

*Redemption
Accomplished
and Applied*

by John Murray

Eleventh Lecture

Presented by Dr. Richard Spencer

Review

- We are discussing Redemption Applied
- Here is Murray's order of the events in the application of redemption:
 1. Effectual calling
 2. Regeneration
 3. Faith and Repentance
 4. Justification
 5. Adoption
 6. Sanctification
 7. Perseverance
 8. Union with Christ
 9. Glorification

Chapter 3: Regeneration

- This is a major controversy in the modern church:
 - Does regeneration, or new birth, precede faith?
 - Or is regeneration God's response to our faith?
- This is of major theological importance, especially in terms of how we evangelize
- We will repeat some of what we covered in connection with the extent of the atonement, but let's look at what the Bible says

Effectual calling
Regeneration
Faith & Repentance
Justification
Adoption
Sanctification
Perseverance
Union with Christ
Glorification

What Does the Bible Say?

- The Bible says that people are dead in sins, not sick or mortally wounded, and dead people do not respond to any call on their own

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins ... But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

Eph 2:1, 4-5

What Does the Bible Say?

- We are also clearly told that no one seeks God and that we were slaves to sin

There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.

Romans 3:10-12

When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.

Romans 6:20

- An unregenerate person is a slave to sin

What Does the Bible Say?

Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. Romans 8:8

This [praying for others] is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2:3-4

- The sinful man cannot please God – but coming to faith in Christ would clearly please God (his will of disposition or benevolence, as opposed to his decretive or preceptive will), so we can conclude that an unregenerate person cannot come to faith

What Does the Bible Say?

- Remember that Jesus said

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.

John 6:44

- We pointed out that the Greek verb used is ἔλκω, which means to move by irresistible force and is translated elsewhere by the verb drag
- Coming to faith is not possible for the natural man, God must do a work first

What Does the Bible Say?

- Jesus also said,
“The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. He went on to say, *“This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him.”* John 6:63-65
- The Father must enable a person to come to faith; and note that Jesus himself preached to these people, but they still could not believe

What Does the Bible Say?

- The gospel is foolishness to anyone who has not been born of the Spirit,

the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

1 Corinthians 1:18

we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. ... This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Corinthians 2:7, 13-14

What Does the Bible Say?

- Jesus told Nicodemus,

I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. ... I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

John 3:3, 5

- Born of the Spirit is obvious, it refers to new birth, but what about the water?

Born of Water and The Spirit

- Murray points out that

Jesus did not say baptism; he says water. ... Now what religious idea would we expect to be conveyed to the mind of Nicodemus by the use of the word “water”? Of course, the idea associated with the religious use of water in that religious tradition and practice which provided the very context of Nicodemus’ life and profession. ... the religiously symbolic meaning of water, pointed in one direction, and that direction is purification. All the relevant considerations would conspire to convey to Nicodemus that message. RA&A, pg 97

Born of Water and The Spirit

- Murray goes on to say

The characteristic sin of the pharisees was self-complacency and self-righteousness. What they needed was to be convinced of their own pollution and the need of radical purification. It is this lesson that the expression “born of water” would have conveyed most effectively.

RA&A, pg 98

Born of Water and The Spirit

- Also look at what Paul wrote in Ephesians 5,
Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. Eph 5:25-27
- The Word of God is this cleansing “water” – we turn to the Word to see our sin so that we can put it to death, and to see Christ our Savior and Lord to see how to be holy

Born of Water and The Spirit

- Now look at the rest of John's statement:

I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. ... I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. ... The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.

John 3:3, 5, 8

- The Spirit is like the wind, we can't control it; regeneration is a monergistic work of God

Born of Water and The Spirit

- This understanding of John 3:3-8 is in complete agreement with the passage in Ezekiel, which speaks of both cleansing and rebirth;

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 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.

Ezek 36:25-26

Murray Summarizes

Regeneration must negate the past as well as reconstitute for the future. It must cleanse from sin as well as recreate in righteousness RA&A, pg 98

These elements, the purificatory and the renovatory, must not be regarded as separable events. They are simply the aspects which are constitutive of this total change by which the called of God are translated from death to life and from the kingdom of Satan into God's kingdom, a change which provides for all the exigencies of our past condition and the demands of the new life in Christ, a change which removes the contradiction of sin and fits for the fellowship of God's Son. RA&A, pg 100

John's First Epistle

- In addition to his gospel, the apostle John also wrote the epistle we call 1st John, and it speaks of regeneration many times
- He speaks of the concomitance between the divine righteousness and begetting;

If you know that he [Christ] is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

1 John 2:29

- In other words, if we are Christ's siblings by new birth, we will share in his righteousness

John's First Epistle

- He also writes about the believer's deliverance from the bondage of sin and that the cause is his new nature (God's seed);

No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.

1 John 3:9

- This speaks of a change wrought in us by God, through new birth, which has power to permanently change us; this same idea is included in the other references in 1st John ...

