

(NEW) Life Begets (ETERNAL) Life

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Date: 06 March 2022

Preacher: Jim Masters

[0:00] Please take your Bibles, go to John chapter 3, John's Gospel, chapter 3.

If you're visiting with us and need a Bible, there's a Bible in the chair in front of you. And go towards the back, they renumber the New Testament and find page 72 to find John chapter 3.

We're gonna do the first 15 verses of John chapter 3. John 3, verses 1 through 15 this morning.

Again, page 72 in that black Bible.

I will read the passage and then we will dive in. John 3.

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This one came to him by night and said to him, Rabbi, we know that you've come from God, a teacher, for no one is able to do these signs that you do unless God is with them.

[1:22] Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one has been born new, he's not able to see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus said to him, How can a man be born when he is old? He's not able to enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born? Verse 5, Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one has been born of water and spirit, he is not able to enter into the kingdom of God.

That which has been born of the flesh is flesh, and that which has been born of the spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I say to you, it is necessary for you to be born new. The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the voice, but do not know where it goes, or excuse me, where it comes and where it goes.

In the same way are all those who have been born of the spirit. Nicodemus answered and said to him, How is it possible for these things to be?

Jesus answered and said to him, You are the teacher of Israel, and you do not know these things.

Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak that which we know, and testify of that which we have seen, and you do not receive our witness.

[2:44] If I told you earthly things, and you do not believe, how should I believe if I tell you heavenly things? And no one has ascended into heaven, except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, in the same way it is necessary for the Son of Man to be lifted up, that all the ones who believe may in Him have eternal life.

Someone has given the seven ages of man spills, drills, thrills, bills, ills, pills, wills.

Life is important. It's short. Like one person said, seize the moment, remember all those women on the Titanic who waved off the dessert cart.

Kind of funny, it's like kind of morbid as well, right? thinking about the importance of life, we think about our brothers and sisters in Ukraine.

[3:58] Life is precious to them. And as we come to this passage, Jesus speaks about life too, but not how you might think.

It's not this life, but a life that's vastly different from this life. He speaks of new life, or rebirth, or really transformation, or being born from above, or being born again.

He would know, because He's the Son of Man. He's the God-Man. John's Gospel is calling the readers, come receive Jesus.

Come believe Jesus. Believe into Jesus. Come know Jesus. That's what John's Gospel is about, and here, in chapter 3, verse 1 through 15, we'll see this.

Life begets life. Life causes life. Or life produces life, and I put that in parentheses, because then you can be even more specific.

[5:18] New life begets eternal life. New life causes eternal life. New life produces eternal life.

Life begets life. Here's some statements for you, different ways to say this. Jesus, the true teacher, says that when the Spirit births, new life, it'll always beget belief.

Belief in Jesus. Which in turn begets eternal life. Jesus is the true teacher. And He says when the Spirit births new life, a rebirth, when He brings transformation, it'll always bring belief.

belief, which in turn begets eternal life. Here's a longer way to state the passage.

When the Spirit does His sovereign work of life, that is cleansing and renewal, it will produce belief in the Son of Man, and all those who believe will have, in the Son of Man, eternal life.

[6:43] That's what this passage is about. That's what John 3, 1 through 15, that's how you can summarize it. The Spirit does His sovereign work of the rebirth, which involves a cleansing and a renewal.

And it will produce, begets belief in the Son of Man and Jesus, and all those who believe will have in the Son of Man, eternal life. Life begets life.

Jesus is the true teacher. And He's God's representative who would challenge and really shame this religious elite guy.

We're gonna call him Nick, for short. This religious elite who represented this dark world. and it's religious system.

Jesus would challenge the whole Jewish religious system here. And because this encounter went beyond Nick.

[7:52] It was a conflict between Jesus and the entire Jewish religious authorities. But even deeper, it was a conflict between God and the entire human race.

Which we'll find out next week. The entire human race whom God loves in order to save them. This is what we really need.

New life. Transformation. That's what people need when you speak the gospel into someone's life, the gospel, when you tell them the gospel, realize that that's the part that you do.

Everything else is up to God. You can't create life in that person. You can't do that. That's not evangelism.

