

The Source and the Means of the New Birth

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[0:00] John chapter 3 verses 4 through 10 will be this morning's text.

! Please stand as we honor the reading of God's Word together. Nicodemus said to him, How can a man be born when he is old?

Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel again that I said to you, you must be born again. The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes.

So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus said to him, How can these things be? Jesus answered him, Are you the teacher of Israel?

[1:21] And yet you do not understand these things. May God add a blessing to the reading of His Word. Would you please be seated? So as we've talked about, we've gone through this chapter so far, that this is a soteriological, soteriological, I can't even say it, passage.

Goodness gracious. This is a passage of salvation. I should have just said that. It is about how a person is saved from their sins.

And so this is the subject of the conversation between Nicodemus and Jesus that John has invited us into in chapter 3. If you remember, Nicodemus believes that salvation is something that a person achieves.

They achieve it by being a Jew and by observing the law. In other words, he understands salvation to be something that is contingent upon what someone does for themselves.

Jesus says the opposite. That salvation is not something a person can achieve. That it does not depend on what someone does, but on something that is done to them.

[2:37] Since its inception, the church has been tempted to believe many times throughout its history that salvation, or at least some aspect of it, depends upon human effort.

In fact, the early church was quite often provoked by false teachers who persisted in their insistence that to become a Christian, they first had to become a Jew.

They first had to become a Jew. They had to undergo circumcision. They had to observe all the dietary laws, and they had to perform all of the other ceremonial traditions.

But this didn't save them. In reality, it brought them back into slavery.

Slavery under the law which Jesus Christ, and His atoning death, had set them free from. The book of Romans and Galatians, among other New Testament Scriptures, were often written to refute these very issues that were taking place within the church.

[3:41] In Galatians, Paul recounts that even Peter, a man who had been saved, an apostle, an integral leader in the church, a man who was physically with Christ during his earthly ministry, even he wasn't immune to this temptation.

In Galatians 2, verses 11-14, Paul talks about how he confronted both Peter and Barnabas for altering their behavior in such a way that was denying the gospel of its power.

Galatians 2, let's read it. But when Cephas, Peter, came to Antioch, Paul says, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles.

But when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with them so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the

Gentiles to live like Jews?

[4:56] So by withdrawing from the Gentiles, believers, to fellowship with the Judaizers who held a position that Peter knew to be wrong, he was in a way giving the appearance that he supported their doctrine.

That it was important to be a Jew first before being a Christian. He was afraid. He was afraid of losing his influence with them.

He was afraid of being seen with people that others look down upon. As a matter of fact, isn't that Nicodemus' issue when he comes to Jesus at night?

He doesn't want to be seen with Jesus by his peers. He doesn't want to be seen consorting with the enemy. He doesn't want to be seen with someone who the rest of them were looking down upon. And here's the thing, if Peter could experience such a setback, it's certainly possible that we who have been saved by grace can be deceived into doing the exact same thing.

[6:09] And as a matter of fact, I believe that that is the case. It may not seem like it. You don't see many Christian churches advocate that their members convert to Judaism first before becoming a Christian or joining the church.

But in a way, they are producing a form of legalistic Christianity that does deny the gospel of its power. Legalism puts the spotlight on you.

It's all about what you can do or what you must do. A list of things that you need to follow so that your marriage will be better. So that your character will improve or you follow these things and it will set you free from bad relationships that you might have in life.

It puts the focus on you. You do these things. You follow these steps and you will experience a better you.

But Jesus wasn't concerned with merely making sinners better by giving them a list of steps to live by that could improve their lives.

[7:21] No, He got right to the heart of the matter. And that being our need to be reborn. To be renewed. To be regenerated.

Case in point, the woman at the well whom we will meet in chapter 4 once we move on from chapter 3. If you remember her story, she had five husbands and she was currently living with a man who she was not married to.

And one can only imagine the toll that all those broken relationships must have taken on her. All the heartache and the pain that she had experienced.

Yet she kept going back to these men, to these relationships to try to make her complete. But notice that Jesus didn't offer her a list of steps to follow to improve her current relationship status.

