

The Necessity of the New Birth

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[0 : 0 0] Let's now turn to God's Word. We're going to read in John, in John chapter 2. Gospel of John in John, chapter 3, sorry, John chapter 3.

John 3. Again, with the Lord's help, we're carrying on our reading of John and following on Jesus' encounters with various people throughout his ministry.

John 3. Let's hear the Word of God. There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

The same came to Jesus by night and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God. For no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

[1 : 0 6] Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, whether it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

Verily, verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness.

[2 : 1 2] If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascendeth up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not a Son unto the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

[3 : 26] For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest of their rotten God.

After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them and baptised. And John also was baptising in Anon near to Salem, because there was much water there.

And they came and were baptised, for John was not yet cast into prison. Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

And they came unto John and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou beest witness, behold, the same baptiseth, and all men come to him.

John answered and said, A man can receive nothing except to be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, but I said, I am not the Christ, but I am sent before him.

[4 : 37] He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice.

This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all. He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth.

He that cometh from heaven is above all. And that he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth. And no man receiveth his testimony.

He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God.

For God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

[5 : 37] He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. He that believeth not the Son shall not see life. But the wrath of God abideth on him.

Amen. We give praise to God for his holy and his perfect word. Let's again sing to God's praise. This time we can sing from Psalm 121.

Psalm 121. Out of the hills will lift mine eyes. From whence do've come mine aid. My safety cometh from the Lord who heaven and earth hath made.

Thy foot he'll not let slide, nor will he slumber. That thee keeps. Behold, he that keeps Israel. He slumbers not, nor sleeps.

Psalm 121. To God's praise. Psalm 121. Psalm 121. To God's praise. Psalm 121. Psalm 121. I could the hills with lift my eyes.

[6 : 41] From whence do've come I need. My safety cometh from the Lord.

Who heaven and earth hath been. By worldogenized.

The spice or wine. My own. The ■■■■ ■■■■oondercieke he, my own. It's a remioment. God's praise.

Hawth. Is this the one? God's praise. It is the two psèdr Parente.

It's a remioment. Folk are strong, nor■■■■■■■ Angie. Margaret Islands.

[7 : 44] He is the Lord thy ship, on thy right hand the still.

The moon by thine, he shall not smile, nor dead the sun by day.

The Lord have hid thy soul, he shall be stewardly from a hill, and for thy going hour to him.

God, he ■■ am, forever. with Jesus.

The reality is looking at how Jesus encounters his people as he finds them, as he saves them. This afternoon we find ourselves in chapter 3 and we do find the account we all know so well.

[9 : 30] This account of Jesus and Nicodemus. For the sake of a text we could take verse 9.

The question of Nicodemus. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? How can these things be?

We meet Nicodemus three times in the scripture. This is of course the first time we meet him. We meet him again when Christ has been captured and we're discussing, the Jewish council is discussing what to do with him in a sense.

And we meet him again. We meet him again at the end. He's there with spices. With ointments. We see a man go from having questions about how to be saved to wanting to somehow be kind towards Jesus to then by the end of scripture, by the end of the recording of scripture.

The last time we see Nicodemus, we see a man, a man who's attending or wanting to attend so tenderly to Jesus. In other words, we see a man go from not knowing Jesus, a man who has questions about Jesus, to a man who clearly cares for Jesus.

[11 : 00] Just like last week, and we do see some similarities as we go on between last week we saw Philip and Nathaniel. And there's quite a bit of crossover between especially Nathaniel and Nicodemus.

We'll see that more as we go on through these verses. Here we meet this man. And by the end of this short section, by the end of verse 21, the section ends.

The end of Jesus talking to Nicodemus. But then in verse 22, we see that after these things, Jesus and the disciples, they move on. They go elsewhere.

They head off into the land of Judea and so on as they carry on his ministry. To a sense that we leave this section on a cliffhanger, not knowing if the words, if the conversation of Jesus and Nicodemus has actually had an impact on him.

