

# GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



## GIG168 – Born of the Spirit

Hello, and welcome to the podcast. Today I want to talk about the spirit realm, the spirit world; being born of the Spirit, or being born into the Spirit. This concept to me is extremely important, because I truly believe that even though most of the time people refer to this age we are in as the Church age – and, of course, they would mark that from the Day of Pentecost in the New Testament book of Acts up until this time we are in – I personally believe that we are in the age of the Spirit. I think the Church is a part of the age of the Spirit, and is a vehicle that should be bringing us into the Kingdom of God and moving us forward in what God is doing. But I believe the truth is that this age we are in, what opened up on the Day of Pentecost by the outpouring of the Spirit, was an age of Spirit. And that age of Spirit, I believe, was supposed to take us through and transition into the Kingdom of God being manifest back on this earth.

When we talk about these things, we need to understand what it is to really be born of the Spirit. This is something that Christ did talk about very, very clearly, and we are going to read about that right now out of John the third chapter. I will begin with verses 1-3:

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

We are all familiar with this term *born again*. It is something that is used quite freely within the Church. Most of the time that I hear the use of that term, it is really referring to an initial salvation experience of the believer; and I am fine with that. If people want to use it to refer to an initial salvation experience, that is great. But I believe that here, Christ is referring to something that is separate and beyond just that initial salvation experience that the believer has.

Let’s go back to verse 3, read it again, and then continue on with these verses. “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’” He is talking about seeing the Kingdom of God. Now when Christ was being challenged at the trial, He said, “My Kingdom is not of this realm.” So according to Christ’s definition, His Kingdom, at this point, at least, was not of the realm of this earth; and that is why He said, “My disciples are not fighting and battling what is going on.” He was not dealing with things on a natural, physical plane, because His Kingdom that He was focused upon is not of this realm. So when He says you cannot see the Kingdom of God unless you are born again, He is talking about something beyond just the basic original salvation experience; and that gets clarified as we move forward in these verses.

Verses 4-6,

“Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

Now He is clearing up something here. He is talking about the fact that you must be born of water and the Spirit. This is where I think we see a delineation between the original salvation experience – which when someone believes in Christ and receives that salvation, we know that they are to be baptized in water, and that is really part and parcel of that initial salvation experience. He also says that he is to be born of water and of Spirit, giving this idea that there are two births that are taking place. “Unless one is born of water *and* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom.” So He is talking about two things, two elements that transpire here. I think we can see this in other places of the Scripture, and I want to just go there without losing the thought that we are in now, and see how that works.

We see in Titus the third chapter, verses 4-6, that it says,

But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Titus here is again referring to two experiences, both of which are necessary to enter the Kingdom. He is saying that He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, *by* the washing of regeneration *and* the renewing of the Holy Spirit which He poured out in Christ. And we know that is talking about the Day of Pentecost.

In Ezekiel we get the same sense, if we look at chapter 36, starting with verse 24. “For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land.” This is a prophecy to Israel, which we are in the process of seeing fulfilled right now. He is removing Israel, the Jewish people, from the nations, and He is bringing them back to the land of Israel. In verses 25-27, we will see these experiences that the Jewish people are to have.

“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart *and* put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.”

So here, again, we see what is clearly a two-step process for Israel in these last days, and as part of the restoration that they are experiencing. We see that He is going to sprinkle them with water; there is going to be a baptism that they undergo which is going to cleanse them from the filthiness of their flesh. But He is also going to take of His Spirit and put it upon them, so that they can walk in His ways.

Now we want to go back to John the third chapter and pick up this idea where we were in verses 5-6. “Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water *and* the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.’” So there are two births here. One is the salvation experience, which deals with the flesh, which deals with the removal of sin, and forgiveness of sin, and giving us eternal life. But there is also a birth by the Spirit into the Spirit, and this is what I am concerned about – that we not stop with a salvation experience that limits or leaves out this being born again into the world of spirit, the realm of spirit, that He is speaking of.

Verses 7-8, “Do not be amazed that I said you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Now when you look at verse 8, He is emphasizing this fact that He is

obviously talking about something that is not perceived or experienced on a natural level, a physical level, a level of just pure matter; He is talking about a realm of spirit. The spirit realm, we know, is not made up of matter as the physical realm is; and so, He is saying, "When you are talking about the Spirit, it is like the wind; it blows where it wishes. You may hear it, you may feel it, but you do not know where it is coming from, where it is going to; and so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

So we, as believers, have to ask ourselves, just in honesty, do we fit into this category? Do we really move in a way that is not understood or known or perceived from a natural level? For me, I think the answer to that question is no. I think believers, once they are saved, they move and live very much and mostly from a natural level, and in a natural world, focused upon a natural world. And I think that in and of itself is a sign that we have not really come into this birth into the Spirit that Christ is referring to here.

In verses 9-12,

Nicodemus said to Him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony. If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"

So again, Christ here is making a very clear distinction that there are things of the earth, there are things that are in this realm of matter and time and space; but there are also heavenly things, and these two worlds exist interspersed with one another. But unless you are born into the Spirit, you do not see the heavenly realm or the heavenly work.

