

A New Birth for a New Life

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[0:00] James 1, beginning in verse 12. We'll read verses 12 through 18. Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

When tempted, no one should say, God is tempting me. For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.

And after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is full grown, gives birth to death. Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. Please open with me to James chapter 1.

A right view of God would save us from a multitude of errors. If we knew how holy and good God is, we would never complain in our trials and never blame God for our temptations.

[1:20] James says he's too holy and too good to tempt us to evil, to harm us in our trials. Indeed, his purpose in every trial, temptation, event is to test our faith, to develop our perseverance, and to perfect our holiness.

That's good.

He's not urging you to holiness one moment and tempting you to evil the next. He's only good and all he does is good. And that's the argument James uses, child of God.

This is why you can safely consider it all joy whenever you come into trials of many kinds.

Verse 2. And so I ask you, how did you do this week with that? That's the whole theme of this first half of the first chapter of James. How did you do last week with the political trials?

[2:51] Were you able, on the first response, to count it all joy when you came into political trials? That too is one of these kinds of trials. And we must know that he comes to do us good.

Always good. Only good. And James knows if we ever get a hold of that truth. Or to put it more correctly, if that truth ever gets a hold of us.

We'll not be the same. We'll not be the same people. So before moving on, he holds before us one of the highest proofs of God's goodness to us.

Read verse 18 with me aloud. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.

Now that's our text today, just verse 18. And it is intimately related to what's gone before it. And we'll see next week it's also tied to what comes after it.

[3:57] So it becomes kind of a transition text in chapter 1. But so far is God from temptiness to evil that he gave us a new birth in order to enable us to live a holy life.

Is that good or what? It also answers the dilemma, the problem of our own evil desires. Verse 12 tells us that the crown of life is promised to those who love him.

The crown of life is given to those who pass the test of trials and temptations. It's given to those who persevere under trial. And yet verses 14 and 15 tell me that my own evil desire entices me and drags me away into sin and leads to death.

How will I ever receive the crown of life when I have evil desires that would drag me down to death? Well, by way of a new birth, James says, a new birth.

God doesn't leave us at the mercy of our evil desires that would lead us to death. For in the new birth, God implants new desires. Desires to love and obey him.

[5:12] Desires to pursue and persevere in holiness. Now, what is this birth that he chose to give us? Verse 18. This birth. Well, it's spiritual birth.

It's being born again. One night a Pharisee came to talk with the Lord Jesus. His name was Nicodemus. He was one of the most religious men alive at the time. He was the teacher of Israel. And Jesus tells him flat out, right up. You must be born again, Nicodemus. In fact, you will never see or enter the kingdom of God unless you are born again. Because the flesh just gives birth to more flesh. And the spirit is the one who gives birth to spirit. Jesus knocked the spiritual wind out of Nicodemus with that statement. Because Nicodemus, as all the Pharisees, had a reputation that if anyone, if two people only make it into heaven, you can be sure one will be a Pharisee. They're good to go.

[6:19] But here's Jesus. And he's not saying, Nicodemus, you know, you're close. You're on the right way. You're getting warmer. No, you are so far from the kingdom of God that unless something supernatural happens to you, you will never perceive, much less enter the kingdom of God. God, God, the spirit must birth you, must bring you to life. You haven't even got to first base, Nicodemus. You've got to be born first. You got to start all over again. You came from your mother's womb, a spiritual stillborn. You were very much alive physically, but all your spiritual capacities have been ruined by the fall. So you need to be born again. Now, that's what James is talking about when he speaks about a birth here in verse 18. It's what theologians call regeneration. And the Bible gives us four helpful pictures of this work of God in the soul of man. It calls it a new birth, even as Jesus to Nicodemus.

[7:36] And in 1 Peter 1.3, Peter says, Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy, he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

He's given us a new birth. And that work of God is such a work that it makes us different people. It makes us so different. It's as if we had been born all over again. So that's the first picture of regeneration. It's a new birth. And that's the language that James is using. A birthing room in the hospital.

