

New Birth Experience: Fully Rely On God This Time

The Gospel According to Matthew. Thinking of the New Birth during this season. Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Monday, November 26, 2018

[Listen to "Thoughts in Worship 11.26.2018" on Spreaker.](#)

"...Jacob fathered Joseph the husband of Mary, who gave birth to Jesus who is called the Messiah. So all the generations from Abraham to David were 14 generations; and from David until the exile to Babylon, 14 generations; and from the exile to Babylon until the Messiah, 14 generations. The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way: After His mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:16–18, HCSB).

Surprise

It was a miracle! A young woman who had never had sexual relations with any man was pregnant. How many times have you heard of instances when women did not know they were pregnant until the third trimester? How many times have you heard of a woman feeling weird, going to the doctor to find out what was going on, and then ... "surprise!" being diagnosed, not with something that caused weird feelings or nausea, but rather pregnancy? They simply did not know. Even when these women did not realize they were pregnant and were surprised by the fact, they did have sexual relations, and pregnancy was the outcome of that experience. Makes sense.

Well, Mary's case was different. It was so different that God sent an angel to her to explain what happened. Even though she was indeed a virgin, she was pregnant. Miraculously, in fulfillment of many Old Testament prophecies, this holy young woman of God was pregnant. The Holy Spirit reached down into her DNA, with all of its historic and genetic relevance and placed the blessed embryo (for lack of a better way of saying it) who we would finally recognize was the Son of God! God's power overshadowed the human predicament, and Mary bore the Son of the Living God. Miracle!

Weak Roots in The Family Tree

Since we do not have a lot of time to exhaust this holy topic, I would like to direct your attention to an intriguing aspect of the story. Even though Joseph had nothing to do with Jesus' birth, He did still come through the womb of a normal human woman. This means that the list of persons preceding

our theme passage were all ancestors of Christ. This also magnifies the reality, that Jesus Christ entered upon the human scene with the need to rely on His Father, fully, so He could live a righteous life. Have you read the motley cast of characters, with all their foibles in the list? This simply says to us, that the Father did not orchestrate some sideshow and call it the plan of salvation. No! Jesus had real human ancestors whose genetics could have impacted His character if He did not rely on His Father's strength 100% of the time.

Are you willing to rely on God for power to live above sin just like Jesus did? We do realize there is a difference here – Jesus was victorious from His birth until He died. We all have sinned and come short of God's glorious intent for our lives. However, John 3, Romans 6, and Romans 8, all teach us that we can be victorious from our *newbirth* until we die or Jesus returns, as the case may be. If we make mistakes along the way, following our newbirth experience, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous One.

This has been the gospel according to Matthew. Be transformed by it.

Hood Proud Introduces “Sermonic Flow.” Take a Listen

What would it sound like if your preacher could rap? What would it sound like if a rapper could preach? Take a listen to Hood Proud, and you will know.

Bradley Tramel and Orlando Boyd form the nucleus of the Hood Proud, a sermonizing, rap group from the Washington D.C. area. Tramel, is a Program Analyst for the United States Department of Energy, while Boyd works as a professional landscaper. Their jobs don't stand in the way of what they know to be a Spirit-led ministry. They believe the Holy Spirit led them to each other and continues to inspire and move in them.

“Truth is our group is composed of men and women that the Holy Spirit chose based on His unique knowledge of everyone's heart and mindset towards doing ministry,” Tramel told *Message*.

Hear how they flow here:

Grace and Mercy

<https://www.messagemagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Hood-Proud-Grace-Mercy1.mp3>

Understatement

<https://www.messagemagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Sermonic-Flow-Understatement.mp3>

Tramel also believes in the Spirit-led, hand-picked collaboration with the rest of the group, including members Lamar Parker, Nathaniel Douglas, Nicole Jacques, and Damon Hill. And, they all credit the divine influence on their friend Frank Dent who, in 2014, shared the idea God gave him. “God gave him [the vision] of the organization doing both outreach and ministry for the youth and impoverished communities worldwide.

What is It?



Hood Proud: Bradley Tramel and Orlando Boyd hope to always move by the Spirit and inspire a generation of young people worldwide.

