**THE GOSPEL OF JOHN**

**You Must Be Born Again, John 3:1-36**

Sunday, January 8, 2023

**WE Slide 1 KALAHARI. THANK ANN/CLARK- great team we can count on- all who serve.** MEN’S LEADERSHIP GROUP, Saturday, Jan. 21 man up/get training to be a spiritual leader in your home, church, work.

**GRAB YOUR BIBLE/phone and head to John 3, pg. 1060.** Everyone’s deepest concern is where they’ll spend eternity and everyone has an opinion which typically involves us doing something/some things to gain God’s approval. **If true then God wants us sinning to get into heaven- selfishness is sin.**

1. **If you want to go to heaven who is the best person to ask?** A friend, media personality, athlete, social media influencer, priest, pastor, imam?
2. **Wouldn’t it make sense to go to the one who is offering heaven?** John says he’s writing this biography of Jesus so that we who read it will know that we have eternal life- in his gospel are the proofs that Jesus is God/Savior.

**LAST COUPLE OF WEEKS- As soon as Jesus began showing SIGNS that He was God some like John the Baptist/Jesus’ disciples immediately believed He was God and their Savior/King.** Others like the RL were ticked off with Him and put Him on their most wanted list. **Still others, those who saw His many signs in Jerusalem believed but Jesus knew their hearts, that their belief wasn’t true belief.** Right after saying that John tells us about a conversation Jesus had with a RL/Nicodemus. **Jesus is busy during the day and Nicodemus didn’t want his religious buddies to see him talking to Jesus so he meets him at night.** He’s seen Jesus do a bunch of signs and has some questions for Him. **READ 3:1-2 Slide 2-4 Let’s learn a little about Nicodemus.**

**GOD**

1. **JESUS’ MESSAGE, John 3:1-3**
2. **Nicodemus-** Pharisee- a ruler of the Jews, member of the Sanhedrin- 71 men who judged the civil and religious life of Israel. These paid Judas to turn on Jesus/demanded that Pilate crucify Jesus.
3. Complemented Jesus calling Him “Rabbi”- teacher, though He didn’t have Nicodemus’ training.
4. Believed Jesus “came from God”, signs done by God’s power, but didn’t believe Jesus was God.
	1. Evidently other RLs thought this too since he says “we”.
	2. Later they’ll accuse Him of doing His signs by the power of Satan/possessed by Satan.
5. Nic/all religious Jews thought they were right with God by being born a Jew and keeping the Law is how they remained right with God.

**How do you think you get right with God/stay right with Him?** **Jesus, who knows all people and where their heart is, cuts past Nic’s “compliments”.** He knows what is Nic’s deeper concern...to know he has eternal life. **He’s a religious leader, wealthy, powerful, but he’s not confident he’s got things right and Jesus knows it.** What Jesus says next causes Nic to forget whatever questions he had for Jesus- look what Jesus says. **READ 3:3 Slide 5-6** **You can’t see the kingdom of God unless you’re born again. What is the kingdom of God?**

1. **Jesus Answers Nicodemus’ Deeper Question**
2. Kingdom of God- wherever Jesus is reigning as King/in charge; now it’s INTERNAL/people’s hearts, one day EXTERNAL/on earth, and eventually ETERNAL- in the new heaven/new earth. **Slide 7**
3. Born again- exactly that, born once physically and then born again spiritually.

**Like most people, especially religious people who think doing religious/good things makes them right with God, this doesn’t make sense to Nicodemus.** Look at Nic’s response. **READ 3:4-8 Slide 8-12 Nic can’t grasp the concept- Go back into your mother? What?!** Those stuck on doing something for salvation struggle with the spiritual reality of salvation.

1. **JESUS EXPLANATION, John 3:4-8**
2. **Jesus Is Not Talking about Another Physical Birth, but a Spiritual Birth. Jesus says…**
3. **One Must Be Born of Water and the Spirit**
4. In the original Greek- literally “water and spirit”, not water and the Spirit.
5. The “and” connects water and spirit meaning you can’t have one without the other.
6. Editors added “the” to show it was the Holy Spirit, not just any spirit.

**When translating “water and spirit” we have to determine what Nicodemus understood Jesus to be saying. Slide 13**

1. Water- not Christian baptism- wasn’t in place yet; can’t read NT doctrine back into Gospels/OT.
2. Possibly John the Baptist’s baptism of repentance- repent through baptism first and then the Spirit does His work, but that would connect a work to salvation which Jesus never does.
3. Best translation- **Slide 14** referring back to prophecy of **Ezekiel 36:24-27 Slide 15-19**

**We’ll see that this ties to Jesus’ rebuke of Nic in 3:10 for not understanding “these things”- the water/spirit reference.** **Slide 20** Jesus continues in 3:6 by explaining the flesh/physical gives birth to the physical life, the Spirit gives birth to spiritual life.

1. Spirit- the flesh/physical produces physical life, the Spirit produces spiritual life.
	1. **No one births themselves physically**- it was the parents who brought that about and we show it happened by simply living like a human being.
	2. **No one births themselves spiritually.**
2. people didn’t have a part in their physical birth but want a part in their spiritual birth.
3. It’s a work of God which only happens once, like physical birth; no need to keep asking.
4. We show it happened by living life in a spiritual way- the way God says to live.