We'll see that again more as we go on through these verses. So looking at this account of Jesus and Nicodemus, just looking at it under three very simple and indeed very brief, very brief headings.

[12 : 12] First of all, looking at the man himself. The man himself looking at Nicodemus. Then looking at the question, or really, if we're being honest, it's more of a dilemma, the problem, but the man, the question, and quite simply and quite obviously then the answer.

The man, the question, and the answer. Now I say we see this briefly, not because there's lack of things to talk about, not because there's a lack of content.

It's quite the opposite. There is so much glorious, beautiful gospel reality in this section. But in a sense, the less is said, the better.

Because the more you see for yourself and leave this place and go home this afternoon and read this chapter again for yourself, the better. As you see yourself, the richness and the simplicity and the beauty of the gospel again and again throughout this chapter.

So the man, the question, and the answer. First of all, looking then at this man, verses one down to verse two. Who is Nicodemus?

[13 : 24] What does scripture tell us about him? Well, actually, we find out quite a few things about this man, at least three major things about him.

We find, first of all, he is, of course, a man, we see here, of the Pharisees. I'm sure you've all heard this plenty of times before, but it's just a refresher for us of sorts.

Of course, the Pharisees were there. They were the, we could say, the academic, ruling class of the day. They knew their stuff. The Pharisees knew their stuff, and that's to put it lightly.

They trained for 20 years, 30 years, some of them. Some of them trained their whole lives. They dedicated their lives, quite literally, their whole lives.

They were dedicated early as children at times, and they spent their whole lives studying the Torah, studying as a word of the Old Testament, but more than that, of course, studying their own laws too.

[14 : 26] The laws that they had added to scripture. There were hundreds upon hundreds of extra laws, at least 200, give or take, extra stipulations, extra laws, extra rules, extra guidelines that they added to scripture.

But they knew their stuff. They were academic, they were experts, they were so well versed in the law and the local culture. They were the professors of their day.

And we see them, not in scripture, but outside of scripture, we know historically that the Pharisees were used and were treated as such. If you had a question about almost anything in life, you would go to ask one of the Pharisees for advice, and they'd have some word of wisdom to give you.

They were smart, knowledgeable people. Nicodemus was a man who knew his stuff. In all senses of that word, he knew exactly what it was he was talking about.

And we see there, there's more than that. Nicodemus, we see, was a ruler of the Jews. He was part, we find out later on, as we said, he was part of the Sanhedrin. He was part of the ruling council of the day.

[15 : 40] Of course, this area is under Roman occupation, but the Romans weren't silly. The Romans were quite smart. The Romans, when they took over a place, they always let the locals still rule themselves.

If the Romans were to invade us, they still let us have our council in Cernoway, but they would have some oversight in that. But long story short, Nicodemus had a place ruling over the religious things, but also the practical reality of ruling the area.

This is a man of power, of knowledge, a man of respect, a man who had respect for sure locally, who had been revered locally, a man who had it all going for him.

We see here there's something missing in the life of Nicodemus. On paper, he has it all. He's got scriptural knowledge and biblical knowledge, historical knowledge, theological knowledge.

He's got the power spiritually, the power in the secular world, he's got the power in the community, but yet he is missing something.

[17 : 00] And we find him here coming to Jesus. But note that scripture tells us something quite telling about this man.

Something that's quite clear and quite obvious to us. There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. The same came to Jesus by night.

By night. For all his wisdom, all his popularity, for all the various many accolades and things that could be said about this man, Nicodemus, this is a man who knew he had a need.

And we see that. He talks to Jesus in a way that's great, in a way that glorifies him. We see that in verse 2. He calls Jesus Rabbi. He calls Jesus Teacher.

Verse 2, Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God. For no man can do these miracles that they do except God be with him. This man actually believes what he's seeing.

