



BETHSAIDA BAPTIST CHURCH

SERIES: LIFE LESSONS FROM JOHN

NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

John 3:1-21

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John 3:1-21 – “There was a man from the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to him at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one could perform these signs you do unless God were with him.” 3 Jesus replied, “Truly I tell you, unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” 4 “How can anyone be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked him. “Can he enter his mother’s womb a second time and be born?” 5 Jesus answered, “Truly I tell you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not be amazed that I told you that you must be born again. 8 The wind blows where it pleases, and you hear its sound, but you don’t know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.” 9 “How can these things be?” asked Nicodemus. 10 “Are you a teacher of Israel and don’t know these things?” Jesus replied. 11 “Truly I tell you, we speak what we know and we testify to what we have seen, but you do not accept our testimony. 12 If I have told you about earthly things and you don’t believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven—the Son of Man., 14 “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. 16 For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Anyone who believes in him is not condemned, but anyone who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God. 19 This is the judgment: The light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone who does evil hates the light and avoids it, so that his deeds may not be exposed. 21 But anyone who lives by the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be shown to be accomplished by God.” (CSB)

CONTEXT

John is the fourth gospel and John really wrote to the whole world and not a segment of people. 90 percent of John’s material is unique in comparison with the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. John’s Gospel does not focus so much on miracles, parables and sermons as the other three did. John emphasized that identity of Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

MAIN POINT – The Gospel is good news and it states that you can have new life in Christ Jesus.

CONTENT

**How do you typically react to change? Do you enjoy change or does it make you nervous?
What does this say about your personality?**

**What is the biggest life change you've been through recently? What do you remember most
about that experience?**

**For Christians, our conversion (when we entered into a personal relationship with Jesus
through belief in Him as Savior and Lord) is the biggest change that has taken place in our
lives. What are some of the ways you were changed when you met Christ?**

As we lay the foundation for real life change this week, we will focus on our need for change. Our need for change is rooted in the reality that apart from Jesus we have nothing, whether we realize it or not. This study of John 3:1-21 shows us that real change begins and ends with faith in Jesus.

I. There must be a sense of need for new life in an individual – (v.1-2)

Nicodemus came to Jesus under the cover at night. This is why this text has become known or had the sermon title of “Nick at Night.” We don’t know why he came at night. Maybe it was to save face or avoid the consequences of being saved by this radical teacher, known as Jesus. This conversation with Nicodemus turned into a theological discussion on soteriology, which is the study of salvation.

Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews and part of the Sanhedrin. He was an influential member of the Sanhedrin, which was responsible for both religious and civil issues in Israel. It was the Sanhedrin that later put Jesus on trial. His fellow partners on the Sanhedrin would have probably had a major problem with meeting and talking and questioning Jesus. So, Nicodemus comes to Jesus full of religion and good works.

Nicodemus shows up only in John’s Gospel. The text does not tell us Nicodemus’s motive for coming to Jesus. When Nicodemus called Jesus “Rabbi,” he (a member of the Jewish ruling council) placed himself in the role of student. The conversation that unfolded led him sense the need for eternal life with God.

II. The new birth is the only thing sufficient to meet that need for new life – (v.3-13)

3:3-4 - If we view these first fifteen verses of chapter 3 as a series of questions and answers, the first question might look like this: “Are you here to bring in the kingdom?” And Jesus’ first answer is, “You will never see the kingdom without being born again.” The “kingdom” refers to God’s family and rule, both on earth today and eternally in heaven. Jesus got right to the heart of the problem. He told the teacher he must be “born again,” a word which appears again in verses 7 and 31. Unless God changes our hearts His way, from the inside out, any discussion of the kingdom is useless.

Grant Richison – “Born again” means born from above—that is, from heaven. Jesus indicated three times in this passage that spiritual birth is required for salvation (Jn 3:3, 5, 7). Nicodemus needed more than law keeping for his soul to be saved. “Unless” indicates that there is no way to go to heaven except a person is born spiritually. All of Nicodemus’ religion was not good enough to make him acceptable to God.

Now the second question surfaces: “How can a man be born when he is old?” The physical world is often unexplainable just like the spiritual world, and Jesus later used the wind as an example to make that point. A person cannot respond to spiritual truth in natural ways.

3:5-7 - The second answer must have hit Nicodemus right between the eyes: “No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.” Verse 3 deals with the way of the new birth, and verse 5 talks about the process. Being “born of the Spirit” means the change provided at the time of faith in Christ.

3:8 - In this fascinating conversation, Jesus moves from the metaphor of birth to that of a breeze. Human effort can only produce human results (John 1:13), but the “pneuma”—the Spirit—is a different story. This is a spiritual mystery known only to God and difficult to explain in terms humans can grasp. God brings the breeze when and where He chooses. Life change comes from the presence of the Holy Spirit.

How is the Holy Spirit’s work like the wind?

III. This new life requires a step of faith (v.14-21)

To understand verses 14-15, you must understand the Old Testament story that goes behind it, found in Numbers 21:4-9. What did the people have to do to be saved if they were bitten by the snake? How is this a picture of salvation in Christ? What is the relationship between Jesus and the bronze snake?

3:16 - Eternal life comes not because of anything we do. Salvation comes as a free gift when we believe what God has said. “Whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” Four times in three verses (vv. 16-18) Jesus uses variations of the word “believe,” perhaps the most important key word in John’s Gospel. Jesus classified the entire human race into two groups—those who believe and are not condemned, and those who do not believe and are condemned already. The gospel begins with God’s love, continues through the cross and the empty tomb, and results in eternal life for those who believe. The verb “perish” speaks of eternal death in contrast to eternal life. It represents the opposite of preservation, since death is the opposite of life. Those who refuse God’s gift are alienated from Him without hope for both the present and the future.