Evangelism is not results. Evangelism is not seeing new life happen. Evangelism is you giving someone the gospel and the Spirit's gonna take that and He's gonna birth new life.

[9:06] This is what we need. New life. Transformation. Rebirth. So let's start there. We need life or new life.

We'll see that in verses 1 through 8. And I'm gonna have statements to follow along with this phrase. We need life. We need life first to see God's kingdom. We need new life first of all to see God's kingdom.

Verse 1 through 4. Notice how John, the evangelist, begins. There's a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus. Let's stop there. So Nicodemus, Nick, approached Jesus having seen the signs.

We'll come to that in verse 2 in a moment. But his thoughts of Jesus were doubtful. At best, he had superficial faith. At best, superficial faith.

See, who was this guy? Nicodemus? He exemplifies, as one writer put it, broken religion and broken humanity. That's Nicodemus who he represents.

[10:18] He's not some guy's innocence trying to figure things out. Now, notice the next part of verse 1. A man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

This guy was a Pharisee. Pharisees came about towards the end of the last century before Christ and into the first century AD.

These guys were an elite. They followed this oral law, these traditions, right? They followed the strict code. He was a Pharisee. But even more than that, he was a ruling official.

And even more than that, some background from Nicodemus, he was from an elite family. Which means he was wealthy, powerful, highly regarded, very influential.

Kind of like the president. Of the ruling group of first century Judaism, that's the identity of Nic.

[11:29] That's him. This is who he is. So, understand this. He was not truly open to the truth. If anything, he was actually challenging Jesus being a representative of that elite to which he belonged.

Because the tie-in is verse 25 of chapter 2. Verse 25. And because he had no need for anyone to testify concerning man for he himself knew what was in man, he knew what was inside Nick.

He knew he needed a new birth. Verse 2. This man came to him by night. Maybe because he wanted the cloak of darkness.

Interesting, you know, but since every instance in John's gospel, night is used in the negative sense, you see this more as the state of Nick's heart.

He needed transformation. Look at what he says. Rabbi! We know you have come from God, a teacher, for no one is able to do these signs that you do unless God is with him.

[12:44] This whole section that Nick says here in verse 2 was nothing more than, as one writer put it, quote, honorific flattery.

It's just flattering Jesus. It looked like he was complimenting him, but in all reality he was being combative. He was actually challenging Jesus. Jesus. We know you come from God.

We, who's we? The Jewish religious elites. The ruling elite. We are challenging everything I just said about you. That you're some kind of teacher with religious authority.

No, you're not some kind of teacher and no, you don't have authority. He's flattering him. Jesus sees right through that and nails him.

Jesus' statement puts him on the defensive. Look at what he says in verse 3. Jesus said to him, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one has been born new, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

[14:03] See, Nick was not really challenging some guy. Nick was challenging God. And Jesus turned things right back on him to reveal the state of his heart, to reveal what he needed.

And notice how Jesus begins. Truly, truly, I say to you, that's an authoritative statement. So, immediately, he's countering what Nicodemus was challenging.

You don't think I have authority? Truly, truly, I say to you, here's my authority. Unless one has been born new.

It's actually has been born. I really don't understand why they translate is. It should be has been born. It's has been born. It's past tense. And it's passive. It happens to you.

You can't bring that. You can't make this happen. You can't create new life in yourself. You can't do it. Unless one has been born new, he cannot.

[15:15] He's not able to see the kingdom of God. Our virgins have born again. Or probably, maybe it would be better to be translated like born new.

Jesus is being obscure on purpose as a way to challenge his challenger. I'm gonna challenge you. And really, when Nic questions this in verse four, he's gonna be both dead right and dead wrong.

Unless one has been born new, he's not able to see the kingdom of God. No, understand that. It's for a Jew in Jesus' day. God's kingdom was at the end of the age, the eternal resurrection life.

So all Jews would be admitted into the kingdom. If you're a Jew, you're awesome. You're in. Unless there's like some extreme evil in your life, or maybe there's some apostasy, apostasy, then.