- [18 : 12] He is willing to say that this Jesus, he must be from God. But he's not willing to do that during the day. He's not willing to do that or to say that publicly, at least not yet.
- He's doing it in secret, in quiet, in his own heart, in his own mind, in his own soul. He is beginning to understand that this Jesus, that maybe it's all true.
- That there's something about him that is clearly different. That this man is doing things, he says himself, that only God could do. But he doesn't say that, does he?
- He says he's doing things that only someone could do if God be with him. See, Nicodemus is happy to say that Jesus must be sent from God, but Nicodemus is not happy and not able yet to say that Jesus is God.
- He's happy with the facts of Jesus' ministry, happy with praising what Jesus is doing, happy with being happy to be in Jesus' company, albeit at night, but he's not happy, he's not able yet to say that Jesus is God.
- [19 : 27] He comes to Jesus by night. He comes in secret to a man who he knows is different, but a man who he still has no idea who he's talking to.
- We see that as we go on as Jesus answers him, we see that Nicodemus for all his wisdom, for all his intellect, for all his many things we could say to praise this man in a worldly sense, he has no idea.
- He has no idea. He knows all what it is to know about who Jesus is in a sense in the history of Messiah and all that, but he is talking to the one who has been promised in the scriptures.
- He is talking to the very son of God and Nicodemus chooses not to understand that, not to see that. As we move away from the man, we have to ask a question and again I know some faces but the reality is I don't know where you stand before the Lord.
- Indeed perhaps if this is being recorded for those who will hear this in the future, I don't know who you are or where you are. But as we look at Nicodemus we have to ask the question, are you like Nicodemus?
- [20 : 46] We asked this last week looking at Philip and looking at Nathaniel. This week are you like Nicodemus? On paper, publicly, you know your stuff, you're doing quite well.
- Perhaps you're here week after week. Perhaps outwardly you're with respect suited and booted, you've got all of it, you can see the right things, you look the right way, you can interact with Christians in a way that looks holy, that sounds holy, that sounds right.
- You know your scripture off by heart. You perhaps have even remembered your catechism from your youth. You've got it all just there waiting to go.
- You know the cultural history of the area. You know your people going right back and you're proud perhaps of your lineage going right back, your godly history going right back.
- You're well respected, you're well liked, you're part of this community and so on and so on. You've got it all. You've got it all. But like Nicodemus, you're missing what's right in front of you.
- [22 : 08] You know all about Jesus. You've heard about Jesus year after year, Sunday after Sunday and yet you do not know him.
- As Nicodemus is about to find out, knowing about Jesus is one thing God. But actually knowing him is something completely different.
- And that small difference in wording equals an eternity of difference. It equals life or death. Only you can answer the question if you are like Nicodemus.
- But if you are, if you are, then please listen as we go on to see what Jesus tells this man. Jesus, as Nicodemus praises him in verse 2, Jesus stops the praise in verse 3.

Jesus says, Jesus answers him, but it's almost Jesus stops him, it would be quite literal there, and says to Nicodemus, verily, verily, I say unto thee.

[23 : 25] Just for a second, we'll see we've repeated a few times here, verily, verily, truthfully, truthfully, quite literally in the Greek, it's amen, amen, amen, amen, I say to you.

When Jesus uses that phrase, he is speaking there in authority. Every time Jesus uses that, he uses it to say something, that this is authoritative.

Of course, any word of our saviour has his full godly authority, we know that. When he uses verily, verily, that is there to tell us he's saying something that needs to be listened to, something specific to the situation.

Truthfully, truthfully, amen, amen, Nicodemus, I say to you, except a man be born, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

And so on down to verse 9, Nicodemus asks the question, how can these things be? As Jesus tells Nicodemus, as Jesus cuts through with respect all of the well-meaning but empty praise of Nicodemus, it all comes down to verse 9, where Nicodemus is left asking the question, how can these things be?

[24 : 47] It doesn't make sense. See, in verse 3, as Jesus answers Nicodemus, he doesn't address the praise Nicodemus gives him.

Jesus, in verse 3, doesn't bring up Nicodemus' great knowledge, his great scriptural basis, his 30-odd perhaps years of training. No.