Birth. Secondly, regeneration is a new creation. Second Corinthians 5.17. Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation. All things have passed away. Behold, all things are become new. You see, the problem with man is not that he just needs a little fixing up.

[8:43] No, he must be created anew. Remade. It's like the casting that comes down the assembly line. And it's seriously flawed. It won't do.

So what do you do with it? Well, you can't just patch it. You send it back to the melting pot. And you pour it into the mold again. And you remake it. And you say, now that's the shape. That's what it was supposed to be from the start. It's been remade. Recreated. It's like that house in Leviticus 14 that was infected with a spreading mildew. And the Bible says you can't just scrape down the walls and replace a few infected stones. No, the infection is spread through the hole. So the whole house, timber, stone and mortar must be torn down. And a new house must be erected. A remaking.

[9:42] A recreating. That's the picture. And it leaves us different persons than what we were. The old me is gone. The old me is dead.

A new me has been born. All things become new. I have new desires that replace old desires. New thoughts replacing old ones. A new will. A new words. New priorities. New habits. New attitudes. New relationships. All things become new when a man is recreated.

A master of a certain slave was born again. And the slave immediately saw the changes in his life. And he said he looks like the same man on the outside. But he's a different man on the inside. That's recreation. He's a new creature. Still a work in process. Something of the old flesh remaining.

[10:48] But a new man. Indeed. The third picture of regeneration. Takes us into an operating room in the hospital. And it's the picture of a heart transplant.

Ezekiel 36.26. I will give you a new heart. And put a new spirit in you. I will remove from you your heart of stone. And give you a heart of flesh.

Children. When the Bible speaks about the heart like this. It's talking about the control center of your whole being. That center that determines all that's done.

It's the mind as it thinks. It's the affections as they desire. It's the will as it chooses. The heart. And this verse in Ezekiel says that our old heart was like stone.

It was hardened against God. It was stubbornly committed to our own way. It was impenetrable by God's word. It couldn't get in.

[11 : 48] It was stone. It was stone. We were unwilling and unable to do God's will. To submit to God's law. Or to submit to God's way of righteousness in Jesus Christ.

The stony heart. And that heart is taken out in the new birth. And a new heart is put in. A heart of flesh. Flesh that's soft and pliable.

That the word of God and the commands of Christ. And God himself can mold and shape as he wants it. And so a whole new direction is given to the minds and the affections and the will.

The heart is changed. It's a heart transplant. And this change of heart is a change of our very nature. Our nature.

There's a big black turkey vulture. One of those birds you see circling in the sky or maybe on the road. The red head.

[12 : 47] It looks like he dipped it in a paint of bucket. A bucket of red paint. It's the turkey vulture. And it has the nature of a turkey vulture. And that simply means that its idea of a grand feast is roadkill.

Dead animals. And so you give him a choice and you set before him a dead animal on one plate. And a fresh garden salad on the other.

And he chooses the stinking dead animal. And so you try your test the next day. And the next day. And the next day. And every time he chooses the roadkill over this fresh garden salad.

Why? Excuse me. Why? Because that's its nature. Its nature is to want dead animals.

Nobody's forcing him to take that instead of this. He really likes that. That's his appetite. Because it's his nature. To ever choose the garden salad.

[13 : 55] He would need to have a change of nature. He would need his vulture nature. Taken out. And replaced. With a rabbit nature.

That would go right after. And dig into that garden salad. And would wrinkle up his nose. At the roadkill. A change of nature. That's what this heart transplant is.

It's a change of nature. So now. It's not the vulture. Now it's the unregenerate sinner. On trial. There he is. With the heart that he was born with.

And we place before him. Sin. Sin. And holiness. And he chooses sin. So we come back the next day. And we give him the same choice.

Sin. Or obedience to God's laws. And he chooses sin. Every day. All day. That's his choice. Because that's his nature.

