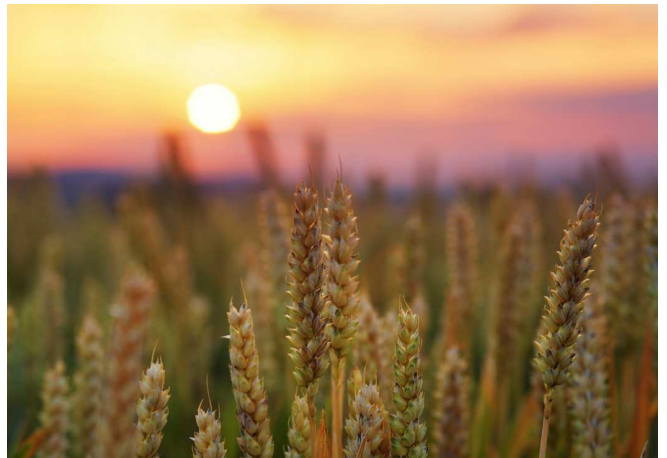


# 'The Son of God and the Lord of Glory Series'

## Sermons in the Gospel of John

### Message 25 - 'Living in the Light of the New Birth' John 3:6



As the Lord Jesus continues to speak with Nicodemus He continues to speak of the workings and wonder of the New Birth, the working of God to bring to life the spiritually dead. In this verse the Lord gives the very reason why God has to work, why God has to intervene, and why salvation is all of God, and a marvellous gift of His grace, and to His glory. It also underlines the important reality that after new birth that the individual changed is to live with a spiritual perspective, and the principles of heaven as revealed in the Bible. The Christian is no longer to live for the flesh, but for the glory of God, enabled by the spiritual life that has been given to them. We can consider the following questions:

**What is meant by 'flesh'?** - The word 'flesh' is one of the words we have to make sure that we understand in its biblical setting. In the Bible, going right back to the beginning, we see that flesh has the concept of the whole individual. The concept of the 'flesh' altered after the Fall, and whilst still speaking of the whole of man's being, it speaks of it in relation to the depraved, sinful nature. So, speaking of the 'flesh' it is speaking of the whole of man, but as he lives and acts by his fallen nature, rather than the Spirit. God made people with a spirit that gave them consciousness of Him and His reality, and through this people would live in a manner pleasing to Him. However, with the Fall, this element died, the Bible says that we are spiritually dead. Without the living God-ward disposition, people are dominated by living after the 'flesh', living for sin rather than living for God. The truth of the situation is emphasised, and is clear in the words of our Lord in this verse, the 'flesh', the 'old man', the 'natural man', cannot do anything to make himself right with God, obey God, please God, or begin to understand Him. Romans 8:8, '*So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*' The verse is teaching us that the God does not save people on the basis of anything in them. The flesh produces flesh, sin produces sin, and the fallen human nature can only produce more of the same. Jesus is saying that the desperate need for the individual is heavenly intervention, and spiritual life to be given by God, a free gift of heaven. Jesus says the person needs a new nature, a life that is spiritually alive, a life with the capability to worship God, to live for Him, and a life that has certain hope of the kingdom of God. Therefore, that which is of the Spirit produces spirit, and stays spirit. When a person is born again, it is not just for a moment, but it is an eternal change, a permanent change in the life of the person, and sets them on the course to glory.

**What is it to live in the Spirit?** - A person must be born again, the Word and the Spirit combining, and what is of the Spirit will produce spirit. When a person is born again, the person receives a new nature, they are a new creature in Christ, they have a new spirit. It is the work of God, the life of the Spirit living within. The question does arise, what happens to the old nature? The Apostle Paul was born again, but listen to what he says in Romans 7:18, '*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.*' Paul speaks of the struggle between the old and the new nature, and the reality that we only have victory in this through Jesus Christ. What does this mean? Well, when we are born again, we are made spiritually alive, and set on a course for glory, but the flesh remains with us, and in fact struggles against the new nature. Until the believer is taken to be with Christ, there is an ongoing struggle, battle, between the old and new. If you are a believer, you have been given a new nature to make you alive to the things of God, to enjoy Him, and to seek your greatest fulfilment and pleasure in Him, these things surpass anything of the flesh. The Bible also tells us that we can have the victory in Christ over the old nature. Let us remember the triumph of the cross that broke the hold of sin, let us dwell upon the Word, and let us treasure those things that God has given for our benefit and to aid us in our growth, so that we might, by His grace, display the fruit of the spiritual work that He and He alone has done in our lives.



**Penzance Baptist Church**

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