

SERMON NOTES

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NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL LIFE (PART II)

1. Natural and Spiritual Life - 1 Corinthians 15:46/ 2:14

- **Natural:** What relates to our physical life and the world we can see, touch, and experience.
- **Spiritual:** What relates to God, His Spirit, and the life He gives us.
- **John 4:14** teaches that Jesus gives living water that brings eternal life.

2. Born Again: Growing in Spiritual Life

- **1 Corinthians 3:1-2:** Paul's letter to the church in Corinth addresses they are spiritually gifted yet torn apart by factions and immaturity.
- **John 3:3, 6-7:** Jesus taught Nicodemus that a person must be born again to see the kingdom of God.
- **1 Peter 2:2:** Like newborn babies, we should long for the pure milk of the Word.
- **Study the Bible:** Learn to understand and correctly handle God's Word (**2 Timothy 2:15**).
- **Move beyond spiritual infancy:** Learn the deeper truths of Scripture (**Hebrews 5:12-14**).
- **Practice what we learn:** Spiritual maturity includes applying God's Word to daily life.

3. The Scriptures Point to Christ

- **Luke 24:27:** Jesus explained the things concerning Himself in the Scriptures.
- **Luke 24:44:** The Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms pointed to God's plan fulfilled in Christ.
- **John 5:39, 46:** The Scriptures testify of Jesus.
- **Hebrews 10:7:** Jesus came to do the will of God.

4. Natural and Spiritual Creation

- **The Heavens:** Declare the glory of God (**Psalms 19:1-3**).
- **The created world:** Points to God's eternal power and divine nature (**Romans 1:20**).
- **The Sun of Righteousness:** **Malachi 4:2** uses the picture of the rising sun to describe healing and restoration for those who fear God's name.

5. The "I AM" — Jesus Reveals Who He Is

- **Exodus 3:14:** God revealed Himself to Moses as "I AM."
- In John's Gospel, Jesus uses several powerful descriptions to reveal His identity and His relationship with His people.
 - **John 4:26 - The Messiah:** Jesus reveals Himself as the promised Christ.
 - **John 6:35 - The Bread of Life:** Jesus satisfies our deepest spiritual hunger.
 - **John 8:12; 9:5 - The Light of the World:** Jesus brings spiritual light and guidance.
 - **John 10:7 - The Door:** Jesus is the way into the safety and life of His sheep.
 - **John 10:11, 14 - The Good Shepherd:** Jesus knows, loves, and lays down His life for His sheep.
 - **John 11:25 - The Resurrection and the Life:** Jesus has authority over death and gives eternal life.
 - **John 14:6 - The Way, the Truth, and the Life:** Jesus is the way to the Father.
 - **John 15:1, 5 - The True Vine:** Believers must remain connected to Christ to bear spiritual fruit.

6. Shadows and Parables: Natural Pictures of Spiritual Truths

- A shadow is an outline or preview of something greater.

A. Trees

- **Genesis 2:9:** The tree of life in Genesis points to life from God.
- **Revelation 2:7** promises access to the tree of life, to him who overcomes the world through believing that Jesus is the Son of God.
- The tree imagery in **Deuteronomy 21:22** and **Galatians 3:13** relates to the curse associated with being hanged on a tree.
- **1 Peter 2:24** teaches that Jesus bore our sins in His body on the tree.

B. The Law of the Harvest

- **John 4:35:** Jesus told His disciples to look at the fields because they were ready for harvest.
- Spiritual harvest involves people who are ready to hear and receive the Gospel.

C. Vines and Branches

- **John 15:1, 5:** Jesus is the True Vine, and believers are the branches.
- Remaining in Christ enables us to bear fruit.

D. Birds and Eagles

- **Birds: Matthew 6:26** reminds us that God provides for His creation.
- **Eagles: Deuteronomy 32:11** uses an eagle caring for its young as a picture of God's care.
- **Renewed strength: Isaiah 40:31** compares those who wait on the Lord to eagles that soar.

E. Serpents

- **Genesis 3:1:** The serpent appears in the account of temptation in the Garden of Eden.
- **John 3:14:** Jesus compares His being lifted up, to Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness. Those who look to Christ in faith receive eternal life.
- **Revelation 12:9:** The serpent (great dragon) is identified with the devil and Satan.

F. Animals

- **The Lamb: John 1:29** identifies Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
- **Revelation 5** presents the Lamb as worthy to open the scroll.
- **The donkey: Zechariah 9:9** and **Matthew 21:5** describe the King coming humbly, fulfilled in Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

G. Flowers

- **Matthew 6:28–30:** Jesus used the flowers of the field to teach that "worry" means undue anxiety, not a legitimate concern to provide for one's daily needs. Do not allow worry to control your life. Trust the Father who knows your needs and cares for you.

H. Ants

- **Proverbs 6:6–7:** The ant works diligently and prepares her provisions without needing an overseer or ruler. Learn diligence, discipline, wisdom, and preparation from God's creations.

I. The Armor of God

- **Ephesians 6:10–18:** Paul uses the picture of a soldier's armor to explain how Christians must stand firm in spiritual warfare.
 - **Belt of truth** - Holds everything together and protects against deception and lies.
 - **Breastplate of righteousness** - Protects the heart and moral character, rooted in Christ.
 - **Shoes of the Gospel of peace** - Provides a firm, steady footing and readiness to share and live out the good news of peace.
 - **Shield of faith** - Used to block and extinguish the "flaming arrows" of doubt, temptation, and attacks from the enemy (protection).
 - **Helmet of salvation** - Protects the mind and thoughts, guarding the assurance of eternal life and grace in Christ (the Word of God).

- **Sword of the Spirit** - The Word of God; the only offensive (active) weapon in the armor used to counter temptation and falsehood.

J. Seasons

- **Ecclesiastes 3:1** - *There is a season (a time appointed) for everything and a time for every delight and event or purpose under heaven.*
- Life has different seasons. We must seek God's wisdom, remain faithful, and trust Him through changing circumstances.

K. Mountains and Valleys

- **Psalms 121:1-2** - The psalmist looks toward the mountains and declares that his help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

7. Shadow and Reality

- **Hebrews 10:1** - The Law is just a shadow of the good things to come, but the shadow was not the complete reality. The coming of Christ brings the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan.
- **Shadow:** A picture, pattern, or preview of something greater; a pale representation.
- **Reality:** The fulfillment of what God promised.
- **Christ:** The central focus of God's plan of salvation.
 - For example, the sacrifices under the Old Covenant pointed forward to the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The shadow helped people understand what God would ultimately accomplish through Him.