“Only begotten Son” is literally one and only Son. Christ was a one-of-a-kind Son to the Father. He was completely unique from any other son. This phrase emphasizes the greatness of God’s gift. God’s gift to us was one of a kind, one vicarious sacrifice for everyone.

Why do you think this verse is so famous?

How much does God love?

What does it mean to “believe” in Jesus? Why is this so important?

What does John 3:16 teach us about God's love, our danger, and the reward?

3:17-18 - Did all this happen for judgment and condemnation? No. That was never God’s purpose. Notice how central Jesus is to the passage. Verse 17 talks about God’s saving the world through Him. Every human being has a choice—eternal life or eternal death. And as the Bible describes it, to perish is not to cease to exist, but to experience utter failure, futility, and loss—an eternity without God.

God’s love made salvation available to the whole world through the sacrificial death of His Son, Jesus, who paid the price for our sins. But salvation comes only to those who believe in Christ and His death on the cross (3:18). When we believe in Him, we are restored in our relationship with God,

no longer separated from Him or under His judgment. The result of this restoration is eternal life, meaning that after our physical death, we will live forever in the presence of God. John has been writing about changed lives—the message of Jesus to Nicodemus. Salvation is the work of God internally through the Holy Spirit, which demonstrates itself outwardly in godly living.

3:19-21 - Now we see the verdict. People reject Christ because of evil deeds and because they hate the light. God does not label their deeds evil because they love darkness; they love darkness because that is their very nature. What possible excuses keep people from Christ? This passage tells us they refuse light because it shows up the darkness in their own lives. Believers possess eternal life, but unbelievers do not. Believers are not condemned, but unbelievers are condemned already. Believers live in the light, while unbelievers live in the darkness. The last phrase of this paragraph should encourage all of us. Those who practice the truth, who continuously live in the light of God's Spirit, demonstrate that their righteousness—the right standing we have before God once our sins are forgiven—has been brought about by God.

According to Jesus' words in verses 19-21, how will we see and recognize belief?

CORRELATION – John 1:12, 5:24; Acts 4:12; Rom. 8:1; 1 Tim. 2:5; Titus 3:5-6; 1 John 4:9-10

APPLICATION - Knowledge without application or action is useless information. Answer these 4 questions – Now what? So what? What does this matter to my life? What does this text demand of me?

**When God shows His power in a person's life by saving him or her, what changes?
How has the gift of Jesus changed both your life and your eternity?
What is the cure for our sin debt?**

- * Jesus came to change our lives and give us a new life inside and out.
- * Religion is man's attempt to gain merit with God without trusting Jesus Christ as Lord & Savior.
- * It is possible to believe that Jesus was a good man and teacher and still go to hell.
- * We have all rebelled against God and it started with the first humans in the garden of Eden.
- * Salvation is a brand new life and beginning with God and is a spiritual birth.
- * Salvation is not something that we can produce or manufacture. God initiates salvation.
- * Before we become Christ followers, we are blind in our sins.
- * Spiritual birth is absolute and universally binding for anyone to go to heaven.
- * The Holy Spirit is the One who does the planting of eternal life into our souls.
- * Eternal life begins at that moment of salvation and when one receives eternal life.
- * The lost are born judged by God.
- * Light is the absolute standard that man must face if he is to fellowship with God.

Chuck Swindoll – “Salvation requires a second birth “from above,” because we are powerless to save ourselves.”

RESPONSE

- * Encourage one another, pray for one another and support one another in your Life Group this week. Look at starting a group online, meeting in a home or on campus w/ social distancing.
- * If you want to be part of the Pastor’s Life Groups online on Tuesday night, just call office or text us. We are using Google Meet. Every week you get a new link to your email. You can also call in by telephone and participate with the group.
- * Prayer for the week – Dear Heavenly Father, I’m grateful that I’m forgiven and accepted. I’m grateful that I do not have to walk in condemnation because I’m saved by Jesus Christ and I’m in Christ Jesus. In Jesus name. Amen.
- * Pray for VISION 2020 & that we will “Engage with the Word and the World!” We are trying to have 2000 gospel conversations by the end of 2020. Pray for many to be saved in 2020! If you are able to have a Gospel Conversation or see a Gospel Salvation, let us know so that we can rejoice with you.
- * Pray for every one as we read through the New Testament chronologically in 2020. Make the commitment to read through the whole New Testament this year with the church!
- * Pray for spiritual awakening in our land, which is desperately needed with all the chaos and craziness going on in our nation and world.
- * Pray for our SBC Convention and that God would do a work in our leadership and do a work in our Southern Baptist Churches. Pray for revival and that our churches would not fall for this social justice gospel.
- * Pray and ask God in His mercy to stop this pandemic. Pray for there to be slowdown of positive cases and no more deaths. Pray for a cure, a medical breakthrough, the right medications and a vaccine to use for COVID-19.
- * Pray for our healthcare workers, law enforcement, school teachers and administrators that are back at work now. Pray for their protection and provision.
- * Start praying for our Presidential election and many other local and state elections that will take place on November 3.
- * Pray for Your One that does not know the Lord Jesus. Pray for an opportunity to share with them and pray that they will be saved in 2020.
- * Pray for our Next Generation Search Committee as we look for a new Student Pastor.