[14 : 54] That's his nature. He loves himself. Instead of God. He has an appetite for sin. Instead of holiness. A will to go his own way. Instead of God's way. And that is precisely why he must be born again.

Because he will never choose holiness over sin. Unless a new nature. With holy desires. Is given to him. To replace his old nature. It is the nature of unregenerate sinners to sin.

It is the nature of regenerate people. To live a holy life. Now this new nature is not perfect yet.

It's a work in process. The flesh remains within. But the predominant bias and direction of the new nature.

Is toward God now. And not toward sin. Toward his word. And not my way. Sin is against the grain. Of the new nature.

[15 : 59] Like roadkill. Is to a rabbit. So that's the third picture of this. Regeneration. It's a heart transplant. And then lastly. Regeneration.

Takes us to the cemetery. And says regeneration is. A resurrection. It's a resurrection. When we think about regeneration. We need to think about a man raised from the dead.

Take Lazarus for instance. He's been in the grave. Four days. He's good and dead. No question about it. But now he's alive.

No question about that either. That's regeneration. It's resurrection from the dead. The Bible describes the unregenerate man. As dead in transgressions and sins.

Ephesians 2. 1. Dead in sin. That's the unregenerate man. Now these are the walking dead. They're physically alive. But they're spiritually dead.

[16 : 57] And this was us. Very alive to sin. Very alive to what we want. But as unresponsive to God and his will.

As if we were dead. Living as if he didn't exist. Dead toward God. And it was then. Colossians 3.12 says.

Or 2.13 says. It was then. When you were dead in your sins. That God made you alive with Christ. Dead. Made alive. That's resurrection.

And that's the picture. Of regeneration given to us. Amazing. Life from the dead. Do you realize that becoming a Christian.

Has been diminished so. So much in our day. Becoming a Christian. Has been diminished to. Such a little thing. Such an easy thing. Such a human thing.

[17 : 54] It's a decision. That I made. It's a prayer. That I prayed. It's. It's an aisle. That I walked. It's a baptism. That I. Performed. It's a new leaf. That I turned over.

When. In reality. It's nothing less than a. A staggering resurrection. From the dead. That the same divine power. That raised Christ from the dead.

Raised me. From spiritual death. So. No small thing. Resurrection. Is being raised from the dead. It's getting a new heart. It's.

It's being recreated. It's being born all over again. Regeneration. Is as radical. As it is supernatural. That's the teaching of the Bible. There's nothing little.

About it. There's nothing easy about it. There's nothing. Human about it. It is all of God. And his supernatural power. Now that's the birth. That James.

[18 : 50] Is talking about. That's a long introduction. To. To. To what James is saying. But we must understand. When he says. He chose to give us birth. What is this birth? It's that.

It's that. So here in verse 18. James tells us. Three. Things. About. The new birth. It's cause. It's instrument. And it's purpose.

And next week. We'll see it's proof. But. Three things this morning. Number one. The cause. Of the new birth. He chose. To give us birth. Can language. Be any clearer.

Do you see that? He chose. To give us birth. Child of God. The new birth. Is not something. You chose. For yourself. He chose. To give us.

Birth. He. Who's the he? He's. That is. Our. Good. And unchanging. Father of lights. In verse 17. And in his goodwill. He chose.

[19 : 46] To give us. Birth. Birth. The he is emphatic. In the Greek. The King James. Picks up on this emphasis. In his translation. And it says.

Of his. Own. Will. He begat us. He chose. It was. His own. Will. To bring us.

To birth. It was. God's. Own. Deliberate. Choice. Not man's. It was entirely. The decision. Of his will. Not ours. It's something. He decided. Not we.

We. Now. Joel Denham. Is left. This morning. But he was born. On October 28th. I say.

He's left. They've gone out. He was. Talking to us. Wasn't he? But. He was born. On October 28th. But. He didn't choose. To be born. There.

[20 : 38] There's no. Nursery. In the skies. Of the spirits. Of babies. Waiting. To be born. That. That. Choose. Say. I want to be born. Now. Or I want to be born. Then.