“Sermonic Flow” encompasses rap, spoken word, and poetry, said Tramel. “We’ll hear the beat and the Spirit will move as to which form of communication will be used. We flow with the Spirit, hence Sermonic Flow.” Tramel hunts beats on Soundcloud, and can sense its fit for specific members of the group, including himself.

“I’ll send them the track and the Holy Spirit gives them what to say just as He does with me,” Tramel said.

Until recently, they were working with “a very generic form” of software and equipment. Tramel engineers the track and lyrics by the insights the Holy Spirit gives him. Recently, they recorded in a studio and Hood Proud is working on a release.

“By Yah’s grace that will continue.”

Hood Proud has enjoyed a positive reception, and have started to receive requests for CDs and live performances. Neither Tramel and Boyd had performance ambitions before this, and they still feel a little sheepish at the prospect, but, in the spirit of ministry, if someone receives a blessing through the Sermonic Flow, they are happy to be used.

New releases of the groups tracks can be found online for free, because members believe the ministry should be free for all. While they know they will encounter costs, realistically, “[W]e leave that in Yah’s hands as He will provide all of our needs.”

You can find Hood Proud on [Soundcloud](#).

God’s Gift–Really

“Sing Unto the Lord a New Song: Meditations From the Book of Psalms.” Message Magazine’s Online Devotional for Friday, July 20, 2018

[Listen to “Thoughts in Worship 07.20.2018” on Spreaker.](#)

“Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: And the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; So are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: They shall not be ashamed, But they shall speak with the enemies in the gate” (Psalm 127:3–5).

Beautiful Babies

Banish the thought that children are a bother, inconvenience, or nuisance. Banish the thought that children are an afterthought, mistake, or interruption of our regularly scheduled programs. The Bible says that we are blessed when we have plenty, from our young age, and that they are a special gift from Him.

Do not miss the language of blessing in our theme text. Let me ask you a question: Are inheritances good or bad? Did you know that the Hebrew word for the word, “heritage” means to take possession of or inherit? This is wonderful! This means that God has given us children as an inheritance, which means they are blessings of inestimable value in the sight of God and we should respect them as such.

The Way to Handle Gracious Gifts

The text continues that we are blessed when we have a household full of them; especially if we can do so while we are young and energetic. Children who are loved, nurtured, valued, and respected will grow up to represent the family name well. When enemies attempt to cast aspersion against you or your family’s character, children, who are receptive to godly character building will defend your honor at all costs, while still maintaining a holy demeanor. Since children are a gift from God, why not treat them as such?

Sing unto the Lord a new song. Celebrate God’s wisdom in giving us children to love and nurture.

Weapons That Work

The Gospel According to Paul: Weapons of Choice. Message Magazine’s Online Devotional for Sunday, May 20, 2018

[Listen to “Thoughts in Worship 05.20.2018” on Spreaker.](#)

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh” (2

Corinthians 10:3).

Desperate Times

When human beings become desperate and don't have answers to life's difficult questions, we sometimes resort to human means for help. One of our most desperate struggles, especially in these last days, is war. There are terrorists all over the world with one goal in mind. They wish to put fear in the hearts of those whom they hate. With suicide bombs, shoulder-launched grenades, and other war implements, they seek to destroy life. In desperation, world leaders seek to combat war with war. The weapons of choice strike with intensity, and destroy the target. Because of hatred and war, many people all over the world lose their lives needlessly.

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). In context, these verses are addressing arguments launched against the true gospel of Christ. When faced with the opposition of those who do not love the gospel, God's word to us is that we do not fight as they fight. We are lead by the heavenly Captain of our souls. Everyone who opposes Captain Jesus Christ will certainly suffer defeat. Nothing can stand in His way and remain in tact.

Choose Your Weapon

Though bombings and artillery fighting was probably not on the apostle's mind when he wrote these verses, we can glean a valuable principle from his words. Whenever we are faced with evil opposition, whether it is nation against nation or in our personal lives, the weapons we choose will determine the outcome. If we choose human weapons, destruction and more opposition will surely result. When we choose spiritual weapons, the Lord fights our battles and in the end, strife will cease forever.

