



## Sermon – It's My Birthday....Every Day

Preached at Cloverdale Church, 12/4/22

### John 3:1-12, 16

Background: My birthday is coming up and it is always a time of reflection. I might get a few gifts and a bunch of greetings on fb along with a favorite meal. I might forget other folk's birthday, but I never have forgotten my birthday....and when it comes, I'm happy and ready for it, I look forward to it, and I celebrate it.

**There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. <sup>2</sup>This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."**

Now Bible study has just begun. He recognizes that Jesus is a great teacher, so Jesus starts teaching. The topic of the study is the need to be born again. This is a foundational lesson which Nicodemus as a religious leader should be aware of.

Unless you go through the process of being born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God. What does that mean.

I think it means you won't get there....talking about heaven. But I think there is a more immediate revelation. Unless you are born again, not only will you not see the Kingdom of God when you die, but you also won't experience the Kingdom of Heaven in your life...right now (Luke 16:16, Matt 4:17).

The Kingdom, represents dominion or rule. Heaven is nice and that's the end goal. But I don't have to wait to die to experience and see God start to increase his dominion and rule over my life. Once I'm born again, I should start to see and experience the Kingdom of Heaven manifested in my life. Evidence of the Kingdom should start to be seen.

- Romans 14:17-20 – Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- Luke 17:20-21 – The Kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, "see here!" or "see there!" For indeed the Kingdom of God is within you.

The Kingdom of Heaven is here in our midst today, but we will not see it in our personal lives until we are born again. So, we need to clearly understand what it means to be born again and how. To be born again means to have new life from your old life.

**<sup>4</sup>Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" <sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup>That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup>Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born**



again.’ <sup>8</sup> **The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”**

Nicodemus doesn’t understand and when I first read this, I didn’t understand it either. The reason Nicodemus and I didn’t understand what Jesus was talking about is because we were looking at this from a natural perspective.

What Nicodemus is saying is this doesn’t make sense because it is impossible in the natural.

Jesus’ response is impressive in that he agrees with Nicodemus. Notice Jesus says, you are looking at this from the wrong perspective. Look at it from a spiritual perspective. You have to be born again through baptism and through the Holy Spirit.

You are right Nicodemus, what is born of flesh in the natural is flesh. There are limitations in the natural, things that can’t happen in the flesh. It impossible to some things to happen in the natural. The only thing that comes out of the flesh is limited and not enough. But what comes out of the Spirit is more than enough.

But you need to understand while it is impossible in the natural, it is easy in the supernatural. Don’t marvel about being born again. What is impossible in the natural is a piece of cake in the spiritual.

So when you hear me tell you that you must be born again, don’t be surprised.

The wind blows and you can feel it and you know that it is there. You can hear the wind, but you can’t tell where it came from or where it is headed but you know it is there. Jesus says having the Holy Spirit is similar. When you are born again, you know that the Spirit is there, you see evidence, but you may not know everything about where the Spirit is about to take you.

I don’t need to know every detail; I just need to know He is there with me and leading me in paths of righteousness.

New life and being born again involves water = washing and a new Spirit.

<sup>9</sup> **Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?”** <sup>10</sup> **Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?”** <sup>11</sup> **Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.** <sup>12</sup> **If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?**

Nicodemus still doesn’t understand. Still trying to understand in the natural rather than looking at this from the spiritual viewpoint.

Jesus responds with a convicting question, how are you a teacher and don’t know this foundational teaching about the need to be born again?

So according to Jesus, Nicodemus should have known. But how?

- This may have been during the time of Passover, and that feast represents the birthday of the Hebrews.
- The Hebrews leaving Egypt are born again through a three step process that he would have been familiar with, Passover, leaving Egypt, crossing the Red Sea, being led by the Spirit in the wilderness. The same way his forefathers were saved is the same way we are to be born again (1 Cor 10:1-4).
- John the Baptist was already calling people to repentance. Matt 3:11 – I indeed baptized you in water unto repentance.
- Ezekiel 36:26

The application:

We can still be church going Christians even today, and still not understanding what it means to be born again. Let's make sure we don't miss this like Nicodemus did.

What does it mean to be born again? It means to be born from above and have a new life in and through Christ. The old life and way of doing things is replaced by a new awareness and application led by the Holy Spirit and not the old you. It means you are trusting in Jesus Christ alone.

How can we be born again? Jesus is the way....follow His steps, Cross, Grave, Sky.

- Recognize the need for God. Pick up your cross and humbly seek Him.
- Repent, turn from trusting in self and turn to trusting in Jesus.
- Receive the resurrected hope that comes from the new life in Christ.
- Be led by the Holy Spirit in living a life that brings God glory.

**<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

- Recognize in your current condition, you need God.
- Believe that Christ died for you and you die to self and turn to Him by faith.
- Believe that that God raised Christ from the dead and that you follow Him and have new life and new hope in Christ.

Just believe.

Some commentaries think that Nicodemus is having difficulty because he may have assumed that the Jews were already past this step and looking to the coming of the Messiah to bring about an earthly or natural Kingdom.

- Too many Christians have been there and visited there born again experience once, but they haven't understood the need to go back. We need to go back each day to the place where we first received Him
- Daily we should be picking up our cross and following Christ and experiencing the born again steps and process so we are seeing the Kingdom of God each day.



Back to my birthday. In the flesh, I can only celebrate my birthday once a year. But I can do things in the Spirit that I cannot do in the flesh. So, every day, I celebrate my spiritual birthday. Each day I pick up my cross and follow the steps of Christ by faith so I can experience the Kingdom of Heaven every day. I live in my new mind IAW Gal 2:20.

## Romans 6

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup>Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? <sup>3</sup>Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup>Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup>For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, <sup>6</sup>knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be <sup>[a]</sup>done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. <sup>7</sup>For he who has died has been <sup>[b]</sup>freed from sin. <sup>8</sup>Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,