I want to be born. In this family. Or that family. No. No. Babies. Don't choose. To be born. And even so. Child of God. You. Were born again.

But you didn't choose. To be born again. You were given birth. But you didn't choose. To be given birth. He chose. To give us birth. John 1.13.

Speaking of children of God. Who were born. Not of natural descent. Nor of a human decision. Of a husband's will. But were born. Of God. Indeed.

When Jesus talked to Nicodemus. About this new birth. He says. That the wind blows. Wherever it pleases. We've seen a lot of wind. Or at least the leaves.

[21 : 33] That are blown by the wind. Recently. Well the wind blows. Wherever it pleases. So it is. With everyone. Born of the spirit. He blows.

Where he pleases. He is sovereign. In who he gives. New life to. Who he brings. To birth. He chose. It was his choice. To give you birth.

You see. The truth is. If it was left up to you. You would never have chosen. To be born again. Because an unregenerate heart. Seeks only self and sin. Never God and holiness. Ephesians 2. Verses 1 to 5. Tell us. What we were like. Before we were born again. We lived in sin. We followed the ways of this world. The ways of Satan. We gratified the cravings. Of our own sinful nature. That's just saying that. We ate roadkill. We did what our natures wanted. And what did they want? They wanted to go our own way. [22 : 34] They wanted sin. Gratifying the cravings. Of our sinful nature. And following its desires. And thoughts. Until God. Who is rich in mercy.

Made us alive with Christ. Even when we were dead. In transgressions. For it is by grace. That you have been saved. Had he not chosen. To give us birth. And to make us alive. We would still. Be following. Be following. The cravings. Of our own. Sinful desire. We would still. Be carrying out. The evil desires. Within us. We'd still be rejecting God. Wrinkling up our nose. At his son. At his laws. His gospel. We'd still be on the broad road. To destruction. No. God. Is the cause. Of. Our new birth. It's his choice. [23 : 29] And that means. Fellow Christian. You have him to thank for it. You have God to thank. For your new birth. Your faith and repentance.

Are not the cause. Of the new birth. Your faith and repentance. Are the result. Of the new birth. You see. Faith and repentance. Is not what the unregenerate heart wants. It wants to go our own way. Not. Toward Christ. Away from Christ. And it's God. Who chooses to give us new birth. That we might come to Christ. And repent of our sins. And find eternal life. In him. Thine eye. Diffused. A quickening ray. I woke. The dungeon flamed with light. My chains fell off. My heart was free. I rose. Went forth. And followed thee. I didn't follow you. [24 : 26] And then. Your eye said. Oh. He's going to follow me. So now. I'll give him a quickening ray. No. No. Quickenings means life giving. That comes first. Thine eye. Diffused.

The quickening ray. Zap. Down came life. I'm alive. And now. My eyes are open. I see. And my chains fall off. And now. I rise. And I come to Christ. And I follow him. I repent. Turn from my ways. And follow him. It took God's sovereign decision. To interrupt. Our chosen path to hell. To give us. New birth. That's what he did for us. Now can you see why James puts this verse. Where he does. In James chapter 1. He's holding before us. The new birth. As an expression. Of the greatness. Of God's goodness to us. How can you ever question. God's goodness. In your trials. And in your temptations. When of his own good will. [25 : 24] He chose to give you birth. He didn't leave you dead. In your sins. But he made you alive. With Christ. He changed your nature. So that now. Your heart responds.

Favorably. To him. Can you not see. That his goodness. Is the very fountain. Of your salvation. That's why you believed. That's why you came to Christ. Because this good God. Chose. To bring you to birth. How good. He has been to us. Where do you find. That kind of goodness. In the earth today. What king. Is so good. To citizens. Who are traitors. And rebels. Think about. All that was working. Against. You. As God. Is choosing. Who he will give. Birth to. Think of all. That he had. Against choosing. [26 : 19] You. To give birth to. Think of your pride. And self-righteousness. That are so. Obnoxious. To God. Think of.

