

Ye Must be Born Again

John 3: 1-15

We have read a portion of one of the most beloved and quoted passages of Scripture. It is here that Jesus has a personal encounter with a man named Nicodemus, one of the elite in all of Israel. Nicodemus was a man of power, wealth, and influence. He seemed to be on top of the world. By the standards of society, Nicodemus had it all; he had reached the pinnacle of success.

But, with all that he had achieved and acquired there was emptiness in his life. He knew that something was missing. This encounter with Jesus would open his eyes to the wonderful and gracious offer of salvation. In their conversation Jesus shares the truths of being born again.

The fundamental truths that Jesus shared with Nicodemus reveal how sinners are saved and cleansed by the saving power of Christ. I want to look in on their conversation as we consider the [truths](#) of the proclamation Jesus made: [Ye Must be Born Again](#).

I. The Condition of Nicodemus – In the life of Nicodemus we can see a resemblance to many in our day. Notice:

A. He was a Religious Man (1) – Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews. The Pharisees were devoutly religious. No doubt he had spent years studying the Scriptures and living according to the Mosaic Law. As a ruler of the Jews, Nicodemus held a position of authority in the synagogue. He knew religious traditions and how they were to be carried out, but sadly he had never met the Christ of the Scriptures. We see Jesus in His person in the gospels, but all of the Bible points to Him.

- Nicodemus may have been religious, but he wasn't saved. All the religion in the world can never provide salvation. You could study the Bible and even quote it word for word, but if you have never been saved all you will have is knowledge of God, not a relationship. Being involved in church services and activities are good, but they cannot save!

B. He was a Respected Man (1, 10) – There is little doubt Nicodemus would've been a man who was admired and respected. Jesus referred to him as a master of Israel, or a teacher. Nicodemus must've been an educated man with a lot of influence on those around him. He was likely envied by many who would love to have the opportunity to serve in the position he held.

- Nicodemus would've been a fine, outstanding citizen among the Jews. He lived a life that was admired and respected by those who knew him, but even that couldn't bring salvation. There are many today who live a good, moral life. They abide by the laws of the land, work hard and refrain from an immoral lifestyle; they are good to help with social causes and issues, but they are lost in sin because they have never trusted Christ. Simply living a respectable life will never bring salvation or acceptance to God.

C. He was a Restless Man (2) – Nicodemus had it all as man would think, but there was something within his heart that wouldn't let him rest. He knew what the Bible said; he knew how to live a moral life, but yet there was a void in his heart. We find that he came to Jesus by night to enquire of Him. He came with respect for the Lord, desiring to learn more of Him.

- The Spirit of God was working in the heart of Nicodemus. This wasn't just curiosity, this was conviction! I remember when the Lord was dealing with me. I could find no rest within my soul. I had heard of Christ, but I hadn't surrendered my heart to Him. I lived in fear of death.
- Many today are like Nicodemus. They have found success in this world, but they are miserable in their souls. If you constantly find yourself thinking of what will happen when you die, or wondering if you have made the necessary preparations to stand before God, it is likely the Spirit is dealing with you as He did Nicodemus. Praise God for the convicting power of the Spirit!

D. He was a Reluctant Man (4; 9) – We will deal with the words of Jesus in a moment, but we find that Nicodemus had trouble with the words of Jesus. The Lord had laid out the plan of salvation, but Nicodemus couldn't yet believe. It is likely that his education and the influence of the Pharisees clouded his vision. They wanted to work their way in, thinking they could live good enough to merit heaven. The Lamb of God had shared the truth of salvation, and yet Nicodemus was reluctant to believe.

- How many have heard the gospel but are reluctant to receive it? Maybe the Lord has dealt with you, maybe you know that you are lost, and yet you are unwilling to believe. I thought of the words of King Agrippa as Paul stood before him, "[Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.](#)" The Lord had sent conviction, but Agrippa would not believe. He was reluctant to accept Christ and I truly believe he is in hell today because of his reluctance.
- Don't be as Nicodemus was here, or Agrippa; the gift of salvation is beyond our ability to comprehend, just believe it by faith! Many have been reluctant and waited too long. They thought they would get saved someday, but "someday" never came. Jesus is the only way to obtain salvation and eternal life!

