happy to make new things.

[43 : 32] a piece of cake. Has He made you new? Has He made you new?

New desires? Not simply new choices, but are you a new person in Christ? Don't leave this place resolving to make new and better choices. Leave this place saying, Jesus Christ has made me a new, better man.

and a new and better woman. Because that's actually the gospel. Let me pray for us. Father God, we pray that your Holy Spirit will work in our hearts.

God bless. It's hard for a person who's not experiencing your grace to understand that everything I just said has really no more indictment on anybody than anybody else, and that the reality is this is incredibly good news.

We are not called to strive in our own strength. We are not called to simply toil under the law. we are called in true desperation to cast ourselves on the author and perfecter of our faith, the one who has secured righteousness for us, and to say, Lord Jesus, please make me new.

[44 : 57] Give me a new heart. Let me live that new heart. Lord, we see in this passage that it's obviously possible, as if we needed any confirmation, confirmation.

It's obviously possible for Christians to need to be reminded to no longer be conformed to the passions of their old selves. It's possible for there to be an identity lag between who you've made us to be and how we're acting.

For sure possible. Here's what I just want to pray, God, that you would do. Don't let anybody think that anything is holding them back from just crying out to you, Lord, and saying, I don't want to do this another day without a new heart.

And if I don't have a new heart, Lord Jesus, please make me new. The reality is that you've designed the world, dear God, in such a way that a person who does not live in holiness and horizontal love will begin to feel substantial amounts of pain in their life at certain points.

And so I trust in your natural law, even the sworning law, Lord, to show people where they stand. But Lord, help them to see where you stand most importantly, and that is you stand ready and willing to save.

[46 : 16] And this table communicates that glory. You came for us. You came for the lost sheep. You ran to the repentant prodigal, and Lord, you have offered yourself for our sins.

And so this table represents your willingness to save us. So please, Lord, let us take this table with a heart full of confidence, not in ourselves, but in your willingness to save.

How could we doubt that when you shed your own blood and allowed your own body to be beaten and killed so that we could be saved? Lord, as we come and take these elements, please, Lord, help us to feel whatever we see in our own lives, help us to feel most secure in what we see in you, an all-sufficient and perfect Savior.

We love you, Lord.