He didn't tell her or try to coach her in how she could work harder to have healthier, more productive relationships.

[8:32] Instead, he directed her focus to himself. That he was the source of living water. That he was the one who could bring spiritual transformation to her life.

And with this truth being brought into focus for her by him, she trusted in him. And only then did the changes begin to take place.

The true transformation in her life was underway. She went from hiding from other people ashamed of her life and of herself to going and sharing the gospel with those very same people in hopes that they would see Jesus as she saw him.

That he is the Christ. That he is the one who can take us from spiritual darkness to spiritual light.

What this woman needed from Jesus that day was not a motivational pep talk or an inspirational TED talk or a list of self-improvements that could make her life better and her relations healthier and more meaningful.

No, she needed Jesus. She needed Jesus Christ. She needed to hear the gospel. These days it seems to me that a lot of people in a lot of churches hear a lot of messages that have less to do with your need to depend on Christ and more to do with your need to improve yourself.

[10:07] These messages come in list form. They present you with a list of steps to take that will make you a better version of you. Now listen, I believe that there is a time and a place for pep talks.

For motivational speeches. But should self-help be the message, the primary message of the church? A message whose focus is on you.

What you must do to change. What you must do to be better and to live better. If you go to a bookstore, you've probably noticed that one of the largest sections in that store is the self-help

section.

Have you ever noticed that? They dominate most of the bookstore. And this is a market. Market research says this is a growing market that it brings in about \$800 million worth of sales per year and it's growing by 6% each year.

It's increasing. Go to Amazon and type in self-help and you'll be instantly inundated with all different titles from all different authors about all different kinds of things.

[11 : 28] Each promising to make you a better version of you. And so I, it makes me wonder, right, if there's all these books that have been written, then these self-help books must not really be that helpful.

because none of them is solving the problem. They just keep coming out with more. More and more and more. People are eating them up, devouring them more and more and more, but I don't see any kind of real lasting improvement.

improvement. This attitude, this approach has been one that many churches have jumped on. They've jumped on the bandwagon thinking that this is, and seeing that this is what people want. So we'll craft our sermon and our worship service around this similar approach.

church. And this self-help, me-centered strategy that many churches have adopted has been appropriately called by many moralistic, therapeutic deism.

[12 : 39] And it's the new American religion. This term was developed by a group of researchers with the National Study of Youth and Religion at the University of North Carolina.

They took a closer look at religious beliefs held by American teenagers. This was in 2005, 14 years ago. These teenagers are now young adults. They said that moralistic, therapeutic deism consists of beliefs like these.

One, a God exists who created and ordered the world and watches over life on earth. That two, God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.

Three, the central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about yourself. Four, God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem. And five, good people go to heaven when they die. The church in the United States of America seems to have an ever-weakening influence on our culture.

[13 : 49] Have you noticed that? And I believe that this is a major reason why that is. It's a system that appeals to many because again, you are the focus.

But the problem is when you are the focus, guess who isn't? Jesus Christ. He's pushed to the back. Pushed to the background.

While we're so busy working on ourselves, we lose sight of our mission which is to go and make disciples. To tell people about Jesus.

We've lost sight of what Christ has done for us. Of the amazing grace of God in saving a wretch like you and me. Now this doesn't mean that the answer is to despise ourselves, but that we come to grips with the depths of our sin and our need of a Savior and the gracious, loving kindness of God to send His own Son who lived for us and died for us and was raised again from the dead so that we could be born again.

This is our greatest problem. And only He has the solution for it. And so we remember that Nicodemus was a very religiously devout man.

[15 : 19] He was a Pharisee which meant he was a teacher of the law. He knew the law very well. He was a member of the Sanhedrin which meant he belonged to an elite group that administered that law. And if you recall he came to Jesus and he expressed to Him that he had known some facts about Him.

Facts that were true. He presents Jesus with the knowledge that He has gathered from what He has observed of Him. That Jesus was a good teacher. That He was a performer of miracles. And that these things gave evidence that this must be a man whom God has sent. However, if you remember from where we've been Jesus makes the point to Him that His good deeds and His limited knowledge of who He was was insufficient to save Him.

