

REBIRTH: BEING MADE NEW

VIDEO ONE

As a teenager, Henry excelled at most things he put his hand to. Whether in the classroom or on the pitch, success came relatively easily.

And with competitive older brothers to chase and loving parents who supported him, Henry's achievements became something he prided himself on. He enjoyed the feeling of doing well.

But there grew in Henry something less healthy.

He wasn't content with just doing well. He wanted to outdo those around him – proving that he was somehow different, somehow better than others. He was determined to make something of himself. He wanted people to quietly be in awe of how impressive he was.

It took its toll on his relationships. In order to be better than others, Henry couldn't allow himself to need their help. So, he slowly pushed friends, and eventually even family, away. Independence felt like strength. People would probably let him down anyway. Kindness felt like weakness.

But it didn't work. Henry felt increasingly lost. He never seemed to be able to live up to his grand ideals. He hated the weakness that he saw in himself. Isolated from others, life felt disconnected and lacked any meaning.

But things started to shift.

Henry had gone along to church a bit as a kid and had dismissed God as irrelevant. But when visiting his older brother's church, he was surprised by how applicable the things he heard were to his life.

His brother persuaded Henry to find the Christian Union when he arrived at university. Sceptical, he went along and immediately felt out of place. He'd never met people his age who were so open about their faith.

Yet, the more time he spent with them, the more he was confronted by their genuine care for one another, and for him. They listened to him, were interested in his life, even though he cared very little for them.

And it's in this community that he saw Jesus with fresh eyes. Wanting to be strong and impressive, Henry had spent his teenage years competing, proving himself, separating himself from others.

But in Jesus he was confronted by a man whose life demonstrated more strength, and was more impressive than his own.

Yet Jesus' strength and greatness came not through winning. But through love and sacrifice. Through kindness towards those who don't deserve it. Through death on a cross. Henry's way of living felt so much more empty and fragile.

For so long Henry had believed that to love was weakness. And yet Jesus' love was so attractive.

And it was extended to him.

Jesus totally humbled Henry. He fell short in every way. God was totally justified to be done with him. Yet, Jesus' sacrifice on his behalf offered him forgiveness and a way back. He was saved by love.

Life for Henry now feels very different.

He doesn't need to be strong and independent to prove himself. He's learning the deeper strength that comes from receiving Jesus' love and help.

He's learnt to love like Jesus: serving without necessarily getting anything back.

He's begun to find contentment. Not fearing failure, not needing to be an impressive individual. Happier to rest in everything that he's found in his Saviour.