Think of. Your sin. Which he calls. An abomination. That I hate. Think of all the times. You. Counted your own pleasure. And will. As more important. Than God's. Think of all the times. You resisted. The Holy Spirit. Wishing he'd leave you alone. So you could be comfortable. In your sin. Of all the times. You rejected. Jesus Christ. His glorious son. Whom he loves. I say. Any one of those things. Would have shriveled up. My goodness. If I were God. I won't choose him. I'd have said of me. But such is the goodness. Of the heart of God. That none of that. Was able to stop him. [27 : 15] From choosing to give me birth. That's the God. Who has you in that present trial. That's the God. Who has only purposes for good.

Even in your temptations. Where Satan is seeking to get you to sin. Then what shall I render to God. For all his goodness to me.

Well let me start. By not complaining. Of the trials he sends me. To make me holy. But let me consider it. Pure joy.

Let me. Stop. Blaming him. For my temptations. And thinking that he's evil. Rather than unchanging good.

Let me go on then. To praise him. For his overflowing goodness. That chose to give me birth. When I was dead in sin. And cared nothing about him. And let me go on.

[28 : 12] To present the parts of my body. Unto him. As one who is alive from the dead. Because that's indeed what I am. I'm like one who was just snatched out of the death.

Out of death. Snatched from the fire. I'm like one who was raised right out of the cemetery. And I have new life. What am I to do with this life? Oh I am to present the parts of my body.

Not to sin anymore. But to God. As one who has been brought from life. Out of death to life. So that's the first thing James tells us about the new birth.

He chose to give it to us. He's the cause of it. Secondly. It's instrument. What is the instrument of the new birth?

Are there any means that God uses? Well he chose to give us birth through the word of truth. Through the word of truth. The word of truth has always been the instrument of God.

[29 : 13] Both to create and to recreate. Think of creation. The Bible bends over backwards to emphasize this to us. Psalm 33.6. By the word of the Lord.

Were the heavens made their starry host by the breath of his mouth. Genesis 2 and verse 3. And God said let there be light. God said. God spoke the words.

And there was light. And we can multiply texts that say the same thing. Long ago by God's word the heavens existed. By God's word they existed.

The word has ever been the tool. The instrument that he uses to create things. And it's also the tool. The instrument he uses to recreate.

It's through the word of God that men are recreated in Christ Jesus. It's through the word that they're born again. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth.

[30 : 10] So what did we see last week in studying Martin Luther? We saw that when God was about to bring Martin Luther to birth. He has his counselor say why don't you become a professor?

And that would just so happen to mean that he needs to lock himself away in the study. With the scriptures. And for ours to pour over the word of truth.

That he might then lecture on it. You see it's the word of truth. That was the instrument that God used. To say to bring to birth.

His servant Martin. And then there's Lydia. Down along the river there. With some other women. In Acts chapter 16. And it's as Paul is preaching the word to her.

That we read the Lord opened her heart. That she might respond to Paul's message. When did the Lord open. That's the heart transplant. That's the work on the heart.

[31 : 13] Taking out the heart of stone. Putting in the heart of flesh. When did God do that? As Paul preached. The word. The message. The message of truth.

The word of truth is the scalpel. That God uses. To perform the heart transplant. And brothers and sisters. It was the same with you.

That's what James is telling us here. It's what Peter tells us in 1 Peter 1.23. For you. You have been born again. Not of perishable. But of imperishable. But of imperishable.

Through the living. And enduring word of God. Should we be surprised. If God uses the living word. To bring people.

To life. The words alive. And by it. He brings dead sinners to life. Now the word of truth.

[32 : 10] Means it's a reliable word. It's true. It's true. Through and through. Amen. And though it refers to all that God says. It refers specifically to the gospel truth. Ephesians 1.13.