Jesus wasn't impressed by any of this with neither His good behavior nor His fact-gathering abilities. And so like He did with the woman at the well who came after Him Jesus drew the attention of Nicodemus back to His greatest need which was that He must be born again.

Verse 3 He keeps saying it. Truly, truly, I say to you unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. Verse 5 Truly, truly, I say to you unless one is born again of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

[16:39] Verse 7 Do not marvel that I said to you you must be born again. So here's the main idea for this morning's message. The Bible says that a new birth is essential for salvation.

A person cannot be saved unless they have been born again. In John 3 verses 4-10 Jesus reveals the source and the means of the new birth.

Now knowing the source and the means of the new birth will, I believe, have an incredible impact on your life and on our church and as a result of those two things on our community in our world.

If you understand and daily dwell upon what Jesus has done for you you will find your true self in Christ by dying to yourself daily.

Dying to self is part of what it means to be born again. The old self dies. The new self has come to life. And so Jesus unpacks this for Nicodemus in these verses.

[17:48] The Bible tells us that dying to self is both a one time event taking place at the new birth but that it's also a lifelong process. Jesus spoke repeatedly to His disciples about taking up their cross which was an instrument of death and following Him.

He made it clear that if anyone would follow Him that they must deny themselves which means that they give up their lives spiritually, symbolically, and even physically if necessary to follow Him.

If you look at the places in the world where the gospel is spreading the most quickly, right?

The fastest. Where it's having the greatest impact on society. You'll notice that it's places where the cost of following Christ is much greater than other places.

It means that you could lose your life for going to church. And it's in those environments where the church is exploding, where the gospel is setting those communities on fire.

[19:00] But if you look here in our nation, that fire seems to have dwindled. That light seems to have faded. And I'm telling you, I believe that it's because most of our focus in church is on self-improvement.

living our best lives now instead of seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness. Dying to self was a prerequisite for being a follower of Christ.

He said that attempts to save our earthly lives would result in the loss of our eternal life in the kingdom of God. However, he said that those who give up their lives for His sake would find life eternal life.

In Luke 14, verse 27, Jesus even went so far as to say that those who are unwilling to sacrifice their lives for Him cannot be His disciples.

You see, He took this matter very seriously. It's not a suggestion but a command. And so Paul explains to the Galatians the process of dying to oneself as one in which he has been crucified with Christ.

[20:12] And he says, it's no longer I who live but it's Christ who is living in me. My old life with its propensity to sin and to follow the ways of the world is dead.

And my new self is the dwelling place of Jesus Christ. He is living in me and He is working through me. Dying to self is never portrayed in Scripture as something that is optional for the Christian life.

It is the reality of the new birth. No one can come to Christ unless he is willing to see his old life crucified with Christ and begin to live anew in obedience to Him.

Obedience is the act of salvation not the result of it. It's the result of being born again. This was the truth that Jesus explained to Nicodemus that he had to be born again.

And as we've seen that Nicodemus he's puzzled by all of this. It sounds illogical to him. He wonders how can someone be born again? And so Jesus answers his question by revealing three principles about the new birth.

[21:21] First of all he reveals that the new birth is not achieved through religious activity. The fact that Nicodemus was a very religious man but not saved tells us that you can be religious and not be born again.

What Nicodemus says to Jesus in verse 2 Rabbi we know that you are a teacher sent from God tells us that it's possible to see God at work in Jesus without experiencing God being at work in you. I remember when I first was a youth pastor and I was getting ready to take a group of our teens to a trip. It was a conference geared towards teenagers and the objective of the ministry was to encourage teens to share the gospel with their friends.

And so we went and as I was preparing to take them the parents wanted to meet with me the parents of many who were going and they had concerns.

They said well you know we are excited that our kids get to have this experience. We're excited that they get to go and hear some music that's geared towards them some messages that are geared towards them.

[22 : 41] Be around and experience what it's like to be with other Christian teenagers but the other youth pastor took them there before and we have a concern because we know at this conference they really strongly encourage the teens to share the gospel with their friends and our concern is that they'll do that and then we'll have to answer their parents questions because why is your son and daughter trying to tell my son or daughter about Jesus Christ and that could be potentially embarrassing for us.

