



SERMON NOTES & PERSONAL/GROUP STUDY

Sunday, October 4

PASSAGE

John 3:1-18

THEME

SPIRITUAL BIRTH -- YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN

QUESTION

Has there ever been a moment in your life when you asked Jesus to FORGIVE YOU OF YOUR SINS and to TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE?

NOTES

v. 1-2

- **Nicodemus** was a PHARISEE, a member of the SANHEDRIN, and a respected TEACHER OF THE LAW.
- **Nicodemus** was SEARCHING FOR TRUTH and HE BELIEVED JESUS HAD ANSWERS.
- **Nicodemus** SHOWED HIS HUMILITY by his willingness to come to Jesus TO BE TAUGHT -- even though he was a WELL EDUCATED MAN.

v. 3

- Jesus told Nicodemus THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT PIECE OF INFORMATION that he would ever need to know in his life -- **the ONLY WAY he would SEE GOD'S KINGDOM is if he was BORN AGAIN.**
- Jesus also told Nicodemus -- it wasn't by KEEPING THE LAW that a person could SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD -- or by DOING GOOD THINGS -- GOING TO THE TEMPLE every time the doors were open -- GIVING A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF MONEY to the temple -- **it was ONLY BY BEING BORN AGAIN.**
- [Romans 3:20](#)
- Nicodemus knew as much about the Scriptures as a person could know -- but KNOWLEDGE IS NOT SALVATION.

v. 5-8

- Jesus told Nicodemus that HE MUST BE BORN PHYSICALLY & SPIRITUALLY to see God's Kingdom.
- Being BORN OF THE FLESH means that you are BORN INTO SIN -- which LEADS TO DEATH.
- But being BORN OF THE SPIRIT means that you are BORN INTO GOD'S KINGDOM or HIS FAMILY -- which LEADS TO ETERNAL LIFE.
- The word MUST means that **there is NO OTHER OPTION or OTHER WAY -- that a person can see God's kingdom** -- the ONLY OPTION you have to see God's kingdom is to be BORN AGAIN.
- [John 14:1-6](#)
- Jesus says you MUST be BORN AGAIN to see heaven one day -- and the ONLY WAY you can be with God in eternity is ONLY THROUGH JESUS.

v. 14-15

- [Numbers 21:4-9](#)
- What a GREAT PICTURE OF GOD'S GRACE -- HE DIDN'T HAVE TO SEND A REMEDY for the Israelites TO BE SAVED from the bites of those poisonous snakes -- HE COULD HAVE LET THEM ALL DIE because of all their complaining and their sin -- **but HE LOVED THEM TOO MUCH to let that happen.**
- Jesus tried to help Nicodemus understand that just as God PROVIDED A WAY FOR THE ISRAELITES TO BE SAVED, God would also PROVIDE A WAY FOR ALL TO BE SAVED from eternal death by JESUS'S DEATH ON THE CROSS & HIS RESURRECTION.
- In this story though -- BRONZE is a symbol of JUDGMENT & CLEANSING -- a SNAKE is a symbol of SIN -- **together it is a picture of CLEANSING FROM SIN.**

v. 16

- To BELIEVE is more than an **intellectual agreement that JESUS IS GOD** -- it means **to put your trust and confidence in Jesus that HE ALONE CAN SAVE YOU** -- it is to make Jesus the LORD OF YOUR LIFE -- which means that WE RELEASE ALL CONTROL and we give Him COMPLETE CONTROL.
- God PROVIDED A WAY FOR YOU TO BE SAVED -- it is A CHOICE ONLY YOU CAN MAKE --
 - You can ACCEPT this FREE GIFT of SALVATION which is ETERNAL LIFE.
 - Or you can REJECT this FREE GIFT which results in SPENDING ALL OF ETERNITY SEPARATED FROM GOD in a real place called HELL where there is ETERNAL SUFFERING & TORMENT.
- The GIFT OF SALVATION is to simply be RECEIVED -- IT CANNOT BE EARNED.
- [Ephesians 2:8-9](#)

v. 17-18

- **When people say, "Why would a loving God let people go to hell?"** -- 2 things come to mind --
 - He is a JUST GOD -- a JUST JUDGE wouldn't let a MURDERER GO FREE -- so a JUST GOD wouldn't let a GUILTY SINNER GO FREE.
 - He is a LOVING GOD because HE PROVIDED A WAY FOR THE GUILTY SINNER TO BE DECLARED "NOT GUILTY" if he/she would simply ASK FORGIVENESS and PUT THEIR TRUST IN HIS SON who died in their place.
- [Romans 5:8](#)
- The SOLE PURPOSE FOR GOD SENDING HIS SON JESUS to earth to LIVE A PERFECT LIFE -- to DIE ON THE CROSS -- and to be RAISED FROM THE DEAD was to SAVE THE WORLD FROM HIS WRATH -- His purpose was NOT CONDEMNATION but SALVATION.