You can say, "I don't get it, this is confusing to me. How can there be two worlds that exist simultaneously, whether they exist side by side, or whether they exist immersed within one another?" And I would say both. How does that exactly work? Well, if any generation should understand this, our generation should understand it; because right now, wherever you are, you are immersed in two worlds. You are immersed in a world that is seen around you, and you are immersed in an unseen. And I would venture to say that in the younger generation, most of their attention, really, is on those things which function out of the unseen, even though they are not relating to it that way; but they are living by that which is unseen. What we are talking about is the fact that you do not see radio waves wafting through your room, your house; you do not see television waves. We also recognize that in this day and age we have Wi-Fi; and not only do we have a modem that is attached to our house that is going to the provider of our Internet services, but within our home, we divide that signal and we send it around through all the rooms, so that no matter where we walk within our house, we are able to connect back to that modem, which is connecting back to our Internet provider, which is connecting off into the Internet.

We live surrounded by this unseen world; and yet, we seem to have such a hard time as believers in grasping and living in and to and through this spirit world and realm that is going on. Many times it is like, the way we live now, people know that those waves are there, but they do not really have an understanding; they cannot function within it, they cannot grasp it. It takes some kind of a connection to it. And that is the difference that Christ is talking about. The things that are of the earth are earthly; the things that are of heaven are spiritual. And we need to be experiencing, in this age, especially, a born-again experience into the realm of spirit so that we can function. It is not good enough just to know that it is there. If you ask any believer, they go, "Oh yes, I know heaven is there. Yes, heaven

exists.” But we are not supposed to just know that heaven exists. We were to be born into the heavenly realm, which is a realm of spirit.

Verses 13-16 go on to say,

“No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

This is really pointing to the totality of the salvation experience that God brought to us in His love through Christ. I want to go now to Galatians the fifth chapter and read a little bit more, because I want us to really have the clarity in ourselves that this spirit world, this spirit realm, is something that we are not to just know about; we are to literally engage in it, in as real a way as we live and walk in the natural realm.

It is very important that we relate to the natural realm that we are in. If we did not understand the rules of the natural world, we would destroy ourselves. If we did not understand gravity, we would end up killing ourselves. If we did not understand certain laws of physics, we would be self-destructive. We must know and understand. When we grow up as children, we learn all through our life about this natural, material world of time and space that we live in; we learn to cope with it and to exist within it in safety and with an ability to actually use the mechanics of the rules and the laws of this natural world. I believe it should be the same for us in the Spirit. I believe as adept as we are at living in a natural world, the world around us of material things, we should, as believers, having been born again into the Spirit, we should be just as adept at walking and living in the world of spirit.

That is really, I believe, what Christ was referring to when He said, “No one has ascended into heaven.” In other words, He is saying to Nicodemus, “You guys do not live in a spirit world. You do not live in the heavenly realm. The one who lives in the heavenly realm is Me, the One who descended.” That is what He is saying, back in John 3:13. He is recognizing that He very much knows and understands and lives in the spirit world. He came to the earth out of the spirit world, and He understands that mankind does not know and relate to the spirit world, but He does. And He has the intent to not just have us be born again from the sense of our sins being forgiven, in the washing of water through baptism; but He also has the intent, then, to bring us into the world that He came from and went back to, which is the heavenly realm, the realm of spirit. And that is what He makes clear: “Where I am, there My servant shall be also.” So we are able, with Christ, through Christ, and through the Holy Spirit, to come into this enabling to live, move, and relate in the spirit world.

The Scripture says that in Him we live and move and have our being; or, as the word is in the Greek, *I am*. So we have our existence in that realm where He is, in Christ. Where is Christ? We are where He is. By Spirit He says, “I am one with you, I am in you, I am around you; and you are in Me.” So we are in Him where He is now. This ability, this enabling to live, I think is something we have not focused on in a way that we should in order to grow up. Just as we had to be born into the natural world, and grow up in a natural world, learning about the natural world, how to live in it and how to function within it; we likewise, as believers, from the Day of Pentecost, being brought into a world, an age, of spirit, we were to learn to grow up and relate in the spirit world. I do not think we have accomplished that yet, but I think it is still for us to accomplish.

In Galatians the fifth chapter, it says in verses 14-15, "For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another." Boy, does that ever express the age we live in. Verse 16, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." Okay, we are to walk by the Spirit. Now we realize that when we get into this, there is an understanding that we need to have of what the Scripture is saying. If we do a little bit of Greek without getting lost in the weeds here, *pneumati* is the word being used; and it is the dative form of the word. Whenever you find the dative form, you can use several words, because the preposition is not really in the Greek; it is something we add for it to make sense in English. So we add *to*, or *in*, or *by*, or *with*, and we see that it can be the object.

