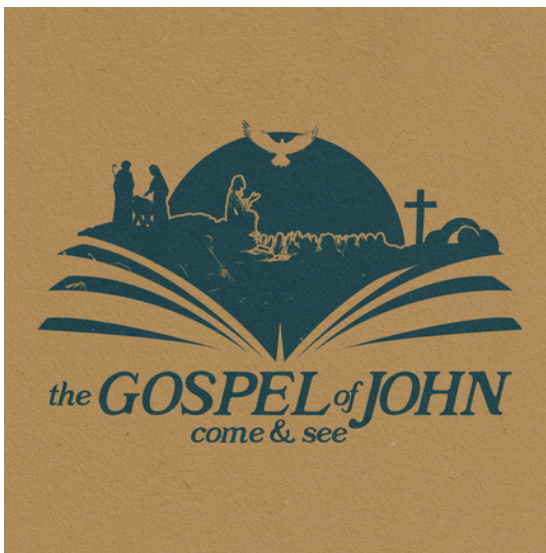


# SERMON STUDY GUIDE



01.21.24 // Week 3 // Born Again



He is the most written-about figure in history.  
He is the most asked-about person on Google.  
Who is He? Jesus.

John's Gospel account of Jesus certainly tells us about some of what Jesus did, but more than that, John wants us to see who Jesus is!

Here we will truly come and see who Jesus is and how He changes our lives!

## ICE BREAKER QUESTIONS

- What's the best piece of advice you've ever received?
  
- If you could time-travel to any point in history for one day, where and when would you go?

# GOING DEEPER INTO THE MESSAGE

## Let's read John 3:1-10

*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.*

### **Point 1 – Transformation does not simply come from information.**

In this narrative, we are introduced to a man named Nicodemus who sought a private conversation with Jesus at night. From verse 1, we learn that this man was a Pharisee and acted as ruler of the Jews. Jesus refers to this man as a "teacher of Israel" in verse 10.

The Pharisees were one of the major religious sects in Jesus' day. These leaders were experts on the law of Moses, memorized large sections of the Bible, and were well known for their distinct practices that set them apart from the rest of the Jews. They were incredibly knowledgeable of God and His Word. The problem was that their religious traditions and special knowledge of God may have looked good on the surface but their hearts were far from God. They knew *of* God but didn't have a personal relationship *with* God. They were revered by the people but Jesus took issue with issues in their hearts: pride and self-righteousness.

In this story, we see Nicodemus coming to Jesus with a posture of respect, referring to Jesus as "Rabbi" and "teacher." He comes with language that mirrors a student eager to learn, as evidenced by his asking questions.

**NICODEMUS SOUGHT JESUS TO GET INSIGHT, BUT JESUS OFFERED HIM AN INVITATION INSTEAD.**

Knowledge of God is important and helpful but true spiritual transformation requires a divine work of God on the human heart. For God to change us, like Nicodemus, we need to experience a touch from His Spirit that sets us on a new course in life. We can't expect to do the things of God without the help of God.

Jesus refers to this type of transformation as being “**born again**” (see vs.3-7). The Gospel of John constantly uses symbolism to explain the greater truths of Jesus. For a man or woman to experience a transformed life, they must experience being born a second time. Not as one who goes back into the womb (vs.4) but someone who is born of “water and the Spirit.” The water symbolizes the cleansing that takes place in the human heart when God’s supernatural work takes place. The Spirit is the one who gives us a new heart to obey and follow Him.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Can you identify with Nicodemus in this story? Have you ever been in a place where your knowledge of God didn't match up with your heart for God?
- When did you accept Jesus' invitation to become “born again?”
- What are some of the areas in which God has transformed your life (speech, conduct, thought patterns, etc.)? What are some areas that God is currently working on in your life?

### Continue reading John 2:11-21

*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[h] the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be shown to be accomplished by God.”*

## Point 2 - Receive the gift of God's love.

The ideas represented in the verses above were radically new to Nicodemus. We have heard them before and they are still hard to fully comprehend. That's because we need the Holy Spirit to help us to understand. We first need to recognize that we have a need, that we are already condemned. But God loves us so much, even though we were condemned, that He has given His own Son to us to make the sacrifice for us to save us. Next we need to acknowledge that Jesus is the only way, that He came down from heaven to live a perfect life, die on the cross and be raised to life again to take away our sins. Jesus didn't come to earth to tell us how bad we are, or to make us feel shame for our sins. He came to earth to stretch out His hand to us and lift us out of the darkness because of how much the Father loves us.

We must trust and "believe" in Jesus. The word "believe" means to change your allegiance. This kind of belief isn't just knowing answers about God. This type of belief is pledging your allegiance to a person. It's giving Jesus your whole life and following wherever He leads.

God doesn't expect us to be perfect in order to come to Him. He only wants us to come to Him with a humble heart. He wants us to recognize Him for the good Father He is and to accept the free gift He offers us. Only then will there be an opportunity for real change in our lives.

All kinds of people all over the world can be moral, "good" people. That is good for society, but that is not what is required for eternity with God. There is only one way to the Father and that is through the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus on the cross. Accepting this gospel message and the free gift of relationship with the Father is the only way to glorify God with our actions moving forward. We have to live by the truth in order to come to the light, Jesus, so that our works may be shown to be accomplished by God.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- When you're struggling, do you turn toward God, or do you try to fix things first in order to be able to come to God?
- What renewal do you need from Jesus in your life today? Do you need to know Him for the first time? Do you need to go to Him with a recurring struggle?
- What would it look like to position yourself in such a way to let the Spirit do the work of change in your life today? How can you posture your heart to release control?