None of that matters to Jesus. Jesus cuts straight to the problem that this man has. Truthfully, truthfully, Amen, Amen, I say unto you, I say to you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Or literally, he will not see. He will not see the kingdom of God. for all the, how many years of Nicodemus' training in life and his perhaps proud-hearted, we don't know, view of himself and his knowledge and his understanding of things, Jesus here reminds this man, reminds this well-known, well-loved, well-respected, educated man that his whole life means nothing.

In a sense, his whole life means nothing if he doesn't understand what's being said to him in verse 3. We see that in verse 4, we see poor Nicodemus, we see this educated man and he is falling to bits.

[26 : 26] We perhaps lose some of the reality things, but this was a real man. Nicodemus was really there at night time in front of his saviour, in front of Jesus, and this is a real man. When you remind yourself that Nicodemus was a real man, read verse 4 again and understand the fact that he is saying this genuinely.

Nicodemus saith unto him, how can a man be born when he's old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Some say that Nicodemus is being a bit sarcastic here, being a bit rude or something like that, but I don't think so.

That's not what we see, is it? We see a man who is just exasperated. Teacher, he started off calling Jesus Rabbi, he started off praising this intellectual man sent from God as far as he's concerned, but all of a sudden this man who he's been praising is telling him something that sounds impossible, and he's saying, how?

How can I be born again? That makes no sense, Rabbi. It makes no sense what you're saying to me. again, Jesus comes straight back in verse five.

Truly, truly, amen, amen, I say to you, except a man be born of water and of his spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

[27 : 52] Jesus answers the question of Nicodemus with the same truth again and again. Nicodemus cannot work his way around this one. The Pharisees we know in Scripture were well versed at catching or trying to catch Jesus out.

They were well versed at using their apparent biblical knowledge to catch out those who weren't with them.

They were, with respect to their education, they knew enough to be sneaky enough to be smart. But here, Nicodemus has no way out.

He can't reason his way out of this one. Jesus repeats to him again and again the reality of Nicodemus, unless you're born again, you will not see the kingdom of God.

You will not enter in to the kingdom of God. He won't see it, he won't get into it, he won't get near it, unless he is born again. Nicodemus' mind is still very much in the world.

[29 : 03] For all his knowledge and all his understanding, we see here he understands nothing. His mind is a worldly mind. And the Christians, as we all know, brothers and sisters, you were once the same way.

We were once this way, weren't we? Once we had no clue. We sat through service after service, just waiting for the time to go, counting, I'll say counting the tiles, but there's nothing here for you to count.

But in Graver, we have a pattern, counting the pattern on the wall, thinking, please, let the minutes tick by. No interest in the gospel, no interest in what was being shown to you.

And perhaps you knew your stuff, Christian, you grew up in a church, perhaps, you knew all the facts and all the information, but it meant nothing to you until the day your saviour met you face to face.

And then, then that day you were saved, you knew, first of all, you knew that before that point you knew nothing. You knew nothing.

[30 : 09] Is it pride that's keeping Nicodemus from understanding? In part, yes. A Pharisee needs to know, is supposed to know, needs to know everything, but yet Jesus is telling him something new here.

But more than that, it's sin. It's a sin nature that keeps him from understanding, from listening to what's being said to him. In verse six, Jesus carries on, that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit marvel, not that I said unto thee, you must be born again.

You must be born again. Dear friends, it doesn't even have to be said, does it, for being honest.

You know where he's going next, because the same question has to be asked. The same statement has to be made. is it being said on my authority?

No. Is it being said on the authority of the free church? No. On the authority of the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, as he spoke these words to Nicodemus, the same words are being spoken to you as you read this for yourself, as you hear it again, the same instruction, the same telling that's been told to you just now, as Jesus speaks to you and he says to you, dear friend, you must, you must be born again.

[31 : 51] If you want to see the kingdom of God, if you want to see heaven, if you want to see God as it were, you must be born again.

If you want the life of eternity with a Jesus, with a saviour, you must be born again. your learning means nothing.

Your godly heritage, your parents and grandparents who served the Lord, who loved the Lord, it means nothing to your personal salvation. And they would be horrified to hear that you thought that way.