But if you're a Jew, you're in. Awesome. Not so according to the true teacher. One must be born new to be able to see the kingdom of God.

[16:31] Regeneration by the spirit in the person must happen before that one can see God's kingdom. You cannot see God's kingdom by virtue of your life that you're a really good person.

You cannot see God's kingdom because of your heritage. Well, my parents were Christians. You cannot see God's kingdom because of the bloodline. You cannot see God's kingdom because of some kind of work that you have done.

No. You must be born new. It's a work of God. It's a rebirth. And those who believe in Jesus have been born of God.

That's the only way. Nick. Are you crazy? Verse 4. How is it possible for a man to be born when he's old?

He's not able to enter a second time to his mother's womb and be born. He took Jesus literally and almost kind of disregarded what Jesus said with some scorn. Maybe even biting sarcasm.

[17:39] What are you supposed to do? Like, under a second time his mother's womb and be born? This is not just confusion. This is rebellion. He's rebuking Jesus, even mocking Jesus.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, right. This guy was the teacher of Israel? He's clueless.

He sucked in too much helium the day before. What's going on? He had no idea. So we need life to see God's kingdom.

We need life. Now notice Jesus ups the ante to enter God's kingdom. Verse 5. He drives the challenge even farther. Notice again the authority.

Jesus answered, truly, truly, I say to you, there's the authority again. Unless one has been born of water and spirit, he is not able to enter the kingdom of God.

[18:44] So notice the tie-in from verse 3 and verse 5. The tie-in is this, to be born new is to be born of water and spirit. The phrase is parallel to verse 3.

plus of the of, born of water and spirit, governs both water and spirit. It's unity. Well, what is, what is he talking about?

What does Jesus mean by this? Well, you have to go to the Old Testament because the Old Testament is the key that unlocks the understanding to this.

See, which, interesting, we sang that song, Holy Spirit, living breath of God. I think it's the third verse it says this. The spirit's work in creation was what gave life.

Genesis 1-2. Water in the Old Testament was used for cleansing. You see that throughout the book of Leviticus. And you put that together with looking forward to a time when the spirit would bring inner renewal, cleansing God's people, Ezekiel 36.

[19:50] That's why we read that. I'm not as dumb as I look. So there's, there's cleansing. There's transformation. There's renewal.

There's newness of life. By the way, in some translations, unless one is born or has been born of water and spirit, the spirit, it can either be capital S or little s.

I take it to be a capital S just because of the context, but if you think it's a little s, whatever. The idea that he's looking forward to is the Holy Spirit.

That's why I think it's a capital S. But all that to say, this birth of water and spirit signals a new birth that cleanses and renews the individual.

which was mysteriously evident in the Old Testament, but also promised in the Old Testament a greater way when Messiah would come. And notice, again verse five, he's not able to enter the kingdom of God.

[21:05] Now it's not just see, it's actually enter. Unless there is a transformation, a person is not able to enter God's kingdom.

Unless there is cleansing, one cannot enter into his kingdom. And understand this, for Nicodemus, there's no way, no stinking way he thought he needed some kind of repentance, let alone be cleansed or renewed.

No way. He didn't think that. He's part of the elite. I'm part of the presidential administration. I don't need that.

But his Jewish credentials, and anything else for that matter, it meant nothing to God. Your credentials, your status, how you are such a good person, that means nothing to God. nothing. You need rebirth. You need transformation. You need to be changed.

[22:19] You need that life. We need new life to see God's kingdom, to enter God's kingdom. We need new life which is out of the spirit.

Out of or from the spirit. Verse 6. That which has been born of the flesh is flesh. And that which has been born of the spirit is spirit.

Now flesh refers to things that are natural in terms of human nature. Human birth produces human people. That's usually how it works. Last time I checked. Pregnant.

Human. Pregnant. Not alien. Not sci-fi. Human. Human. That's how it works. Spirit birth though. Spirit birth produces people who are born of God with a new nature, a new heart. They're cleansed. And notice he says that which is born of flesh is flesh.

[23:26] Born of spirit. Spirit. The character of those born of the flesh is determined by the source of that birth. Flesh. The character of those who have been born of the spirit is determined by the source of that birth.