You see they wanted and they're okay with God them experiencing God working right but they did not want God to be working in them so it's possible to see God at work around you but not experience God at work in you.

Religious activity does not accomplish the new birth. Second principle it is not possible to see or enter the kingdom of God without experiencing the new birth. As we saw in verses 3, 5, and 7 Jesus stresses this point.

We must be born again in order to see and in order to enter the kingdom of God. In John chapter 3 verse 36 Jesus explains that seeing and entering the kingdom of God means being rescued from his judgment and being brought into eternal life.

Jesus says there whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. Whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God remains on him. And if you remember when Jesus spends the night in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane moments before he is arrested and led eventually to the cross where he will suffer and die that in that moment he is in intense anguish.

[24 : 29] so intense that his sweat turns to blood. Now I'm sure that you've experienced a very stressful situation but I seriously doubt that any of you have been so stressed in your spirit that blood vessels in your forehead burst and blood started pouring out.

He was very upset. Why? Well certainly the cross was excruciating. There was no form of punishment and pain that was worse than that form at this point in time.

But it was something much more than that. Jesus understood that he was going to be experiencing the crushing abandonment of God his father as he hung on the cross.

He who knew no sin would in that moment become our sins. The sins that we've committed were transferred over to him.

To his account. For those who haven't trusted in Christ's atoning death, Jesus says that the wrath of God still remains on them.

[25 : 53] And that means that they'll have to endure that wrath forever. Being born again means that you've experienced this new birth. That you understand that your sins were transferred over to Christ.

That he died for you. For what you've done. And that in return and putting your faith in him and trusting him and knowing him as your Lord and Savior, that his righteousness has been transferred over to you.

God sees you as he sees his son. As if you always did right. As if you always lived sinlessly as Jesus did. And again, by far the worst problem that any of us are ever faced with in this life is the problem of our sin that separates us from our holy God.

That keeps us out of his kingdom. So being born again means that your greatest problem, the greatest issue that you will ever face has already been rectified by God.

Listen to how Paul celebrates this great truth and all that it means in Romans 8 verses 32 through 39. He who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

[27 : 28] Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died.

More than that, who was raised? Who is at the right hand of God and who indeed is interceding for us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall tribulation or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written, for your sake we are being killed all the day long.

We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor heights nor deaths nor anything in all of creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Do we celebrate that like he does? Man, we should. nothing can separate you as a believer from the love of God.

[28:46] Nothing. Third, the source and means of the new birth is God. Verse 5, Truly, truly, I say to you, Jesus, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Now, there has been a lot of debate among biblical scholars over what Jesus meant by being born of water and Spirit. I think it's helpful to understand who Jesus is talking to, to better get a grasp for what he meant by those terms.

He's talking to Nicodemus. Nicodemus knows the Scripture, and so he knows that water and the Spirit are often used symbolically throughout those Scriptures to talk about our need to be cleansed, to be spiritually renewed.

In fact, I think the primary Scripture that is in mind here is Ezekiel chapter 36 verses 24 through 27. Nicodemus would have known and understood these terms.

They weren't as confusing to us. Let's look at that Scripture. God speaking to his people says, I will take you from the nations. I will gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness and from all your idols.

[30:03] I will cleanse you and I will give you a new heart and a new spirit. I will put them within you and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. So without the spiritual washing of the soul, a cleansing accomplished by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, no one can enter the kingdom of God.

And then in verse 7, Jesus says, that which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the spirit is spirit. And so as was mentioned last week, man is fallen.

He's fallen in body, in soul, and in spirit. And so God doesn't merely seek to renovate him or reform him or rearrange him. No, instead he regenerates him.

He makes him new. If you understand genetics, if you've taken a biology class, you understand that likes produce likes.

[31:11] Dogs have puppies, not kittens. Humans don't produce elephants or anything like that. This is basic. We understand that.

