

You Must be Born Again

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- [0 : 00] I'm reading from John chapter 3, verses 1 to 13. Now, there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council.
- He came to Jesus at night and said, Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.
- In reply, Jesus declared, I'll tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. How can a man be born when he is old? Nicodemus asked.
- Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born. Jesus answered, I'll tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.
- Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to Spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, you must be born again.
- [1 : 26] The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.
- How can this be? Nicodemus asked. You are Israel's teacher, said Jesus. Jesus, and do you not understand these things? I'll tell you the truth.
- We speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things, and you do not believe.
- How then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who has come from heaven, the Son of Man.
- Now, in the previous chapter, John, especially in the last paragraph, introduces the story that I have just read to you.
- [2 : 28] It says this. Oh. Oh. Oh. What's it?
- Okay. Yeah, go on. Yeah, next one.
- Yeah, go on. Yeah. It's this one, this passage. John chapter 3, verse 23 to 24 says, Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name.
- But Jesus would not untrust himself to them, for he knew all people. Notice that. He knew all people. He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.
- He knew exactly what was in a man. It is clear that Nicodemus was among those who saw Jesus' miraculous signs.
- [3 : 49] And Jesus knew who he was. Because he's God. So who was Nicodemus?
- An edema. Right from the beginning of the story, John tells us that Nicodemus was a Pharisee and occupied a prominent position within his religion group, being a ruler of the Jews.
- According to verse 10 of our passage this morning, and also chapter 7, verse 50, Nicodemus was a member of Sanhedrin, a scribe and a teacher of the law.

The Bible says he came to Jesus at night. But we still don't know why this guy turned up at night to talk to Jesus.

But once there, he started by affirming that Jesus was from God. And the miraculous signs that he was performing were the result of God's presence with him.

[5 : 09] This is what he had to say in verse 2. He says, sorry. Yeah, in verse 2 he says, Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.

And Jesus replied, I'll tell you the truth. No one can see the kingdom of God unless he's born again.

At this point, Nicodemus wants to engage a theological debate with the Lord. But Jesus refused to go that way.

He brought a different subject on the table. You must be born again. Jesus, who knew what was in a man, refused to miss the opportunity of revealing to this teacher of the law the missing piece of his life.

Something is missing in the life of this guy. Yes, he's an expert of the law. He can teach. He knows many things about God.

[6 : 24] But there is something that is missing in his life. So what was missing? In chapter 4, in verse 4, it says now, How can a man be born when he is old?

Nicodemus asks, Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born. So the concept of being born again was something new to our expert.

Even though he was an expert. He was confused and could not understand the revelation from Jesus. He saw things on human level as the only birth that he knew of was the one that happened at King's College Hospital.

Where nurses, midwives, and doctors are helping mothers to deliver babies. So for Nicodemus, once a baby is born, he cannot enter into his mother's womb again to be born for the second time.

So what was this carpenter trying to say here? Nicodemus is confused. Why is he confused?

[7 : 56] That's the question to ask. And the Bible has an answer to that. 1 Corinthians 2, verse 14 says, But the natural, that is the unbelieving man, does not accept the things, the teaching, and revelation of the Spirit of God.

For they are foolishness, absurd, and illogical to him. And he is incapable of understanding them.

Because they are spiritually discerned and appreciated. And he is unqualified to judge spiritual mothers. So it's not his fault, really.

It's just that he's not qualified to understand this truth. He's not qualified. Nicodemus' confusion is the result of not having the Spirit of God in him.

That's what is missing in his life. Therefore, he cannot grasp the revelation from Jesus Christ. He is basically dominated by the merely physical, worldly, and natural life.

[9 : 28] He doesn't possess the Holy Spirit. He is not equipped to receive truth that comes from the Spirit. Like Nicodemus.

Maybe you are in need of the Spirit. You need a touch from God. So you can understand the things of the Spirit. And how the kingdom of God operates.

After 20 years of living in England, a Congolese man decided to go back home and meet his family.

While there, one evening, they served him food. Everyone else has eaten already.

So the guy started to eat. Suddenly, one of his nephews came in. Oh, uncle, you are eating.

[10 : 37] We have eaten already. And the guy said, the uncle replied, Oh, Junior. Okay, that's good news. Junior went out.

Junior was about four years old. He went out. He played with his friend for two minutes. He came back. Uncle, you are eating. We ate already.