John's First Epistle

- Biblical love, which characterizes believers, is the result of new birth;

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

1 John 4:7

- As John wrote in his gospel:

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

John 13:34-35

John's First Epistle

- Saving faith is tied to new birth;

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God

1 John 5:1

- So is leading an overcoming life;

everyone born of God overcomes the world

1 John 5:4

- And so is being safe from Satan's attacks;

We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.

1 John 5:18

Murray Summarizes

We are not born again by faith or repentance or conversion; we repent and believe because we have been regenerated. ... The embrace of Christ in faith is the first evidence of regeneration and only thus may we know that we have been regenerated.

The priority of regeneration might create the impression that a person could be regenerated and yet not converted. ... We need to remember again that the leading emphasis in these passages is the invariable concomitance of regeneration and the other graces mentioned.

RA&A, pg 103

continued

Murray Summarizes

The regenerate person cannot live in sin and be unconverted. And neither can he live any longer in neutral abstraction. He is immediately a member of the kingdom of God, he is spirit, and his action and behaviour must be consonant with that new citizenship. In the language of the apostle Paul, “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things have passed away, behold they have become new” (2 cor. 5:17)

RA&A, pg 104

My Summary

- Regeneration is a radical, permanent, work of God alone in which we are entirely passive; think of the metaphors used:
 - New birth
 - New heart
 - New creation
 - We are not told we are made well or merely healed or rescued from disaster
- Without rebirth, no one comes to saving faith in Christ and all who are born again do come to saving faith; this faith unites us to Christ

Evangelism

- Murray correctly notes that
A cheap and tawdry evangelism has tended to rob the gospel which it proclaims of that invincible power which is the glory of the gospel of sovereign grace. May the church come to think and live again in terms of the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. RA&A, pg 105
- The result of faulty evangelism is a faulty church, “having a form of godliness but denying its power” (2 Tim 3:5)
- J.I. Packer said it well in 1959

J.I. Packer wrote in 1959

we have during the past century bartered [the true] gospel for a substitute product which, though it looks similar enough in points of detail, is as a whole a decidedly different thing. ... The new gospel conspicuously fails to produce deep reverence, deep repentance, deep humility, a spirit of worship, a concern for the church. ... One way of stating the difference between it and the old gospel is to say that it is too exclusively concerned to be 'helpful' to man – to bring peace, comfort, happiness, satisfaction – and too little concerned to glorify God. ...

continued

J.I. Packer wrote in 1959

the themes of man's natural inability to believe, of God's free election being the ultimate cause of salvation, and of Christ dying specifically for His sheep, are not preached. ... the result of these omissions is that part of the biblical gospel is now preached as if it were the whole of that gospel; and a half-truth masquerading as the whole truth becomes a complete untruth. Thus, we appeal to men as if they all had the ability to receive Christ at any time; we speak of His redeeming work as if He had done no more by dying than make it possible for us to save ourselves by believing; ...

continued

J.I. Packer wrote in 1959

we speak of God's love as if it were no more than a general willingness to receive any who will turn and trust; and we depict the Father and the Son, not as sovereignly active in drawing sinners to themselves, but as waiting in quiet impotence 'at the door of our hearts' for us to let them in.

J.I. Packer, introductory essay to John Owen's work *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, 1959

True Regeneration

- True regeneration *must and will* produce the effect of increasing godliness – we must look for this in ourselves and seek to explain this in evangelism
- Phony faith is the most deadly thing we can have or give; so
 - we must present the bad news before the good news, and
 - we must insist on the necessity of living a transformed, holy life as evidence of new birth

What Does the Bible Say?

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ... But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.

Matthew 7:21-24, 26

Henry Scougal – *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*

I must lament, that among so many pretenders to [religion], so few understand what it means: some placing it in the understanding, in orthodox notions and opinions; ... Others place it in the outward man, in a constant course of external duties, and a model of performances. ... Others again put all religion in the affections, in rapturous hearts, and ecstatic devotion; ... Thus are these things which have any resemblance of piety, and at the best are but means of obtaining it, or particular exercises of it, frequently mistaken for the whole of religion

Scougal, Henry (2010-11-19). *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (Best Navigation, Active TOC) (p. 1). Forward2. Kindle Edition.

More Scougal

true religion is a union of the soul with God, a real participation of the divine nature, the very image of God drawn upon the soul, or, in the apostle's phrase, "It is Christ formed within us." Briefly, I know not how the nature of religion can be more fully expressed, than by calling it a Divine Life

Scougal, Henry (2010-11-19). *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (Best Navigation, Active TOC) (p. 2). Forward2. Kindle Edition.

More Scougal

The worth and excellency of a soul is to be measured by the object of its love. He who loveth mean and sordid things doth thereby become base and vile, but a noble and well-placed affection doth advance and improve the spirit into a conformity with the perfections which it loves.

Scougal, Henry (2010-11-19). *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (Best Navigation, Active TOC) (p. 11). Forward2. Kindle Edition.

- Let me close by asking each of us; What do we love?

To Prepare for Next Session

- You should review (or read) Chapter 4 of Part II, Redemption Applied

Application

- We need to be very careful to examine ourselves and our evangelism; have we accepted a defective gospel?

he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

Ephesians 1:4-8