And you also were included in Christ. When you heard the word of truth. The gospel. Of your salvation. So God uses his own word.

To create. He uses his own word. To recreate. Sinners. To give them new birth. And he uses his word as the instrument as well.

In resurrection. Not only in creation and recreating. But it's the instrument in resurrection. Another term for this new birth. What does Christ do.

At the grave of Lazarus. What's the tool he uses. To give life to this dead man. Well it's his own word. Isn't it? He spoke.

[33:09] And he said to the dead man. Lazarus. Come forth. And the dead man came forth. It was the word. Of truth.

A power attended. Christ's words. To enable the dead Lazarus. To come out of the grave. And to obey his command.

Take the dead man at name. There he is. Laying out on the stretcher. And Jesus said. To him. Young man. I say to you. Get up. And the power went with the word.

And that became the instrument. To bring life. To that dead man. And so it is. With every chosen sinner. Dead in trespasses. And sins.

In the gospel. Jesus speaks. And what does he say? He says. Come to me. All you who are weary. And heavy laden. And I will give you rest. Come to me. And a recreating power.

[34:07] Attends. His gospel. And creates new minds. And new affections. And new wills. And the hearts. Of sinners. So that they. Do just what they were told to do.

Come to Christ. Christ. They come to Christ. They're born again. By the living. And enduring. Word of God. The Lord Jesus says.

In John 5. I tell you the truth. And whenever he says that. He's going to tell us something. That we might doubt. Because everything he says. Is the truth. But he prefaces.

What. What might seem. Unbelievable. To us. He prefaces it. With these words. This formula.

Verily. Verily. I say unto you. I tell you the truth. This is what he says.

I tell you the truth. A time is coming. And has now come. Right now. As Jesus is alive. Standing there. On the earth. It has now come. When the dead.

[35:04] Will hear the voice. Of the son of God. And those who hear. Will live. For as the father. Has life in himself. So he has granted the son. To have life in himself.

He's not talking about. The end of times. He's not talking about. When he comes back. He's about to say that. Later on. In the same chapter. In verse 28. He says. That the dead.

Who are in their graves. Will hear the voice. Of the son of God. When he comes back. And the dead. Will live. The righteous. Will go to everlasting life. And sinners. Will go to everlasting Torments.

He's not talking about that. Now. He's talking about. Right now. As he's on the earth. The dead hear his voice. And live. The spiritually dead. Hear his voice.

And live. It's his voice. That is the instrument. For the new birth. And that's why. We preach the word of God. Even to those. Who are dead in sin. That's why you witness.

[35:57] And speak the word of God. To those. Who have no spiritual life. At all. We might say. Why should we? They have no ears. To hear. They have no eyes.

To see. They have no heart. To embrace. This savior. No mind. To understand. This gospel. Why do we? Because it's in the midst.

Of presenting. The word. That God is pleased. To use that word. To bring. Sinners. To life. It's his instrument. To unstop.

The ears. To give eyes. To see. To create new hearts. To embrace. Christ. And his truth. You have that picture. Of it. In. Ezekiel 37. An illustration. Of this point.

Where. Ezekiel is. Taken down. Into a valley. And it's filled. With very dry bones. And. And God says. Can these bones live? And Ezekiel says.

[36:50] Lord only you know. And then he's told. To preach. To those bones. Preach. To those bones. And say to them. Dry bones.

Hear. The word. Of the Lord. This is what. The sovereign Lord. Says to these bones. I will make breath. Enter you. And you will come to life. I will attach. Tendons to you. And make flesh.

Come upon you. And cover you a skin. I will put breath. Into you. And you will come to life. So. Ezekiel says. I prophesied.

As he commanded me. And breath. Entered them. And they came to life. And stood up. On their feet. A vast army. What a beautiful. Illustration. Of the point. That James is making.

It's through the hearing. Of the word. That they came to life. He chose to give you life. Through the word. Of truth. And so it's been.