When the persecution of life assails you, look to Jesus. We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but devils. How can we fight devils by human means? We cannot see them unless they manifest themselves. Even then, we cannot defeat them in our own strength. If we ever hope to stand against unrighteousness and evil, we must be fully covered with the armor of God, Jesus Christ.

Cover Me

Let us be covered by Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life. Let us be covered by Jesus, our righteousness. Let us be covered by Jesus, the focal point of the gospel, and Prince of peace. Let us be covered with Jesus, the Author, and Finisher of our faith. Let us be covered by Jesus, the One who is our redemption. Let us be covered by Jesus, the living Word of God (Ephesians 6:11-17). It is only when we are covered by Him, and fight the good fight of faith that we will conquer evil.

I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, are you?

When Tempted, Stand on This Promise

The Gospel According to Paul: God is faithful, and provides a way to escape temptation. Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Monday, May 14, 2018

[Listen to "Thoughts in Worship 05.14.2018" on Spreaker.](#)

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Stopped Short

The children of Israel were a chosen people who were entrusted with the charge of being God's witnesses to the then known world. Their obedience and intimacy with God have been recorded forever, in the Bible, for us to follow their example. There are many victories recorded from which we might learn, but there are also defeats, that are equally instructive. The people had a habit of worshiping other things in place of God, lusting after evil. As a result, many of them were overthrown in the wilderness, on their way to the Promised Land.

Many times we read of such unfaithfulness, and probably have asked how in the world those people could have been so wicked. After all, did not God constantly demonstrate His power on their behalf with visible signs and wonders?

The Bible echoes, with a resounding warning, against such pride. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12). This text is trying to teach us distrust of self. At the same time, it encourages us by saying we do not have to fall into the same sinful patterns. Why? He is faithful!

Tempered Temptation

The Lord has promised to filter the devil's temptation through His loving care. Always remember that the victories that Jesus accomplished while living on the earth are available today for our deliverance. If temptations come our way, we can be assured that there is a back door ajar to aid in our escape.

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever Amen" (Jude 1: 24-25).

I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, are you?

The Overcomer's Zeal

Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Tuesday, January 30, 2018

[Listen to "Thoughts in Worship 01.30.2018" on Spreaker.](#)

This is devotional thought number 65 in our devotional series, God's Promises are Sure!

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." (Revelation

3:21).

In the River. On the Bank.

Living an “in the river, on the bank” lifestyle is nauseating to God. In the same way lukewarm water turns most people’s stomach when drunk first thing in the morning, a lack of full commitment nauseates God’s spiritual sensibilities.

God can work with those who hate Him. He came to save those who were hostile toward Him. Jesus, in due season, died for the ungodly. God can work with those who love Him and keep His commandments. These people have been transferred from the kingdom of hatred and darkness to the kingdom of love and light.

However, some people halt between two (spiritual) opinions or lifestyles. They who are comfortable with a form of godliness instead of surrendering all, make it difficult for God to work with them. Pride characterizes their thoughts and deportment. They do just enough to feel connected to Godlike things, but do not go all in.

When You Have No Zeal

For these folks during the Laodicean church era, Jesus provided the following antidote: “Therefore I counsel you to purchase from Me gold refined and tested by fire, that you may be [truly] wealthy, and white clothes to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nudity from being seen, and salve to put on your eyes, that you may see. Those whom I [dearly and tenderly] love, I tell their faults and convict and convince and reprove and chasten [I discipline and instruct them]. So be enthusiastic and in earnest and burning with zeal and repent [changing your mind and attitude]. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears and listens to and heeds My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will eat with him, and he [will eat] with Me.” (Revelation 3:18–20, AMP).

God wanted to give His people faith that worked by love and purified the soul (like fire), the righteousness of Christ, and spiritual eyesight/discernment. Further, He wanted to give them a relationship with Himself. If they would simply heed His entreaties to repent and allow Him into every aspect of their lives, He would dwell in them and feed them the Bread of Life continually.