**Jesus will bring up the fact that the Spirit changes how we live toward the end of His discussion with Nic, but also says it in the ILLUSTRATION of the wind in 3:8.** **Slide 21** Play on words- pneuma, same word for both wind and spirit.

1. ILLUSTRATION: pneuma- same word for both wind/spirit; context determines which one.
	1. We don’t see the wind but hear it’s sound/see it’s effect.
	2. We don’t see the Spirit but see His impact on people.
	3. **How do you know you have spiritual/eternal life?** Holy Spirit will change the way you live.

**Sadly, all of Nic’s religious training missed God’s point.** Look at what Nic says next. **READ John 3:9-13 Slide 22-26 Nicodemus can’t believe what he is hearing! “How can what you’re saying be true?!”**

1. **JESUS’ REASON, John 3:9-21**
2. **Jesus Knows Because He’s from Heaven- He’s God, 3:9-15**
	* + 1. Nicodemus supposedly knew God, knew all about Him, was right with Him, but he had it all wrong.
			2. Jesus said, “I know what I’m talking about. I know the truth. I came down from heaven. I’m God. I wrote the OT so I should know.”

**Jesus goes back to Scripture to a passage Nic would have known well, Numbers 21 to explain the REASON why he had to be born again by the Spirit- maybe this would help. Slide 27** EXPLAIN NUMBERS 21- people spoke against God/Moses, complained about the food God provided for them so God sent poisonous snakes to judge the people for their sin against God. When they confessed their sin God told Moses to make a BRONZE snake wrapped on a pole, if people looked at it they would be healed. **Here’s what Jesus said. READ John 3:14-15 Slide 28-29** Like those who looked to the snake were healed physically from the snake’s poison so those who look to Jesus on the cross will be “healed” of the poison of sin- eternal death, and given eternal life. **Jesus continues with the REASON for this. READ John 3:16-21 Slide 30-36**

1. **Jesus Saves Us from God’s Judgment, 3:16-21**

God loves/agape the world- not an emotionally driven response but a determined response to do what is best for us no matter our response to Him.

Agape- self-sacrificing love; Jesus died on the cross for you and me.

He doesn’t force us to love Him back- that would be abuse; He leaves the response up to us.

Our evil/sin/disobeying God brings His judgment.

Jesus says people will be judged for rejecting the truth of who Jesus is- the Light, giver of spiritual life/understanding.

He says they will “perish”- apollumi; be ruined, die, context- eternal death in hell.

All of us have done this, but for those who choose to believe there is salvation from judgement.

**The great gift from God is that if we receive the truth of who Jesus is, entrust our lives to Him, we’ll be saved from God’s judgment.** God the Son took your judgment/mine so we wouldn’t have to.

* + - 1. He who believes in Jesus will not be judged.

Believe He died on the cross to take God’s judgment in your place.

Put your full weight of trust on what God says, entrust your spiritual well-being to God.

**Last week we learned that not all belief is true belief, so how do we know if our belief is true belief? Slide 37**

He who believes in Jesus will experience a changed life.

Those who reject Him show they “love” darkness- spiritual ignorance/sin more than God- uses “agape”- they look out for the best of sin no matter what it might cost them- it will cost them an eternity in hell.

Those who believe in Jesus will pursue the Light- allow Him to light up those dark areas where we are holding on to sin, confess it, and obey Him in that area.

Jesus says we do this because we want people to know God is at work in our lives.

**John goes on to tell us that Jesus/disciples left Jerusalem for the countryside where the disciples were baptizing people- baptism of repentance- people saying they were turning back to God.** John/disciples were also baptizing north of Jerusalem and were upset that Jesus/disciples were baptizing more people than they were. **John the Baptist says that this is what is supposed to happen since Jesus is the Christ, He’s from heaven, and people need to turn to Him for eternal life.** The chapter closes with this statement from John the Baptist to his disciples. **Slide 38 So why does the Apostle John, who’s writing so that we know we have eternal life, tell us about this interaction between Jesus and Nic? As the BAND comes up we’ll use our TAKEAWAYS to answer that question.** The obvious answer is that Jesus, the one who did the dying for our sins, says eternal life comes through believing He did that for you; IN THAT IS SPIRITUAL BIRTH/SPIRITUAL LIFE/ETERNAL LIFE. **So, the question is, do you believe He died for you? Slide 39**

**YOU TAKEAWAY**

* + - 1. **UNBELIEVER- Don’t reject Jesus, receive spiritual life.**
1. **Admit** you’ve disobeyed God and deserve His judgment.
2. **Believe** Jesus took God’s judgment for you.
3. **Confess** that you want God’s forgiveness/believing in Jesus.
	* + 1. **Slide 40 BELIEVER: Show your true belief, show a changed life.**

**PODCAST- What does “born again” mean? Find our from Jesus Himself. John 3:1-36; Ezekiel 36:24-27; Numbers 21**