3 QUESTIONS that will SUM UP what has been taught...

1. What is the RESULT of being SAVED / BORN AGAIN?

- A person who is BORN AGAIN will RECEIVE ETERNAL LIFE -- that is **a promised life with the Father, Son, & Spirit one day in Heaven** -- that life begins THE MOMENT YOU BELIEVE.

2. What is the CONSEQUENCE of NOT being SAVED / BORN AGAIN?

- John 3:36 -- The person who REJECTS JESUS and is NOT BORN AGAIN will suffer THE WRATH OF GOD -- which is **forever and ever spent separated from God in a real place called hell where there will be eternal suffering & torment.**

3. How can you be SAVED / BORN AGAIN?

- **ASK JESUS TO FORGIVE YOUR SINS** -- 1 John 1:9 says -- *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*
- **ASK HIM TO HELP YOU REPENT** -- Acts 2:38 -- Peter tells the people at Pentecost to -- *“Repent...”* -- turn away from your life of sin.
- **SURRENDER -- CALL ON JESUS & GIVE HIM CONTROL** -- Romans 10:13 says -- *“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

TODAY'S TAKEAWAY

God does not desire to keep you where you are -- He desires for you to GROW!

QUESTION

If there was a chart of your spiritual growth, what would your chart look like?

PERSONAL / GROUP STUDY -- Discussion Guide

Face the Issue:

This week, Drew continued our new series, "God's Expectations of a Christian". Each week we will be looking at the basics that God expects of His people. This week's topic is Salvation.

Many people love the hymn Blessed Assurance:

"Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine,

Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine"

While many of us love to sing that song, how many of us actually believe it? According to a 2017 Barna study, 67% of Christians report that they are either currently struggling with doubt about their salvation or have experienced doubt at some time in their lives.

Drew shared that the Christian life begins with salvation. It is the beginning of the journey. Many times new Christians can be derailed from the journey because of doubts.

Have you ever questioned whether you were a member of God's family? If you are in a group and comfortable, explain.

When do you have the greatest assurance that you are one of God's children? Again, if comfortable, share with your group.

Into the Word

We live in an age when a lot of people make a lot of claims. It turns out this is nothing new. The Apostle John found that it was necessary for him to write a series of letters to believers to help them "test" the claims of people and leaders that were claiming to be followers of Christ. It is in these letters that we can find that blessed assurance that we are seeking.

Read 1 John 3:11-24..

What thoughts and feelings do you have as you read these words about love? Does the world around you demonstrate this type of love?

Why is our love for our neighbors so basic to our assurance of eternal life (vv. 11-15)?

While we may not be murderers in that we take lives, what are some ways that we can "murder" people's spirits?

How do verses 14-15 answer those of us who may claim that assurance is based solely on our profession of faith? (Note: When we say someone is "saved", what exactly are they saved from? Many say eternal damnation but while that is true, it is only part of the story. We are also saved from living a life of hatred and misery. John is saying that type of being saved is passing from death into life. The evidence of that is a new life based on loving others. Something has to change.)

A popular song says, "Everybody loves somebody sometime." But what is the test of genuine love (vv. 16-18)?

Why is Christ's death on the cross the supreme example of love (v. 16)?

In verses 17-18 John mentions ways we can follow Christ's example. How have you and those in your church sought to love those with material needs? (Have the words "I love you" lost their meaning and power over the years? Why)

How can John's assurances in verses 19-20 help us deal with times of doubt? What specifically would our hearts (the Holy Spirit) condemn us of?

Why do you think John reduces the commandments to a single command to be obeyed (v. 23)? Both outwardly and inwardly, how can we know Christ lives in us (v. 24)?

Apply The Word

Based on this study, how would you counsel someone who lacked assurance that he or she was a Christian? What type of evidence of salvation would you tell them to look for? How is an internal salvation expressed outwardly?

Pray specifically for God to reveal to you ways that you can demonstrate genuine Christ-like love for others. Then do it.

If you have come to the conclusion that you are in need of salvation, please contact us at Meadowdale or talk to a trusted Christian friend or relative.