Empowered

Overcomers are special to God, because it was for this purpose Jesus gave His life. He came to find the lost and save us. Jesus came to show us the right example so we could follow in His footsteps. He came to empower all to live above sin by simply taking hold of His strength and serving Him according to all He commanded.

Those who overcome pride, self, doubt, and sin will soon function in the fullness of their authority. Jesus promised a position in His future throne of glory in the same way He now occupies His position in His Father’s throne. It does not get any better than this!

God is preparing a place for all who will trust Him in all things. We are now a kingdom of royals and priests before God, but then the manifestation will be known. He will give us everlasting vigor, judgment, and authority. We will have crowns and new names written in our foreheads. He will give us final

rest. As I said, overcomers are special to God, because it was for this purpose Jesus gave His life. The mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Endurance: The Overcomer's Bypass

Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Sunday, January 28, 2018

[Listen to "Thoughts in Worship 01.28.2018" on Spreaker.](#)

This is devotional thought number 63 in our devotional series, God's Promises are Sure!

"Because you have kept my admonition to endure steadfastly, I will also keep you from the hour of testing that is about to come on the whole world to test those who live on the earth. I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have so that no one can take away your crown." (Revelation 3:10-11, NET).

Victory Now

Sometimes life throws curveballs at us. They may catch us off guard, but our heavenly Father neither slumbers nor sleeps. He sees and measures each trial before He allows it to hit our spiritual house.



More than that, Jesus, who has endured more suffering and more trials than any other human being ever will, offers His victory to bolster our faith. In the King James Version of the Bible, our theme text says that those who keep the "Word of [His] patience" will be kept when the last great testing time is unfurled upon the earth before He comes. I love how the New Living Translation states the verse. "Because you have obeyed my command to persevere, I will protect you from the great time of testing..."

Our lesson for today is simple: God promises to protect the faith of those who keep His word, or command to persevere, no matter what. Then He makes an additional promise, which we will unpack further tomorrow. He said, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from

my God: and I will write upon him my new name" (Revelation 3:12).

You Will Overcome

This promise means so much. Among the many jewels to gather is the fact that by making a promise to overcomers, He is revealing the fact that people will overcome. Do not dismiss my last statement as obvious rambling; it is not. There are so many who feel like we will continue to fail, that it is encouraging to know that Jesus makes His promise as a foregone conclusion. People will overcome! Overcomers will be rewarded! Those who will be rewarded with the name of God written upon them, are those who have allowed Jesus to keep them through every circumstance in life.

Cash in on the promise, dear friends. Keep His word and let Him keep you, until He returns with His reward. The mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Sheep-ish Shepherd Knows How to Lead

Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Monday, January 15, 2018

[Listen to "Thoughts in Worship 01.15.2018" on Spreker.](#)

This is devotional thought number 50 in our devotional series, God's Promises are Sure!

We are going to have a look at the 23rd Psalm as one great big promise for the next several days and listen out for God's message to us.

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1).

Sheep are not the sharpest knives in the drawer sometimes. They need to be led, protected, accompanied, guided, and pastored (fed and nurtured). I find it intriguing, then, that Jesus so identifies Himself with our human needs that He became the Lamb who was slain to take away the sins of the world. The Good Shepherd became a lamb to save the sheep. There must be a lesson in that somewhere. As you meditate upon that, give thanks!

Satisfied Sheep

King David, a seasoned shepherd, who diligently provided for and protected his sheep, saw God as his Shepherd. This is a trustful attitude for a man like David. He understood what it took to provide for sheep. He knew the dangers shepherds protected them from. There was no shortage of predators waiting to pounce the moment the sheep wandered away from the fold or were unprotected. He said that with His Lord, the One who comes near to those He loves, as his shepherd, he will be satisfied in all areas of his life. He would not be in want for affection. He would not be in want for food. He would not be in want of clothing. He would not be in want for power to live righteously. He would not be in want for heavenly companionship. He would not be in want for wisdom. Does this mean that David never felt the burden of living on this sinful earth? No. It means that whenever David stayed by God's side, that whenever he had a need, God supplied it.