In the same way, God tells us that only he can produce a new spirit within a man. Ephesians 2, 1-5, speaks to this very thing. Talking of our spiritual condition before the new birth.

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

By grace, you have been saved. We understand that a spiritually dead person can only be made alive by God. It is only the new birth that is able to take that which is dead and make it new.

[32:25] And then in verse 8, Jesus talks more. He gives more explanation about what is involved in this, how it happens. And so he uses the wind as an illustration. He says, the wind blows wherever it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes.

So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit. Now to me, when I read that, this is the slam-dunk portion of the passage. Jesus has just posterized legalism and all in any other form of trying to save oneself.

You know what posterized means? It's those guys who look ridiculous on the posters when Michael Jordan comes and dunks in their faces. It's the guy there who's like, oh, I didn't see that happening, right? He dominated me completely.

Jesus is doing that here. He is dunking down this truth upon us all that it's the Holy Spirit who is at work in the new birth and it is only He that affects it.

I remember being in college and some buddies of mine, we went camping and you know, we're talking about the typical things that college guys talk about and the wind started to pick up, started to blow a little bit harder.

[33:40] I remember one of my good friends disengaged himself from whatever we were talking about and he just kind of was looking around like this, introspectively for a while and then without breaking his line of vision to look back at us, he just said, guys, what is wind?

And we all were dumbfounded. Like, I don't know. I feel like we should know, right? But that's a really deep question and so we pondered about it for, you know, maybe a minute and then we realized that we are too dumb to answer such a question and went back to other dumb things to talk about.

You can feel the wind. You can observe its effect on other things. You can hear it. But you can't truly see it.

And you can't truly control it. It's mysterious in that regard. Jesus explicitly makes this point here that when you are born again, it's the Spirit who does that work.

And that just as the wind blows where it wishes, so too the Spirit operates in that exact same way. He says four things about the work of the wind and how it pictures the work of the Spirit.

[35:15] actually three things. First of all, he says the wind blows where it wills. This means the Spirit is not constrained. Neither is it at our beck and call.

And we can't manufacture its results. But let me tell you, that doesn't stop many of us from trying. I remember going to a service. A pastor there had written a book that I had read and really enjoyed and I was eager to go hear him preach.

And it was an impressive sanctuary. When you walk through, you could already see the haze of the smoke right in the rafters and many bright lights and cameras flashing in the drummer bay and the bay where the person was playing the keyboard.

A very impressive sight to take in. And then he got up and preached. And he said, you know, he was preaching about the Holy Spirit. He was preaching a message that had something to do with the fact that you can't manufacture the work of the Holy Spirit.

And he said, you know, as much as we can, we try not to do that here. Try not to manufacture a feeling of the Holy Spirit. Try not to create or induce a sense of feeling inside of you to accomplish that.

[36:33] And I looked around and I thought, what in the world are you talking about? That's what all of this is. That's what all of this has been. Unless that smoke was the manifestation of the Spirit, which I highly doubt, that was not the case at all.

Secondly, we understand that the wind can be seen through its effects. Jesus told Nicodemus, hey, you can hear it. And so this means that there are perceptible effects of the invisible wind.

You can't see the wind, but you know it's there because sound accompanies it. You feel it against your skin. You feel it blowing in your hair, picking up dust and debris and sending it through the air. And so Jesus says it is the same way with the new birth. you can't see it, but you can see its effects. If you've been born again, this means that people ought to be able to tell that that's happened.

And not because you've told them, but because they see it. You're different. You talk differently. You care about different things. What is it?

[37:51] Help me understand. They see the effects of the new birth in you because of the way that you live your life in front of them. It can be seen.

It is seen. Third, the wind moves in mysterious ways. Jesus continues to compare the Spirit to the wind by telling Nicodemus, but you do not know where it comes from.

Again, we don't control the wind just as we don't control the Holy Spirit, but He does move. And He moves in ways that we often don't see or expect to come.

Have you ever experienced that before? I'll tell you a story of the man, and I've shared my salvation story with you about my brother who died in the hospital and this man who was visiting somebody in his church and prayed for my family and kept calling them and praying for them, inviting them to church, sharing the gospel with them, and my parents have gone there ever since then?