The uncle said, oh, I know you have eaten already. That's good. Junior went out. Played two, three minutes. Came in again.

Uncle, oh, we have eaten already. He said, that's good news. For the fifth time, the guy came in.

Found out that the food, the uncle has finished all the food. Ah, uncle has finished his food. Uncle has finished his food.

[11 : 35] Oh, everybody's like, oh, what is wrong with Junior? Uncle is a bad man. Uncle is a bad man. He has finished his food. Uncle came.

Junior. Junior, you told me that you have eaten already. No, you are a good man. You are a bad man. You are a bad man. Okay.

But what is wrong if I finish my own food? The problem with Junior is that he was in need. But he didn't know how to express his need.

In fact, he didn't express his need. Some of you this morning are in need. All you need is to express your need to Jesus Christ.

Turn to him and speak to him. Nicodemus had a need. He needed the touch from God. And look at this guy.

[12 : 42] He is with the one who gives life. But he doesn't say what he needs to this guy so he can be blessed.

He wants a theological debate with the Messiah. Maybe, just maybe, this morning, you are in need.

Like Junior, you have a need, but you don't express it to God. So you can meet it. Some of you are in need. And they need to turn to God.

The second point about Nicodemus. Two-faced man. Nicodemus was a Pharisee. What do we know about Pharisees?

Pharisees were white in many points of doctrine, such as the divine decree, the man's moral accountability and mortality, the resurrection of the body, the existence of spirit, reward and punishment in the future life.

[13 : 55] Good stuff. However, they externalized religion. This was a tragic error. It was all about being saved by works and not grace.

Pharisees were hypocrites. They kept law externally to gain merit from God while breaking them inwardly.

They were following the letter of the law by ignoring its spirit. This is what Jesus had to say about them. Listen carefully.

All to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites. I haven't written the Bible. I believe you know that. You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside, but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean.

In the same way, on the outside, you appear to people as righteous, but on the inside, you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

[15 : 16] Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews, a member of Sanhedrin, and a scribe. He was someone who knew something about God and could boast about it.

He could appear to people as righteous, but inside, inside, inside, he was full of hypocrisy and wickedness. He could hide behind his knowledge and social position to highlight his righteousness, but inside, he was full of darkness, dirty, and evil.

Friend, I don't know about you, but I wonder whether there are Pharisees in this room this morning. I just wonder whether there are Pharisees in this room this morning.

I wonder whether you appear to us as a committed and God-fearing Christian, but inside, you are full of evil. This is why Jesus had to say to Nicodemus, you must be born again.

One of the things that I enjoyed a lot as the minister of the church is visiting. I like being with people, visiting them, listening to their story, day-to-day struggles, and sharing God's word with them, praying with them.

[16 : 49] I like that. Because ministry for me is about people, isn't it? It reminds me the incarnation. One day, I decided to go and visit a couple.

Once I got there, I find them fighting. What was the problem? Mrs. Nicodemus said, you are working.

You are being paid each month, but you don't want to give your contribution toward the bills of this house. How am I going to pay all these bills by myself?

So because you, since you don't want to pay the bills, you should leave this house. And Mr. Nicodemus said, okay, yes, I'm being paid each month.

But the problem is, you have forgotten that I send the money each month to your mother back home, each month. So which money do you want me to give you so you can pay the bills?

[18 : 01] Okay, that's fine. I'm going to leave this house. But before I go, let me show you who I am. Fight. Nicodemus was beating the wife.

Here I am, in the midst of this couple, trying to stop them from fighting. I went there to visit them, to share God's word, and pray with them.

Now look, I'm trying to stop them from fighting. And within that fight, Mr. Nicodemus, give me a slap on my face, thinking that he was slapping his wife.

I couldn't see anything for, I couldn't see them. I couldn't hear the fighting going on, but I couldn't see.

All I could see was darkness. I felt like the Holy Spirit was saying to me, slap him back, slap him back.

[19 : 15] And then I realized that it was just a feeling. It was just a feeling. Nicodemus. You see, the problem with Nicodemus is that when he comes to church on Sunday morning, he's got a huge Bible with him.

And he wants to stay, to stay at the front, to the front. And when he comes in, the first thing he does, he's in and down.

He wants everyone to know that he's in communication with the father, like this. You have no, if you look at him, you have no idea that this guy can fight his wife.

