

“You Must Be Born Again!”

John 3:1-20

A. Jesus is approachable.

John 3:1-21 (NLT)

¹There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee.

²After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.”

-- Jesus is “approachable” ... eager to listen and talk. As His followers, we must mimic that approachable attitude.

-- At this point in his ministry, the Pharisees were trying to figure Jesus out.

B. Spiritual stuff requires the Spirit.

³Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

⁴“What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?”

⁵Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit.

⁶Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. ⁷ So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’

-- Things like heaven, prayer, miracles, wisdom ... “spiritual things” obviously require God’s Spirit, they cannot be obtained by human means. This is a “slap in the face” to our sense of independence and self-sufficiency.

-- v. 6 makes it clear: humans produce human stuff ... the Holy Spirit produces spiritual stuff. Why is this important? Because here’s a list of Spiritual stuff: (Galatians 5:22-23)

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness
- Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-control

If you’re going to get these things, they are obtained by the Spirit, not by human methods!

C. Don't expect to understand it.

⁸The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit."

⁹"How are these things possible?" Nicodemus asked.

¹⁰Jesus replied, "You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don't understand these things?"

¹¹I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won't believe our testimony.

¹²But if you don't believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things?

-- These verses are a real blow to my manhood ... because I'm a preacher and I'm supposed to be able to clearly explain how people are born of the Spirit, but I can't, because it's not-knowable! You can't dissect it and put it under a microscope. God acts and we shrug our shoulders. That's normal.

D. Believing in Jesus is an essential part of eternal life.

¹³No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven.

¹⁴And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,

¹⁵so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.

¹⁶"For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

-- While we don't know the "how" of salvation, we do know it involves believing in Jesus. Believe what He said. These claims He's making, buy in. Believe it. Believe Him, and if you do that, you will not perish but have eternal life.

-- "have" eternal life. Present tense. You possess it now and can begin using it. You don't have to wait for heaven to begin tasting God's goodness.

E. Jesus overcomes the consequences of evil.

¹⁷God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

¹⁸"There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only

Son.

¹⁹ And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil.

²⁰ All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed.

²¹ But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants."

-- There IS evil in this world. Jesus is a realist. Some people love the dark and hate anything to do with the light.

-- Jesus came to save sinners. Judgment and condemnation were not, and are not, His purpose. If people refuse to believe, they are *already* condemned.

MAIN POINT: Jesus claimed that believing Him is THE critical difference maker in life.

A closing prayer ... "Dear God, we have heard Your claim regarding eternal life. Help us believe it, believe You, and so possess eternal life today. In Jesus' name, amen."