The spirit. So this life, rebirth, transformation comes out of from the spirit of God.

He does that work. We need life. We need life which is to see God's kingdom, to enter God's kingdom. It's out of the spirit and the spirit he's sovereign.

Verse 7 and 8. Look at what he says. Don't marvel that I said to you it's necessary for you to be born new. When blows or it wishes you hear the voice of it.

You know it won't know where it comes and where it goes in the same way as all the ones who have been born of the spirit. Don't marvel. You should know this stuff.

[24:34] Jesus is driving home his own rebuke of Nick silencing his response. He turned the tides on him. It's hard to see what the spirit is doing.

Why? Because he's like the wind. He's like the wind. You know was it yesterday and then Friday? Man that wind was just blowing. It was pushing that cold air in right?

Pushing that cold front in we got all that snow and rain and all that. This is great. So now you have the picture in your mind just a day or two ago the wind blowing. Now you don't see the wind you see the effects of the wind.

You see it blowing the trees. Blowing your hair. Blowing your snot all over the place. Your nose is running. Blowing your snot because your allergies are kicking up. And it cannot be controlled. You can't control the wind. You can't grab the wind. You can't do that. It grabs you though doesn't it? It's mysterious. It's unseen.

[25 : 33] It moves at its will. So it is with the spirit. No one controls him or understands him but when he works his work is undeniable.

It always always always always did I say always? Always produces an effect and that effect will be belief in the son of man which will produce eternal life.

Chapter 3 verse 15. Those born of God they're not born from human decision. Or the will of a husband.

Remember chapter 1 verse 12 and 13? The spirit moves like the wind so he is sovereign over whom he cleanses and renews.

he decides whom he will make new and the result of that renewal is belief. Hold on to that when you give someone the gospel.

[26 : 48] Hold on to that when you talk to someone about Christ because it can not it will never be you. you can't make that happen and doesn't it drive you nuts because you just want to what's wrong with you?

Right? Why don't you believe in Jesus? Right? You want to do that but you don't want to do that. Don't do that. It's probably not a good idea. But you feel like that because why aren't you hearing what I'm saying?

Because the first hour we talked about this is quite interesting the tie-in. In 2 Corinthians chapter 4 the God of this world is blinded to the minds of the unbelieving.

See I will not see the light of the glory of God who is Christ and he's the image of God. They can't see. But what does God do?

He says let there be light. By whom does he do this? The spirit. The spirit says light.

[28 : 02] The spirit says rebirth. He calls that person and that life will produce life. Don't forget this in your evangelism.

And don't forget this. God's given you life. We have the Lord's Supper here. We're going to celebrate that in a few moments.

You get to remind yourself that God was so gracious to you. What did you do to deserve this? Nothing.

That's why you sang depth of mercy. Reaching even me. God's been so gracious to you. He created new life in you.

It should well up in us such praise and thanks that God would do this. We need life to see the kingdom, to enter the kingdom.

[29 : 12] It's only the spirit. He is sovereign. And trust Jesus saying this because he's the true authoritative teacher in these things. He knows what he's talking about.

Verse 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13. Notice Nick. You're crazy. How is it possible for these things to be?

Notice Nick was totally rejecting what Jesus had to say.

Yet his comment was powerless because Jesus stops him cold. Look at what Jesus says, verse 10. Jesus answered him, you are the teacher of Israel and you do not know these things?

You've never heard this before. Aren't you the teacher of Israel? This whole teaching comes out of the Old Testament. You don't know this? This comes full circle. Notice how Jesus strips away Nick's title, his elitism.

In other words, Jesus is a saint. I am the true teacher in this matter, not you. In essence, Jesus rebuked him, one writer put it like this, vainglory because he challenged God.

[30 : 26] Who do you think you are, Nick? He thought he would shame Jesus, but he was shamed. He thought, I'm going to teach Jesus a thing or two.

Ends up, he becomes the student, doesn't he? Jesus drives this authority further. Look at verse 11. Truly, truly, I say to you, there's the authority.