A good man, Monsanto, he means saint. A very good man. But you have no idea that he could do what he did.

It is possible to be in church or serve God for a long time and yet still not be born again. I repeat that. It is possible to be in church or serve God for a long time and yet still not be born again.

[20 : 47] Why am I saying this? The Bible says that. No, no, no, no.

It's not this. Go to Matthew 7. Where are you going? Go back. Go back. Go back.

Go back. Go back. Find Matthew 7 for me. Okay. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Many will say to me on this day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?

Then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you. Away from me, you evil doers. Notice, those people to whom Jesus is saying, I don't know you.

[21 : 53] Where were they? Where were they? In church. Serving God. Is it true? They were in church.

Notice, they were not the outsiders. No, people in the church. The pastors, the deacon, the singers, all these people, the collectors of offering, whatever, all these people were saving God in church.

And then, at the last minute, Jesus said, I didn't know you. Go away. Go away. I want to say to somebody this morning, don't waste your time in the church thinking that you are a child of God because you come to church.

What makes you a child of God is not the fact that you come to church. What makes you a child of God is the Holy Spirit of God. When he lives in you, then he changes you.

Your nature changes. You have now the DNA of God. Now your good deed, your good deed become the consequence of the Spirit in you.

[23 : 25] The Bible college will never make you a child of God. to sing, to preach, like I do this morning, or to do anything.

We like Baptists, we like doing, doing stuff, doing stuff. Where is the Spirit? Where is the Spirit?

Where is the Spirit? We are good at doing stuff. They were in church.

Finally, the God who gave birth. Can you go? Please. The last point. The God who gave birth. I like it because it's only in, in, in, in, I mean, in Christianity that we, we have a God who gives birth.

Finally, Jesus now decided to teach this expert, expert, what it means to be born again. Next slide, please. Jesus answered, I'll tell you the truth.

[24 : 38] No one can enter the kingdom of God unless it's born of water and Spirit. Let's give birth to flesh, but the Spirit give birth to Spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, you must be born again.

The wind blows wherever it pleases you. You hear sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it's going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.

Nicodemus, your parents decided to have you as a child. You have their DNA, but now let me tell you that God can give birth.

He doesn't need to go to King's College Hospital in order to give birth. He does it whenever he wants, wherever he is, and in a spiritual way, because he is the Spirit.

Next slide, please. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.

[25 : 45] I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Nicodemus, this is the dawning of a new era, which John the Baptist has introduced with his message and water baptism. Jesus comes now as the baptizer in spirit to complete the dawning of this new era, according to John chapter 1, verse 33.

Now, to Corinthian chapter 5, verse 17 to 18. Next slide. He says what? Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being, new being.

The old is gone. The new has come. All this is done by God who through Christ changed us from enemy into his friend and gave us the task of making others his friend also.

So, to be born again is to become a new creation, to receive the nature of God and bear fruit of such nature. This is something that only God can do, only God can do whenever it pleases him.

[27 : 11] There is absolutely nothing you can do to be physically born. Your parent makes such a decision. In the same way, there is nothing you can do to be born again.

God makes such decision. through the spirit. It takes away your sinful nature. You know, things like we are in church.

The preacher is preaching and Nicodemus is sitting there thinking, why two lights are not on? Nicodemus is thinking, when I go home, I'll cook that chicken.

But the preacher is preaching. The problem with Nicodemus is that there is no life here. So, there can't be connection between him and the preacher.

I like John Calvin. It says something. It says what? It says, but the word born again, it means not the amendment of a part, but the newness, the renewal of the whole nature.

[28 : 28] Hence, it follows that there is nothing in us that is not defective. Friend, it is not one part of you that is changed, but your whole being is changed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is one of the greatest miracles. You are now part of the kingdom of God. you can now understand how it operates. Is there any Nicodemus in this room?

Is there any Pharisee in the room, in this room, this morning? We are praying as church, God will provide a minister for this church.

I pray, I pray that this church, we, we will be able to submit to God's Holy Spirit.

God's Holy Spirit. And God will take away the sinful nature within us.

[29 : 41] Amen. May God bless His Word. Let's just pause and think about what we have been hearing.

Lord, thank You for Your Word. Do Your work within us. Help us to work our salvation. Help us to focus on You.

take away all the dirty, the evil stuff within us. In Your name, we have a word.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.