

1st Sunday after Easter**Date: 12-4-2015**

Introduction: Lenten season is observed successfully. Easter fest.. is celebrated joyfully. Now today is the first Sunday after Easter. I praise and thank God for the privilege of sharing God's word once again.

When I was a student I happened to attend a gospel crusade of LEF, conducted by Joshua Daniel. Someone asked me, Brother are you born again? I said, what does it mean? Then he asked me a simpler question, Did you accept Jesus as your personal savior? Sincerely, I replied, I have not yet.

Friends! In fact The word born-again is the language of the Bible. Remember what Jesus said to Nicodemus, the ruler of the Jews: Truly, Truly I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the KOG. Then Nicodemus said to Jesus; How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he? Nicodemus, the teacher of the law could not understand the language of Jesus. So he answered and said to Him, how can these things be?

Friends! Salvation, repentance, penitence, transformation, change of heart, new birth—these are synonyms for the word born-again. The new birth is a spiritual birth. For Lutheran's it is kind of embarrassing question but it must be the experience of every true Christian. Our thoughts, words and actions must be the proof that we are born-again people of God.

Today's epistle lesson speaks about the born-again experience. Based on the epistle lesson, { 1 John 5:1-12}. I title my sermon "The New Birth: It's three fold proof". Every born again child of God has the threefold proof of the new birth—proof that he is a child of God. The three fold proof is this:

1. First, the inward proof: V 1, 5. whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ[Messiah] is born of God. My faith in Christ—that He is my God, my Lord and my savior. This is the personal evidence that I am a child of God [v10-13]. This is the inward proof of the new birth.

For Example: 1. The belief of Thomas, one of the twelve. When other disciples said; we have seen the Lord, he said to them: [John 20:25] unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe. After 8 days Jesus appeared again when Thomas was present and said to Thomas: v27—reach here your finger, and see my hands, and reach here your hand, and put it into my side, and be not unbelieving, but believing. Then Thomas answered, My Lord and my God. Jesus' second appearance made his faith active and strong. He is born of God because he believed Jesus is raised.

2. The faith of a woman who had a hemorrhage for 12 years:[Luke 8: 46, 48] when she touched Jesus, he said someone touched me. And I was aware power had gone out of me. She came trembling and fell down before Him. Jesus said to her, Daughter, your faith has made you well, go in peace. The healing power that had gone out of Jesus made this gentile women's faith strong. She is born of God because she believed in God's power that healed her.

3. The faith of the centurion: Luke7: 9. Jesus marveled at him and said to the multitude: I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith. A gentile Roman officer is born of God because he believed in the power of Jesus.

Therefore, all these instances prove that they had inward belief that Jesus is the Messiah/ Lord/ miracle worker.

Application:-- Today the problem with us is : we are slow of heart to believe: Luke 24:25. We are reminded that he who comes to God must believe that He is: Heb 11:6

2. The second proof of new birth is: Out-going proof: 1John 4:7-11-- Everyone who loves is born of God. What is meant by loving God?

--V3 says for this is the love of God that we keep His commandments and his commandments are not burdensome. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might: Deut 6:5.

The proof/expressions of the love of Christ is that His taking our human nature; Heb 2: 16-18; and also dying for us: John 15: 13.

Our love for God must be expressed not only in words but in actions primarily. Not by the way Peter loved Jesus in his words, answering Jesus' questions; Do you love me more than these? You know that I love you. But he failed to love the Lord. He denied Christ three times. Of course this was His old story happened before Pentecost. But after Pentecost with the mighty filling of the power of the Holy Spirit, he certainly proved himself that he loved the Lord through his ministry, miracles and facing persecution. He was crucified upside down. That was the great proof, how he loved the Lord and the gospel, left for us in the history.

Everyone who loves is born of God. We are to love our fellow man with the love of God. This we are not capable of doing in the flesh. We must let God love man through us.[Rom 5:5] This is the out-going proof of the new birth.

Bible says:

--let love be without hypocrisy: Rom12:9

--love covers a multitude of sins: 1Peter4:8

--your love before the church: 3 John 6.

3. The third proof of the new birth is Out-ward proof: 1John 4: 7-11. Everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him. 1 John 3:10 says—anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God...If you are born of God, you will make a practice of doing right at all times and at all cost.[2Cor5:17—if anyone is in Christ he is new creature: the old things passed away. Behold new things have come. This is the out-ward proof of the new birth.

The new birth is being made the righteousness of God; 2 Cor5:21.—who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Ex. 1. Noah was a man of righteousness. He walked with God when the earth was fully corrupt and violence: Gen6:9. In other words, he practiced righteousness.

2. Joseph of Arimathea: Luke 23:50—a good and a righteous man, waiting for the KOG. He did a righteous deed, giving his own burial place for Jesus.

3. Job, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil: Job1:8. He practiced up-righteousness when everything is lost and gone. All these people are born of God because they practiced righteousness.

4. Jesus said: Seek ye first the KOG and His righteousness, and then all these things shall be added unto you.

Quotation “True religion is real living; living with all one's soul, with all one's goodness and righteousness”. **Albert Einstein**.

Therefore, if do not have the three fold proof of the new birth, now is the time to get on your knees and accept Jesus Christ as your personal savior—by faith in His vicarious death, burial and resurrection.

Application: Friends! Are you born again child of God? God’s word reminds us:

--whoever believes Jesus is Christ, is born of God. How is your belief in Christ?

--whoever loves God is born of God. How are you loving God? In words or in deeds?

--Everyone who practices righteousness is born of God. Are you practicing righteousness or corruptness?

May the good Lord help us all to experience the new birth that is available in Christ Jesus? Amen.