We speak that which we know and we testify that which we've seen and you don't receive our witness. The we and the hour is best seen as the we of an authoritative testimony. testimony. In

other words, Jesus intensified his authority by using this plural form to try and drive it home. I am the authority on these things he's saying. I know all these things. He knows all there is to know about these things and notice, how do they respond? They don't receive it. They don't receive Jesus. and the you notice, verse 11, you do not receive our witness. You is plural.

[31 : 39] So he's not just speaking to Nick. He's speaking to Nick and his peeps. In essence though, Jesus spoke this to the world.

I am the teacher to all of you and you are all the students. Learn from me. I'm your only way. You must believe in me.

He's going to go into that. The only way you can be saved is trusting in Jesus Christ. It's the only way. Because he's the authority. He's the son of man.

He died for sinners. If you're here, you don't know Jesus, you should come trust Jesus. Put your trust in Jesus alone. He's the true authority.

He drives it further. Verse 12. Look at verse 12. If I told you earthly things and you don't believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? What's the earthly things?

[32 : 41] The new birth. It's that which takes place here. The message of the gospel. It's about the real world. It's about who Jesus is.

The need for new life. And the cross and trusting in Jesus is the earthly truth. Nick must believe. If you don't even believe these things, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things which is Jesus inaugurating things by his incarnation, the kingdom, the details of life in the kingdom of God, the consummation of it all.

How are you going to believe if I tell you about those things, Nick? You won't. You want authority? Nick, any minutes you want authority?

Boom, I'll give you authority. Verse 13. And no one has ascended to heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. By what authority does Jesus have these things, speak these things?

He's the only one who descended from heaven. That's why. Mohammed hasn't done that. Buddha hasn't done that.

[33 : 55] Following the eightfold path the Buddhism. Following the book of Hinduism. Sikh. Any other religion of the world, just pick it. No one has descended from heaven.

Only the one who will ascend back to heaven, the Son of Man. He's the Son of Man. And by his work of redemption, he has descended and will eventually ascend back to heaven.

because his work of redemption, that's how he saves people. And Jesus goes into that. I'm the true authority of teacher on these things and Jesus, the Son of Man, must be lifted up or shamed.

Look at verse 14. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, in the same way it is necessary for the Son of Man to be lifted up. this is why there needs to be cleansing and renewal. This is why the Spirit gives life so that an individual will believe this very message. That Jesus will be lifted up.

[35 : 06] That Jesus will be shamed. Now why does he bring up Moses in the wilderness? What's that whole thing about? Moses in the wilderness is from Numbers chapter 21.

the people are being bit by snakes. So Moses took a snake, put it on a staff or a pole and he told the people, this is the word I'm going to tell you, the Lord says look upon that staff and you'll live. So he lifted up the staff, people look at that and they will live. And the similarities between Numbers 21 and Jesus is striking. In the context of Numbers 21, Israel mocked and rebuked God.

that's what Nicodemus is doing to Jesus and the religious authorities. Moses was the intercessor. The people had to turn to him and hope was found only through Moses.

Same thing with Jesus. He's the intercessor. People have to turn to him and hope in him because hope is only found in Jesus. But the differences are even more striking. Moses has worked for the people involved something outside himself.

[36 : 14] For Jesus, he was offering himself. Moses' work was temporary. Jesus' work is eternal and permanent. The snake on that pole or staff was the means by which God would save his rebellious people.

By God's grace to the people, he granted them life if they believed his word and looked upon the staff. And notice Jesus says, it is necessary, day, D-E-A, delta epsilon iota, it must happen.

He must be lifted up. Jesus will be lifted up upon the cross with exaltation soon to follow. The clearest, the clearest way God reveals himself is through his son and his death, his resurrection and exaltation.

And as the Israelites were called to look up at the snake to live, so must you do that so you would live. He's the obedient servant of Yahweh, the son of man.

John doesn't use this phrase from Jesus very much. The synoptic skew. They use it a lot. Jesus here in John's gospel doesn't. But here he's specifying the son of man who would suffer, die, and rise.

[37 : 36] It had to happen. So those who turn to him, receive him, believe him, will receive eternal life. We'll see that in a moment. Verse 15. But look at the irony.