[37:46] Over and over. This has ever been. God's instrument. Of the new birth. Nothing looks more futile. And silly. Than preaching. To dry bones. It's like telling you.

To go out. To the cemetery. North of town. And to preach. Preach. Preach louder. Preach longer. Preach harder. You say. Why? They're dead.

That is precisely. The situation. Anytime. The gospel is preached. To a lost person. They are as dead. As the people. North of town.

And yet. God sends us. To preach. And to give the word. Why? Because that's the instrument. He'll use. To bring life. Into them. And to make them. Stand up. And to follow.

Christ. Faith. Like the new birth. Comes by hearing. The message. The message is heard. Through the word of Christ. Oh it's a despised way. Isn't it?

[38:42] It's a despised word. The word of the cross. The word about. A savior. Who. Who saves his people. Not by. Riding on some horse. Coming in to conquer. Some.

He saves his people. By his bloody death. On the cross. And the world. Just sneers at it. But that message.

Of the cross. That word. Of the cross. Is the very instrument. That God uses. As the power. Of God. Unto salvation. Will we believe it? Will we go on.

Setting. The word. Before. Our unconverted. Friends. And family members. Because we believe. That this word. Is his instrument. Through which it gives birth.

To dead sinners. Parents. Are you continually. Setting God's word. Before your children. Are your unconverted children.

[39:38] Hearing. The word of God. From you. In the home. Are you encouraging them. To read the scriptures. When's the last time.

You. You've asked your son. Or daughter. Are you reading the Bible. Folks. It's. It's the instrument. God uses. To give new birth. Why would we not. Be using it.

Why would we not. Be pressing them. To be reading it. Are you eager. To get others. To come and hear. The word of God. Are you telling it. To them. Because God chooses.

To give birth. Through. The word of truth. The instrument. Of the new birth. Is.

The word. Of truth. And lastly. The purpose. Of the new birth. What's the goal. God's aiming at. Well. To enable us. To live a new life. A new life.

[40:32] Of holiness. To the Lord. He chose. To give us birth. Through the word. Of truth. That. There's the. The purpose. Clause. So that. We might. Be a kind. Of first fruits.

Of all he created. Now he takes us out. Into the field. At harvest times. And there we see. The field is. Just. Ripe. And the first harvesters.

Go in. And they cut. The first sheaves. And they bring. The first fruits. Back. To the sanctuary. Of God. The temple. And they present it. To God. You see.

By law. The first fruits. Belong to God. They're his. They're holy. They're set apart. To God. And so they're presented. To him. They're offered. To him. The first fruits. Of the whole field.

Are offered. To God. That was true. Not only the fields. It was true. Of the womb. It was true. Of all that they had. They were to honor. The Lord. With the first fruits. Of all their increase. Much of our harvest.

[41:29] As you go through. The countryside. Have already been brought in. But. The very beginning. Of the harvest. The first fruits. Were consecrated. To God. God. Romans 11.

6. Says that the first fruits. Are holy. That means that they are. They're set apart for God. They're his. They're dedicated to him. And Jeremiah 2.

And verse 3. Says Israel was holy. To the Lord. The first fruits. Of his harvest. Out of all the nations. Of the world. It was Israel. That was. Set apart.

As his first fruits. His nation. Spared. When God in wrath. Struck down. The first born. Of Egypt. They were the first fruits.

Of their manhood. And so Israel. Is his first fruits. His first born. Believers. You're to think of yourself. As God's first fruits.

[42:23] Of all that he's created. What a privilege. To be his. To belong to him. Amen. Your new birth. Sets you apart. From all the other peoples.

Of the earth. From all that he has created. You're set apart. You are the people. Belonging to God. You are the people. Who are dedicated to him. And to the pursuit.

Of holiness. Because you see. A people who realize. They're his. Realize they're not their own. You're not your own. You've been bought. At a price. Therefore glorify God. In your body.

Which is his. Paul says. The same thing. In Ephesians 1. 4. When he says. He chose us. In him. Before the creation. Of the world. To be holy. And blameless.