What he is saying here we could translate in different ways: "But I say to you, walk *to* the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh." That is what we see in Galatians 5, verse 16; if we recognize that he is saying we can walk *by* the Spirit, we can walk *to* the Spirit, we can walk *in* the Spirit. See, it is expressing something in what is called the dative form of this noun *spirit*; which again, don't forget that *by* and *the* are added to have it make sense in English. That preposition is not found in the Greek itself, it is a form of the word. So you could say, "I say, walk *in* the Spirit"; "I say, walk *to* the Spirit"; "I walk *by* the Spirit"; maybe even "*for* the Spirit." So, I think if we wanted to choose – which is what is done here, because this is a translation, right? – so you are translating. The translator is using what seems to make the most sense. I would prefer to say, "Walk in the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh." So we can walk in the Spirit, and that is something that we should recognize is available for us to do.

We actually see the word in Matthew 5, the same Greek word for spirit, in this same form, used in verse 3: "Blessed are the poor *in* spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Same word, not being translated *by* the spirit – "Blessed are the poor *by* spirit, for theirs...." So, obviously, why did they use the preposition *in*? Because *by* does not make sense here. I am saying this so you recognize that in this dative form, when it is being translated, it is kind of the translator's choice of what they feel is the best way to use a preposition to express it; and they could use any of the five methods of the preposition *to*, *in*, *by*, *with*, *for*, with the object. Any of those would be correct, grammatically. It is trying to express the way that the action that you are talking about is really being done.

And so, that is what we have here. In Galatians 5:16-21, we are seeing that we are to...

...walk in the Spirit [by the Spirit, if you will], and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, [here, again, we could say, "if you are led in the Spirit,"] you are not under the Law. Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these.

In other words, that is not the end of the list; as long as that is, there is still more that could be added to it. And we see that wherever people are just moving by the flesh, just moving in the natural realm, that these personality traits are going to be in evidence.

Verses 22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." How do we get these aspects of personality into our being? we walk in the Spirit. They do not come because we go through just a salvation

experience and we are forgiven of our sins; but if we walk in just the flesh, if we live just in the natural world, you are going to see some of these other traits coming up. We see it all around us in believers. We see impurities, sensuality, immorality, unfortunately; outbursts of anger – I have seen one or two of those; jealousy and strife, enmity. We can say that the church for two thousand years has been filled with some of these things. Why? Because I don't think we have really reached into this birth in the Spirit, enabling us to walk in the Spirit, to live in the Spirit, by the Spirit. See, there is something else. And as I said, I think that we are in our salvation experience – as Christ said, we are to be born of water and the Spirit. We are born into the spirit world. And when we are born into the Spirit, in the Holy Spirit and in the spirit realm, which is into the Kingdom realm, then we begin to learn, as we are just children born into God, how to live and move in this realm and in this world. And I feel like we have missed this to an extent. I feel like it is something we need to go back to and really become spiritual beings as believers.

Verse 25, "If we live by the Spirit," or in the Spirit, "let us also walk in the Spirit." If we are living by this Spirit, because it is part of the salvation experience, then let us walk by, let us walk in, the spirit world. Can we walk and live? Again, "In Him we live, and move, and have our existence." We are to exist in this realm in which He exists. And I think too much we have emphasized, "Well, we are just waiting for His return." It kind of implies, "I just want Him to come back here into this realm, into this world, into this natural world of matter that I am so focused upon and living in. I don't really want to try to get into that world and live there." But there is so much for us in it. Look at the fruit of living in the Spirit: joy, peace, love, kindness, patience, goodness, gentleness, self-control – all these things become part of what we learn to live in when we learn to live in the Spirit. So, I believe that we have been born again. Yes, we have been born of the water, which is the purification from sin, the forgiveness of sin, the washing of filthiness, as it said in Ezekiel 36; but I think there is an experience other than that, which is having this new spirit put within us, enabling us to walk and live and move in the Spirit of God.

Christ, when He was ready to leave, spoke with the disciples, and I will just finish quickly with this. In John 16, verses 12-15, He says,

"I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you."

At this time, Christ was talking to the disciples. This was a huge transition for them, and He just says upfront, "You guys are not yet able to receive the things that I still have to tell you. But the Spirit, when He comes, the Spirit of truth, He is going to disclose, He is going to teach you, He is going to train you." I believe that we still live in a time where for us, as believers, there are many things that we still cannot seem to bear; truths of the Spirit that we are not yet able to grasp or bear. But I think it is time. You know, I think that as we walk in these days that we are in, seeing that we are obviously immersed in some level of the tribulation, as we look around us, one thing about this age is that I believe it should help us open up to walk in what we were not able to yesterday. When you are challenged on a level, you are able to receive things and do things that you could not before. And I think we are being challenged in the natural to open up and walk in the Spirit in a way that we, as the body of Christ, have not yet walked. But we will walk. And the Holy Spirit is here to teach us, to train us, to take us on into this life in the Spirit.

It is time for us as the body of Christ to be born into the spirit life that He spoke of when He talked to Nicodemus. And it is time for us to open up and receive and learn what we have not been able to receive or learn up to this time. But the Holy Spirit is with us, and He is here to train us, to teach us, to impart to us, and to disclose to us all that is to take place in the age in which we live.

I bless this Word to your hearts.

Amen.