Jesus wins when he loses. He's lifted on a cross, but it's in his humiliation that Christ can be exalted and you're saved.

This is the heart of the gospel. Jesus is shamed so you can be honored. That's what you'll celebrate in a few moments. The bread and the juice, it represents Jesus' death.

And by the shame of the cross, you're saved. One writer put it like this, quote, to look at Jesus is to understand the necessity of the exalted son of man on the cross.

To understand how a crucified God can become for the world the greatest thing imaginable. What amazing grace and love. The power of this victorious work must go through shame.

[38 : 50] In the same way, when you're ashamed for the faith, that's just victory, that's not defeat. So notice how Jesus closes all this off.

This brings us back to our main theme. Life begets life. The spirit does his work so that you can see it, you can enter it, you can believe in Jesus, and that begets eternal life.

Here, last point, all who believe have in Jesus, in the son of man, eternal life. Verse 15, that all the ones who believe may in him have eternal life.

Only the ones who believe may have eternal life in him, just like those who believe in the word that Moses spoke when he lifted up the snake on that staff. All who believe have in Jesus this life.

So this life is in Christ, and it's a life that's personal, it's relational, it's intimate, it's knowing God, because Jesus will mention that. Eternal life is knowing God and Jesus Christ whom you've sent.

[39 : 55] So when the Spirit does His work of cleansing and renewal, the spiritual order is that an individual will believe in the Son of Man, putting all their hope in the shameful, dishonorable, horrific cross.

Dishonorable, shameful, horrific Messiah. When the Spirit does His sovereign work of life, cleansing and renewal, it will produce belief in the Son of Man, and all those who believe will have in the Son of Man eternal life.

Life begets life. New life by the Spirit will bring belief in Jesus, which will in turn give you eternal life. Jesus is the true teacher on these things. He says that when the Spirit births new life, it will always beget belief, which in turn begets eternal life. Life begets life.

As we come to this part where we're going to be contemplating the Lord's Supper, here's two truths I want to encourage you to fill your mind with.

[41 : 19] Fill your mind with these two truths. First, God was so gracious to you to give you a new life. He's renewed you.

He's changed you. He's transformed you. So you can express thanks and praise because when you have that juice and that bread in your hand, you're reminded what Jesus has done for you, what the Spirit has done for you.

So that's the first one. Here's a second point to fill your mind with. These elements, they don't change you. They don't cleanse you.

The gospel cleanses you. So let it be a reminder of your relationship with Jesus and how you need him to constantly cleanse you and renew you. So you can say, Lord Jesus, keep cleansing me.

Keep renewing me. Keep changing me. Keep transforming me into the image of your son. Jesus, do that. Father, do that in me. Change me into the image of your son. So there's thanks for new life that you were giving, but also they will keep creating you that new life.

[42 : 35] Okay? There's two truths that you can take away from our passage for the Lord's Supper. And let me take a moment and pray that for us. our Father, we want to express thanks to you because in and of ourselves, it's the spirit who gives life, the flesh profits nothing, as Jesus will say later.

In and of ourselves, we will not embrace you. In and of ourselves, we cannot create life. You do that in us with spirit. So we will believe and trust in the gospel, trust in Jesus.

So we want to come before you with humility, with thanks and praise for what you've done in our hearts, changing us, saying, let light shine out of darkness.

And we pray. And in this time, it will be a reminder and actually a prayer that we will say, oh Jesus, I am a sinner.

Keep renewing me. Father, by your spirit, keep changing me into the image of Jesus. Keep cleansing me. And I may reflect you by the way I live.

[43:59] In my relationship, my intimacy with you. Father, we pray those two aspects in our lives. And I'll let you take these few moments where you can meditate, fill your mind with truth, with those true truths that we've talked about, examine your heart, bring in repentance and openness and humility before your Savior.

with such thanks and praise. Renewing your commitment to Him and your love for Him. Take these few moments and do that.

And, you know, we'll give you, I'll give you instructions about more to come with the Lord's Supper. But just these few moments, do that, preparing your heart, okay? Please do that now. Amen. Amen. Amen. ■ nhà to love your needs.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.