I don't think I've told you about him. His name was Gail Milhoff. He was not a believer for a large portion of his life, into his early to mid-twenties, and he liked to ride motorcycles.

[39:04] And he was out riding his motorcycle, and he had an accident, and his bike flipped over on him, and he broke his leg, and guess what? Guess what the nearest location for him to go into

was?

A church. And he hobbled into the back pew, and he heard the gospel, and God saved his life. He was born again.

That's a mysterious way to save somebody, isn't it? I'm glad God didn't have to break my leg to save me, but it just happens in ways that we don't expect. It's awesome, is it not?

The Spirit moves. He moves mysteriously. So Jesus' point is that the wind is mysterious.

It comes and it goes by its own laws. We don't control it. We didn't then. We don't now 2,000 years later. He is free to move and to work according to God's sovereign will.

[40:06] So what verse 8 teaches us is that we don't cause the Spirit to bring about the new birth anymore than we can make the wind blow. Or to be more specific, the decisive act of the will in the new birth is not ours, it's the Spirit's.

Be sure our will moves in the moment of the new birth. Change. Real change. Transformation happens to us in that moment. Those who experience it move to receive Christ and believe in Him. But our wills move because the wind is blowing, not the other way around. We don't move first. He moves. He awakens.

He brings the new birth. This is what Jesus has said. John chapter 1. The Apostle speaks to this very clearly.

We've been there. Verses 12 and 13. But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God. How was that accomplished? Well, they were born not of the blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

[41:14] So it's a work of the Holy Spirit. The new birth is an operation of God. He is the source. He is the means. So now, let's take all of that and see how we can best apply it to our lives.

First of all, we need to understand that God will work on you as you allow His Word to work in you. He will work on you as you allow His Word to first work in you.

Satan seeks to keep us self-centered and works motivated. Telling us and reminding us of all that is wrong with us and making us think that the solution to our problems can be found within ourselves. That takes our focus off of Christ. The more though you abide in His Word, the more His Word will abide in you. And that will bring about the growth and the change and the improvements in your relationships that these self-help books cannot accomplish.

They will make you more like Jesus Christ. You will be less self-centered, more Christ-centered, because after all, who is more selfless than Him? If we are more preoccupied with Christ, we will see people differently.

[42:30] We will look to serve instead of looking to be served. We will go from coming into this place with our question being, how does this church serve me? To our question being and our attitude being, how can I serve my church?

And that will have a huge impact in great and mysterious ways. Second, share the gospel in the hopes that others will believe, but know that the results are up to God.

And let me tell you, this takes so much pressure off of me when it comes to evangelism. I understand, you know, I can't mess this up. I mean, I can mess this up, but you know what I'm saying?

If I am sharing the gospel and I am backing that up with scripture and I am desiring to be used by that person, it's not really up to me.

It's not my words that will bring them the new birth. You understand what I'm saying? I think of baseball. In baseball, you are successful if you get a hit three out of ten times.

[43:33] You fail seven out of ten times and you're still able to make millions of dollars, right? But for me, with evangelism, when I look at this, I think you're batting a thousand. Anytime you open your mouth and you share the gospel with somebody, you've done your job.

You are batting a thousand, brother and sister in Christ, right? And so we know that ultimately it's God who does the work. We'll be used by Him. Yeah, we need to know the Bible. We need to be prepared to give in a defense.

But ultimately, it's Him who will accomplish what His will desires. And then third, pray. Would you please be praying that you will see the Spirit increasingly working through you and our church? church? Are you praying for that? Do you hope to see that happening here? Are you praying that God won't just use us, but that He will use you?

He wants to. And so my encouragement for you is to put your yes on the table and allow God to determine where He's going to put that yes on the map.

[44 : 47] Somewhere here in one of our ministries, you know what? It may be somewhere across the Atlantic Ocean. But we want to be a church that makes sure that God is using us to bring glory and honor to His name by serving Him, by serving one another, by putting our yes on the table, and by allowing God to use that to work in mysterious ways that we never thought possible.

Thank you.