In his sight. James is saying. This is why he chose. To give you birth. That you might be holy. That you might be set apart.

[43 : 15] To live unto God. And so John Blanchard says. Our lives are to be marked. By a holiness. That immediately. Distinguishes us. From the rest. Of mankind.

You're the first fruits. Of all he's created. You're his. You belong to him. You're set apart. As holy to him. And so we show.

Our thanksgiving. For God's goodness. To us. And giving us new birth. By living. Unto him. Being his. First fruits.

In the earth. So the new birth. Is the starting point. Of our. Sanctification. You can't. Start to be holy. Without. A new birth.

Without the new birth. There can be no holy living. Spurgeon says. Without the new birth. All efforts for holiness. Would be like. Scrubbing. A dirty mud floor. In a mud hut. With hot water. The results.

[44 : 10] Would be. Only a muddy. Mess. It's impossible. To live a holy life. Without this new birth. This. Starting over. This.

Heart transplant. This recreation. And so God. Finds us. Like a car. Set on a racetrack. Without an engine. How can it. How can it go around the track. Without an engine. So in our unregeneracy. There's no way. We can. We can run the race. Of holiness.

We don't have it in us. And so he comes. And gives us. New birth. Changes our hearts. That we might have. A new nature. Willing to do.

What he commands. Do you see. The goodness of God. In the new birth. In choosing to give you. A new birth. He doesn't send you. To make straw. Or to make bricks. Without giving you. Straw.

[45 : 04] He doesn't send you. To live a holy life. Without first. Giving you. A holy nature. A new nature. He chose. To give us. This birth. So that we might be. Able to persevere.

Under trial. We might be. Able to stand the test. Able to love God. And so to receive. The crown of life. That he's promised. To those who love him. It's all of grace. It's all of his goodness.

So how can you ever. Doubt the goodness of God. In your trials. How can you ever. Blame God. For. For wanting to do you harm. And tempting you. To do evil. That's. That's. What James is telling us.

In verse 18. Lost person. Perhaps you've seen this morning. You can't get to first base. Unless God does something to you. You need to be born again.

And you can't. Birth yourself. And you're frustrated. May I warn you. Not to blame God. For the condition. Of your heart. Do you realize.

[46 : 02] My friend. That the only thing. That keeps you from Christ. Is your own unwillingness. To have him. That's all. He's ready to have you. He's ready to receive you. It's just your unwillingness.

So. So go before him. And confess your unwillingness. And say Lord. Change this wretched heart of mine. From the stony condition. To make it soft.

And pliable. To hear your gospel. To come to your Christ. Go to him. At once. Don't sit and wait. Go to him. The command is right now. Come to me. Come to me. So you go to him. Right now. And tell him that. You heard his words. To come to you. I heard you say.

Come to me Lord. And you said. All who come to me. You will in no wise cast out. Cast yourself upon his mercy. And he will save you. Let's pray.

[46 : 58] Lord we do thank you. For your goodness to us. And choosing to give us birth. We thank you that that word of truth. Came to us. And more than letter. But with power. With the Holy Spirit.

And with deep conviction. And we pray Lord. That as you have proven to us. Such wonderful goodness. We would never again doubt it.

We would not allow. Any situations in our life. To cast doubt upon this one thing. That we know. That you are God. Have nothing but good. In store for your people. Oh how blessed we are. That you interrupted our lives. And our mad rush to hell. And gave us a new birth. And made Christ. To appear in new light. And made him precious to us.

And drew us after him. Thank you for interrupting. Our families. And saving those in them. And changing. Lord what what different. What a difference our families are.

[47 : 56] What a difference our church is. What a difference all of life is. Because you chose to give us birth. And what a difference eternity will be. And we owe it all to you.

So then. Receive the end. For which you've done this. Make us your first fruits. Who realize we're yours. We're no longer ours. Help us to live holy lives unto you.
For your praise. And your praise alone. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.