



SERIES: Pursuing Spiritual Fitness

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Scripture: John 3:3, 5-7 / Ephesians 1:13-14

TITLE: A Difficult Saying from Jesus

Do-over. Mulligan. A fresh start. Regeneration. Whatever you want to call it, we all desire it, because we all need one from time to time. I think that's why we watch movies that involve second chances and happy endings. That's why video gamers like me like the rewind function. That's why golfers love "the mulligan". None of us do sports, games, or our lives perfectly. There are times we mess up a little, and we just move on. But many times, we feel like our mistakes are far too great. We wish for a fresh start.

Well, though, we may not get a do-over, thanks to the Holy Spirit, we get regeneration, which is the fresh start our souls need. What do I mean?

Listen to Jesus' challenging words in John 3:3, 5-7 (NLT):

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.... I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.'"

Because humans are born sinful, they need to be reborn or regenerated through the Spirit. And Jesus brings great clarity about what that means. He doesn't mean reincarnation or re-physical birth. No, our Spirit or soul must be renewed. This is something we cannot do. Only God can do this through the Spirit.

Through the Spirit, we are unified with Jesus. Because of the Spirit, Jesus lives in us and we in Him (1 John 4:13). And when the Spirit regenerates us, He seals us and marks us as His own. And this seal is like a spiritual tattoo that cannot be removed.

Paul writes in Ephesians 1:13-14:

And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

Paul said God gave us the Holy Spirit. He identified us as His own. A better translation is that we were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of the Promise.

Friend, I am so thankful because God saves the broken. He seeks the lost. And what he redeems – what He regenerates – what He seals – He never lets go of. Once saved, always saved. Once sealed, forever sealed. The Spirit is our promise – our down payment for a future with God forever.

So here's my challenge for you today. Have you been born-again by faith? There is no other way. If you're banking on your religion or religious activity to save you, you've missed Jesus' words. Eternal life is only experienced through Jesus by grace through faith. True faith leads to confession, repentance, and following Jesus. So if you haven't, believe today in Jesus' death, burial and resurrection.

If you have been reborn, have you been living as one who's been given a second chance, or living like nothing changed? My challenge for you is to live, honoring that second chance. Follow Christ by obeying His Word and living to glorify God each and every moment.

Take this challenge and go win the day!