What the Shepherd Knows

This can be your testimony. You can also rest assured that with God by your side you will have confidence that all your needs will be supplied. He knows you need money, food, clothing, shelter, good relationships, and emotional

healing. He knows you need strength when trials comes. If you accept the Lamb of God, as your Shepherd, He will supply all your need according to His riches in glory. Just trust Him. Trust in His timing. Trust that He knows what He's doing. The mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Beggars Must Be Choosy

Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Friday, July 7, 2017

[Listen to "Thoughts in Worship 07.07.2017" on Spreaker.](#)

This is devotional thought number 15 in our devotional series, "Essentials of Faith." Our subject is "The Sinner's (My) Need for Christ."

Here's the last question for consideration on this subject: When I begin to recognize my need for Jesus Christ, how will I receive satisfaction?

"And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they called the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way" (Mark 10:46-52).

Don't Settle

Beggars must be choosy! You heard me right. I said, "Beggars *must be* choosy," especially if we are begging for a spiritual breakthrough.

The problem with most people is that when we have a real need, we throw away our ability to discriminate between right and wrong. We flush our chances of real change because we lose courage and accept a counterfeit. We forget about our lofty aspirations and settle for whatever happens to pass our way. This is problematic in the natural world; not to mention in our spiritual lives. Case in point: blind Bartimaeus had a problem. He could not see. I'd venture to guess his blindness was not very helpful to his personal economy.

Here's Your Chance

Notice how keen his hearing was. He heard that Jesus was passing by. When you are at your lowest point in life, how keen is your perception of Jesus? Not only did he hear that Jesus was passing by, but he immediately threw caution and shame to the wind and opened his mouth to beg for mercy, regardless of what others thought of him.

You can hear them now; "Shut up, Bartimaeus! You're always begging!" But, see, what some fail to realize is that persistence is the path to excellence.



Your persistent request for transformation from the One who can satisfy will be heard.

Bartimaeus begged. He did not settle for less. Jesus asked him what he wanted. *Now's your chance, Bartimaeus!* He asked for the one thing that would change his natural life forever—his sight. He did not ask for a home, chariot, three virgins, new sandals, a best friend, or anything else. Bartimaeus asked to receive his sight from the One who could give it. Guess what? Jesus gave him his sight. His faith in Jesus made healing possible.

Deep Satisfaction and the Blessings to Follow

Learn a lesson from a formerly blind man...

When I begin to recognize my need for Jesus Christ, how will I receive satisfaction? The only way I can receive it is if I refuse to accept anything less than a close relationship with Him. It is the singular thing that will change my life forever. All other blessings come in its train. I'm a beggar, but I'm choosy. Are you?

How the Experience With Jesus Changes Everything

Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Tuesday, May 30, 2017

[Listen to "Thoughts in Worship 05.30.2017" on Spreaker.](#)

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty." (2 Peter 1:16).

When you have a real experience with God, nobody can convince you to

relinquish your faith in Him.

So many people are confused and grasping at straws to bolster a great argument to validate the existence of Christ in their lives. They pull together Web related resources, commentary, and third-party validation to self-assure, and then convince others. Did you catch the way I constructed the last two sentences? They were stilted, dry, listless, contrived, and robotic. They were lifeless and impotent. The outcome of the efforts I described would be just as lifeless. For who by searching (merely) can find out God?

This is Real

The Holy Spirit is alive and well. He is providing very real encounters with God for those willing to trust in Him. God is answering prayers for healing. He is opening people's minds to truth they would otherwise reject. He is revealing Himself in the Word of God. He is coming divinely near to those who mourn. He is changing the paradigms of proud people, thieves, murderers, and child molesters. He is making liars honest, abusers meek, and narcissists self-abnegating.

Peter walked and talked with Jesus. He experienced times when Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead. He saw Jesus glorified. He saw Jesus crucified. He saw Jesus after His resurrection. He experienced Jesus' forgiveness. Do you think anyone could convince Peter to abandon His trust in God after all that? Do you think anyone could convince Peter that Jesus was a farce? No!

Solid Bond

When we, like Peter enter into a relationship with God and begin to have real communion with Him, nobody can take away the zeal that comes from such experience. We must seek our God on the experiential level. When those experiences line up with His Word, we have a solid bond that no man or woman can break.