They themselves had to trust in Jesus, the same way you must trust in Jesus. you must be born again, dear friends.

Here's the problem, here's the crux of the whole situation. You ask, well, why is this the case? Why does Jesus tell this Nicodemus? Why does Jesus repeat the same thing again and again in different ways to Nicodemus?

[33 : 01] The answer is simple. It's the same answer as to why does everyone who stands up here give you essentially the same message week after week after week? We can turn to read in Kings or Chronicles or Genesis.

We can turn to the Psalms and the Prophets. We can look at narrative and look at story and look at illustration. Look at how God did this or did that.

At the end of the day, every one of a sermon up here, every sermon is the same purpose, is to point you towards Jesus. Why? Because you must know him.

Why? Because you're lost without him. Why? Because you're a sinner, born that way, born hating God, born despising God. Why does that matter?

Because you must be born again. Why? Because without that you will not see, you will not enter the kingdom of God.

[34 : 02] God, the question is how? How? How can I be born again?

We pray that's a question in your mind just now. We pray that what does it mean for me to be born again? Before you get there, you have to understand that you must be born again.

again. We see that here, you must be born again. Dear friend, until you grasp the reality that you need that to happen to you, you will not be saved.

You will not be born again until you realise that you need to be born again. We see that here with Nicodemus, he brings his own righteousness, his self-righteousness, and he can't understand his own goodness, his own history, his own learning, and so on.

It blinds him from what Jesus is truly saying to him. It blinds, it clouds his understanding, his own pride, his own sin, stops him from seeing what's being said to him.

[35 : 10] And with respect, it is no jump of logic, it is no great prophecy to say that I'm sure that's the story for you too. For any Christian here, that's most of our stories, isn't it?

Those of us who were slow, perhaps, coming to Christ, at often points, it's because of our own pride, our own desire not to come to him. Dear friends, learn from Nicodemus, learn from what he didn't do.

He is being told again and again, as he faced with Jesus, that he must be born again, he must trust in Jesus, and so on, and so on, and yet he cannot see that, he does not listen to it, he doesn't understand it.

You must be born again. You must be born again. that famous and well beloved, for good reason, preacher of course, Spurgeon, Charles Spurgeon, he was saved, the Lord used that in his life, he was searching, seeking, as a young man, and he went to a church, it's a winter's night, and he walks into the church, there's an old elder leading the service, an old, old elder, and this poor old elder, like everyone who stands in a pulpit, the worst had happened to him, one that we all fear, but he had his notes and everything, but he just couldn't say anything, it had all gone wrong for him, the notes weren't working, his sermon didn't make sense, he was having a moment, he was preaching from this text, and he started a sermon, it was a disaster, he got his words mixed up, he got his points mixed up, so he stopped himself, right after he started, and this old elder, this old elder, just lays down the reality again and again, just finds himself repeating the same words again and again and again, you must be born again, you must be born again, you must be born again, according to

Spurgeon, the old elder said that for almost the entirety of his time, you must be born again, it was that mess, humanly speaking of a sermon that the Lord used to convert a very young Charles Spurgeon, which we didn't know how God used him in the years following, dear friends, you must be born again, saved us last week, we could rant and rave, and I could go through every bit of text I can think about, try and go through my back catalogue of sermons, preach at you, harangue you, shake you by the shoulders, I won't save you, you must be born again, your elders can't save you, you can go to any congregation, a church in the island, you won't be saved by doing that, you must be born again, your history won't save you, you must be born again, your desire to read the word of God more, good thing as it is, it will not save you, you must be born again, coming to this building every week as a good thing, a godly thing to do, we praise the Lord you're here, but you must be born again, and so on, and so on, and so on, every reason you have, every excuse you have, the answer to it is simple, you must be born, again, how, how, it's okay saying that, but how are we born again, what does it mean, what does that look like, well we'll close this briefly, the big section we have here from verse 10 down to verse 21,

