Theology: The Doctrine of Regeneration – Week 14

Truth

Suggested Memory Verse
John 1:12-13
But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (ESV)

Introduction

Too often we think the forgiveness of our sins is the totality of our salvation. While God’s forgiveness of us is essential and wonderful, we can praise God that our salvation is even greater than forgiveness. We’re on our second of four weeks studying some of the parts our salvation like election, regeneration, conversion, justification, sanctification, and glorification. These aren’t just fun doctrinal truths. Trusting these truths can change our feelings and actions, by replacing the lies that lead to wrong feelings and actions.

TRUTH

1. Do these definitions of regeneration fit with the following Scripture passages? Write below what parts of these definitions you think agree or disagree with Scripture, and/or what questions you have.

Definitions of Regeneration:

- “The concept is of God renovating the heart; the core of a person’s being, by implanting a new principle of desire, purpose, and action, a dispositional dynamic that finds expression in positive response to the gospel and its Christ.” J.I. Packer
- “Regeneration is a secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to us.” Wayne Grudem

Scripture Passages:

- John 1:12-13
- John 3:1-8
- 2 Corinthians 5:17-18
2. What do these verses say about the natural spiritual state of every person?
   Scripture passages:
   - Eph 2:1-5
   - 1 Corinthians 2:14
   - Psalm 51:5
   - Matthew 7:17

3. Based on the above verses, why would regeneration be a necessary part of salvation?

4. Would regeneration happen to a person before or after they placed their faith in Christ? Why?

5. Based on the Scripture passages we’ve looked at this week, what would you say if someone told you they decided to be regenerated?

6. According to 1 John 2:29, what evidence is there of regeneration? According to 1 John 1:8-10, what is also true of those who have been regenerated?

7. If we are spiritually regenerated, why does Paul say we still struggle with sin in Romans 7:21-25?

8. Read Galatians 5:16-25, and based on it (and our previous passages) do you agree or disagree with the following paragraph? Why?
It’s important to remember that our old, natural, sinful self has been crucified with Christ and is dead. We are now spiritually alive, and have been given a new heart that wants to obey God’s law. However, while our old man is dead, it has not been completely removed and can feel like it still has authority over us. We can repent, believe, and fight because we are regenerated and born again, and when we do, our old man, or the flesh, grows weaker.
Equipping

1. The following quote from theologian John Murray discusses how a believer has been delivered from the dominion of sin through regeneration. Use the space below to write about a besetting sin of yours, and how the quote might help you to fight it.

“There must be a constant and increasing appreciation that though sin still remains it does not have the mastery. There is a total difference between surviving sin and reigning sin, the regenerate in conflict with sin and the unregenerate complacent to sin. It is one thing for sin to live in us: it is another for us to live in sin. It is one thing for the enemy to occupy the capital; it is another for his defeated hosts to harass the garrisons of the kingdom. It is of paramount concern for the Christian and for the interests of his sanctification that he should know that sin does not have the dominion over him, that the forces of redeeming, regenerative, and sanctifying grace have been brought to bear upon him in that which is central to his moral and spiritual being…”¹

2. Pastor Martin Lloyd-Jones once said, “Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself?”² Read the following case study and discuss below where Maria needs to quit listening to herself, and what change in her life would occur if she talked to herself about the doctrine of regeneration.

Maria has been a Christian for as long as she can remember, but she really grew spiritually in college. The staff of her campus ministry poured their lives into their walks with God and into students like her. Since college she has thought the life of a spiritually mature person would look just like those staff members, but the pressures of her job and family responsibilities keep her from a life like that. She has resigned herself that she doesn’t have time to grow or to obey like they do. She does recognize her sinful need and push for control in all her life, but she doesn’t seek growth because she feels she’ll never have power over that sin.

Accountability

1. Where in your life have you adopted a false identity as just a “born sinner,” but surrendered the new part of your identity as a Christian, “born saint?”

2. What sins in your life have not been brought out into the light to Christian friends so they can help you fight them?

3. Are there things you’ve confessed to your group so far this year that you would still like help fighting?
Mission

How does the truth of regeneration change how you pray for non-believers?

What freedom does regeneration give you when it comes to sharing the gospel of Christ with others?

Who are the three people (non-church, non-believers) you are praying for?

1. ____________________________
2. ____________________________
3. ____________________________

Steps I have taken or will take to connect with them:

1. _____________________________________________
2. _____________________________________________
3. _____________________________________________
Supplication

Spend time praising God for his love shown in regeneration.

Pray for your lost neighbors, friends, and family.

What needs do you have that your group can be praying for?

What’s one area of godliness that you can pray for each other about?