

MY
NEW
BIRTH

MY NEW BIRTH

July 21, 2013

Sermon in a sentence: Your current crisis can be a great catalyst for radical New Birth to take place within you.

Scriptures: Acts 1:1-14; Acts 2:1-21; Acts 4; Rev. 1:1-18

Acts 1:1-14 NASB The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, 2 until the day when He was taken up *to heaven*, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. 3 To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over *a period of forty days* and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. 4 Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, **“Which,” He said, “you heard of from Me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”** 6 So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He said to them, **“It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; 8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”** 9 And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. 11 They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.” 12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey

away. 13 When they had entered *the city*, they went up to the upper room where they were staying; that is, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James *the son of Alphaeus*, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas *the son of James*. 14 These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with *the women*, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

We all try to avoid crises if at all possible. We pay good money to insure ourselves against catastrophic events pertaining to life, death, business affairs, criminal activity, property, automobiles, etc. The “100 year flood” we recently endured is still fresh in our minds and we have all seen stacks of destroyed furniture, drywall, carpets and appliances at the curb on our streets.

However, in some cases, catastrophes bear very good fruit! There are homes that badly needed work to be done, and now they will be repaired and improved, even though their owners had no such current plans.

Life works that way at times. There are things we need to address, but “Until the pain of change is less than the pain of the status quo, nothing changes” (Source unknown).

Our brethren in Acts 1 were facing a crisis. Jesus had just left them and simply told them to wait a few days for the next step forward in their journey – the infilling of the Holy Spirit. (As long as Jesus was with them, they felt no real need for anything more.)

The waiting time was not wasted however. They prayed and sought after God for His will. His purpose. His revelation. The power of His Spirit. (The kind of things we need to be praying about when we’re in the middle of a crisis.)

As they prayed in unity and harmony, the answer came. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit! It is certainly God's will that we ALL receive New Birth.

Acts 2:1-14 NASB When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. 5 Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. 7 They were amazed and astonished, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" 8 "And how is it that we each hear *them* in our own language to which we were born?" 9 "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs — we hear them in our *own* tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God." 12 And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But others were mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine." 14 But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words.

A crisis never comes at a convenient time. We are never quite ready for a critical disease, the loss of a job, a child saying "I hate you", a spouse walking out the door, a natural disaster, an industrial accident, an investment that

eats all of our retirement savings, a false accusation, etc. And if we had the choice, we would probably choose just about any other crisis than the one we're facing.

But this may be just the catalyst we need to push us to the place of new birth in our personal lives.

At this time, you may be experiencing a crisis regarding your faith in God. Is He really there? Is He truly my friend? Does He really care about me? Does He love me?

Your crisis may be due to the utter frustration of unfulfilled desire. Why am I always passed over for promotion at work? Why am I still suffering with this sickness? Why can't I get married? Why does everything I try fail? Why am I chronically unhappy and depressed? Why do people bug me so much?

Sometimes the best thing to do is to simply stop trying to figure it all out and turn to prayer, praise and worship.

After Peter and John had been released from prison and went back to their brethren, (Acts 4:23ff), there was no complaining about their abuse at the hands of their oppressors. There was no crying and questioning of God and His fairness. Instead, they engaged in serious prayer, asking God to give them boldness to preach His Word in the face of great opposition. Theirs was a new birth of courage, boldness and action.

Revelation 1 tells us the story of a man who was being persecuted for doing what was right. He wasn't a sinner or one who brought trouble upon himself. He wasn't a fake or a phony, caught in the bind of trying to live in two worlds. He was a servant of God, doing the will of God. He was on the prison island of Patmos because of His stand for Christ, but there was no hint of animosity, resentment

or bitterness in his attitude. Instead, he was ‘in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day’! He figured his best response was to completely ignore the situation and focus instead on the goodness of God. John’s worship led him into a spectacular vision of Jesus Christ and the glorious future He has planned for His people. His was a ‘new birth’ of revelation.

The need for new birth is evident in many of our lives. Boredom, fatigue, unanswered questions, frustration and even bitterness against God, our colleagues, family or friends has brought us to a bad place.

Like the apostles in Acts or John in Revelation, we have a great response available to us in any and all situations: prayer, praise and worship.

We need to P.U.S.H. – Pray Until Something Happens!

New Birth demands labour, pain and pushing. We cannot say what kind of new birth the Lord may give to us – it is all according to His will and purpose for our lives. However, it will not happen without our focused attention upon Him, and our diligence in seeking after Him until we achieve our goal of New Birth.

Let us pray, praise and worship our way to New Birth today! A New Birth of Boldness. Revelation. Gifts of the Spirit. Giving. Intercession. Obedience. Love. Compassion. Ministry to the Body of Christ.

The apostles’ New Birth led to global evangelism. John’s New Birth led to him seeing Jesus in a way he had never seen Him before. We anxiously await the testimony of what YOUR New Birth produces!

Speak of the role of the midwife. What about stillbirth?

All things work together for GOOD. Whose good? God's or ours?