[39 : 10] Jesus answers this for Nicodemus, we can focus especially verses 13 down to verse 17, where Jesus tells Nicodemus quite plainly in verse 13 here that he is no ordinary rabbi, he's not just some teacher, in a sense just being taught by God, no, in verse 13, Nicodemus is being told by Jesus, excuse me, that he is from God, but more than that we see that he's been told here that he is God, so Nicodemus again a man who knew his stuff, if he was listening properly, if he was willing to listen, when Jesus quotes in verse 14 the account of what took place in the desert, Nicodemus should have known exactly what Jesus was saying, in verse 14 where Jesus making the illustration about himself, and as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up, of course that account were those who be held the bronze serpent that they were healed, they were saved from the bites of the snakes.

Jesus hears saying, that just like God to his people of old, provided a way of salvation, just as that creature of sin was lifted up, so one day he will be made sin for his people.

He who knew no sin would be made sin on behalf of his people, on account of his people, out of love for his people, he would be lifted up to be beheld by his people on that cross.

But even more than that, he'd be lifted up even higher. It's in the grammar here, it's quite interesting, that lifted up at the end of verse 14, even so the son of man must be lifted up or will be lifted up, literally.

The sense of that lifted up, it's not a one-time event, it's an ongoing thing. He's lifted once, yes, at the cross, literally, lifted again, yes, quite literally, when he ascends to glory, but in a sense he is always and will always be lifted up.

[41 : 34] Jesus is telling this man that before you, Nicodemus, in front of you, you have the son of man, the one prophesied from the start who will come to save his people, who will be lifted up, who will be made sin, who God will use to rescue his people, to save his people.

Nicodemus, you're talking to him. We see that the glorious words we have, verses 15 and verse 16 and verse 17, these words we all know so well, but in the context these words are even more beautiful.

We perhaps often forget that John 3, 16 is in the context of Jesus speaking to Nicodemus. These are the words spoken to this man, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

Again, Nicodemus is being told here quite simply, quite plainly by Jesus who he is. Jesus is telling this to Nicodemus. Nicodemus, God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believed in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

So on and so on. Verse 18, again speaking to Nicodemus, he that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already because he have not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God.

[43 : 07] So on and so on. You must be born again. How am I born again? How does that happen? How does it work? What does that mean?

What Jesus tells Nicodemus and dear friend, he tells you to for God so loved the world he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Verse 18, he that believeth on him is not condemned. He that believeth not is condemned already because he have not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God.

How are you born again? You believe in the one who was sent for your salvation, dear friends. This is not complicated. You've heard this so many times.

You've heard this said to you in different ways, in different years, perhaps many years for some here. It's the same gospel you'll hear and hear again. But once more on this Lord's day, this again is you hearing of the gospel.

[44 : 20] You must be born again. Nicodemus took his time. But we know the Lord used of course the words of his saviour, of Nicodemus the saviour, to speak to him.

And we see it, as you said, at the end of Christ's time on earth, we see Nicodemus there wanting to tend to the saviour, wanting to take his oils and spices to Jesus.

to anoint the body. This man went from not knowing anything to knowing his saviour, as far as we can understand.

Dear friend, for all Nicodemus' wisdom and all his learning, for all his academia, the reality is that you, this very moment, that you, and perhaps you have no education formally, perhaps you left school early, I don't know, for all your education, or perhaps lack of formal education, the truth is, you, this very moment, sitting where you are, have in front of you more information than Nicodemus would ever have in his lifetime.

You have the gospel right in front of you. You know, as it were, with respect how it goes, you know how it ends. You excuses, your excuses and your reasons for not coming to faith.

[45 : 49] If Nicodemus' didn't work with his limited knowledge, then you, with your more complete knowledge of a word of God in front of you, of God's plan of salvation as it's in front of you here, you have even less excuse, even less reason.

Dear friends, don't think for a second that this is somehow easy. The life of a Christian at times is a painful life. If we're honest, at times it's a hard life.

But ask any Christian you know and they'll tell you there is no other life. For all the hardships, not all the things which are less than easy at times, the reality is it's a life where you know your Saviour.