II. The Conversation of Jesus – Jesus reveals the truths of salvation. Let's consider the words of the Giver of Life eternal. Notice:

A. The Must of Salvation (3; 5) – Jesus reveals there is only one way to enter into the Kingdom of God. A man must be born again. The word **except** is an imperative revealing “*there are no other options*;” Jesus is the only way! We **must** be born again. The word **must** is also an imperative which means “*to be absolutely necessary*.” He was telling Nicodemus that if he wanted to be forgiven of sin and acceptable to God, he must be born again!

- This was hard for Nicodemus to comprehend. How can a man enter his mother's womb the second time and be born again when he is old? Jesus isn't referring to a physical birth. The word **again** has the idea of “*coming from above*.” Man must be born of the Spirit of God. It is the only way. The Holy Spirit brings conviction to man's heart and through faith he believes in the finished work of Christ and is regenerated a new creature.

- I don't remember my first birth, the physical birth, but I do remember my second birth, the day I was born into the family of God! We can't comprehend the new birth; it is the work of God, [John 1:12-13](#).

B. The Mark of Salvation (6-7) – Jesus reveals to Nicodemus there is a fundamental difference in the flesh and the Spirit. Those who have never experienced the spiritual birth remain in the flesh. There has been no change in their lives. We often find folks, who make resolutions or try to turn over a new leaf, but there has been no change within the heart; there has been no regeneration and spiritual renewal. Those are depending on themselves to create a right relationship with God.

- When we are born again, we are born of the Spirit. The Lord makes a change within the heart, old things have passed away and all things become new. There will be a noticeable difference in the lives of those who are born again. [2 Cor.5:17- Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new](#). We will still be apt to sin and come short of the glory of God, but there will be a drastic change in our lives.

- I wonder about those who claim to have experienced salvation and yet there is no change in their lives. They still behave the same as before, they are still found in the same old places with the same old people. I am not perfect, but there has been a change in my life. When Jesus sets up residence in your heart, He will make a change that you will see as well as those around you!

C. The Miracle of Salvation (8) – Nicodemus was an educated Pharisee but he couldn't grasp the truths of salvation. It is beyond our ability to grasp all the Jesus has done for us and continues to do in us. I have been saved for 30 years and I still haven't figured out all I've received.

- Jesus gives a simple illustration: The wind blows where it wishes; we hear the sound of the wind and can even see its effects, but we cannot tell where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with our salvation. We feel the conviction of the Spirit and we visibly see the effects of a changed life, and yet we have no idea all that the Spirit is doing in our lives or where He is leading us.
- There is no way to fully grasp all we have in Jesus. Much of what we've received is a mystery, but it is wonderful nonetheless! We are not expected to understand it all, just believe. Rejoice that you are forgiven and acceptable to Him!

III. The Confidence of Salvation (13-15) – In these closing verses Jesus provides assurance for those who believe. I want to consider a couple aspects regarding our confidence in salvation. Notice:

A. The Provision of the Savior (13-14) – Jesus wanted Nicodemus to realize all of his education and upright living were not the source of salvation. It is impossible for man to ascend into heaven of himself. This is prior to the crucifixion and sacrifice that Jesus would make, but He shares the gospel message with Nicodemus. The Son of God left the glories of heaven and came as a servant to mankind, robed in flesh, to offer Himself as the only Sacrifice that could atone for sin.

- Just as Moses lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness to provide for those who were bitten by the venomous snakes to be made whole, Jesus had to be lifted up for those who had been poisoned by sin to be made whole. Were it not for the death and resurrection of our Lord, there would be no hope for us to ever be saved. Jesus secured the means of our salvation as He died upon the cross. We have the hope of eternal life because He rose again. Salvation is in Christ and Christ alone!

B. The Promise for the Sinner (15) – Everyone couldn't have the position that Nicodemus held, but that wasn't what was required. It isn't about who we are; it is all about what Jesus has done! Jesus makes a promise that all can receive, whosoever can come to the Lord and receive salvation if they will only by faith believe. He came that all people might be saved. Jesus came for you! If you have never trusted in Him, He stands waiting for you to come. He wants you to come, just as you, are in faith. If you can believe that Jesus has the power to save, He will save you today!

Conclusion: I remember a time when I was like Nicodemus. I have never held a prominent place in society, but I was lost and reluctant to receive Christ. But I found out all I had to do was respond in faith and Jesus met me there. All He wanted was for me to come unto Him. He did the saving; I was just the recipient.

Jesus said, **Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.** If you are lost please come!