But more than that, where you're known by your Saviour. Where you love your Saviour. But more than that, where you're loved by your Saviour. It's a life where we see the reality that those who are born again, those who are born again, will see the Kingdom of God.

And those who are born again will enter the Kingdom of God. And in God's providence, and this wasn't planned, God willing, this evening, looking of course at our second petition of the Lord's Prayer, looking at what it is for us as Christians to pray, Thy Kingdom come.

[47 : 08] And it wasn't, and just praise God for this, it wasn't until last night I realised that these things go together so beautifully, properly. You won't see the Kingdom of God, you won't enter the Kingdom of God, unless you know and love Jesus.

Unless He is your Lord and your Saviour. And you have heard this day from God's Word, how that can be a reality for you in your life. Dear friends, there's no more excuses for you.

There's no more spaces to go and to find a reason not to believe. You've heard again the Gospel today, and our prayer, and our desperate hope is that you would hear these words for yourself, you respond to these words, and you would be born again to His glory, for His glory.

Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer. Lord God, we thank you again for the gift of your Word, Lord. We've spent this time in it, and this time reading your Word, this time engaging and seeking to understand what it is you're saying to us through your Word.

Lord, we ask you would forgive anything that was said, but it's not in accordance to your Word, give you praise that the power is in you working through your Word, the power is not in the jars of clay, Lord, to stand up here, but the power is in you, and as you use your Word, we ask you to bless your people, to encourage your people, to encourage us as we are reminded us to the reality that we are those who have been born again, who have that newness of life in us.

[48 : 43] We ask again for those who as of yet don't know Jesus, that even this day, that they would hear that gospel, they would hear that stark reality coming from the mouth of the King, that they must be born again.

Lord, we ask that even this day they would seek after that truth, they would seek after that, and as we read, Lord, only you and you alone can save any, only you and you alone can give that newness of life.

Lord, we ask as they cry out to you, as they seek that salvation, Lord, you would give it to them, you would grant them that newness, grant them that freshness, that they would say that they have met with you, they would say that they have truly been born again.

That's our prayer, Lord, that is our desire. We confess that we leave these things with you, that we can do nothing to make these things a reality, Lord, but you have all the power, you have all the power to do so.

Help us as we sing our act of praise just now, to do so of hearts and minds full of understanding and full of joy, to sing about the power of you, our God. As God, these things in and through and for Christ, as precious name is it?

[49 : 54] Amen. Let's sing again to God's praise. We sing from Psalm 87.

Singing in Psalm 87. A glorious psalm, of course, which just paints a picture of how broad, how broad and indeed how varied God's church truly is, as we see these places being named here, places which at times were enemies of Israel, at times were against Israel, places which are so far flung from Israel, and yet God assures us that even from the distant lands, both physically and spiritually, that he will bring his people in.

He is building his church. Psalm 87. Upon the hills of holiness, he his foundation sets, God who on Jacob's dwellings all delights in Zion's gates.

Things glorious are said of thee, thou city of the Lord, Rahab and Babel, I to those that know me will record. Psalm 88, to God's praise.

Psalm 88, to God's praise. Psalm 88, to God's praise. Upon the hills of holiness, he his foundation sets, God mourn and Jacob's dwelling song, he delight in Zion's gates.

[51 : 41] King's glory, God's God's name, I said of thee, I said, thee of the Lord.

Pray, how I've given life to those that know me will report.

Behold, you, Tyus, and within the land of Palestine.

And likewise did he know me, how this man was fornicator.

And it of Zion shall be said, this man of the man there.

[52 : 56] Was born and he got his most high, himself shall establish her.

When God, the people, I still count that this man Lord was there.

Let me sing and play, and all my well-spring in the hour.

Amen. Give me a second after the benediction to get to the back door and see some faces again without masks and see you up close and get a chance to say hello probably.

So give me a second to get to the door. Let's close with the benediction. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you now and forevermore.

[54 : 08] Amen.