

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

You Must be Born Again

John 3:6-8

Part 3

Lynn and I have been blessed with having three of our grandchildren living in the Antelope Valley. Every Friday we have the joy of spending a certain amount of time babysitting them. There is Kyle and Carson, our 6 year-old twin grandsons and there is Natalie our two-year old granddaughter. One thing that has impressed me about them, especially the boys, is how focused they are when it comes to certain particular activities.

It might be a picture they are drawing, or a transformer toy that they might be playing with or even a conversation that they might be enjoying with each other. It is almost as if for them, at those moments in time, that nothing else exists in the world other than what they are playing with or what they are doing. In those times when I want to get their attention, I will sometimes have to walk up to them and actually place my hand on top of their head to get their attention. And of course if this doesn't work I will get right in front of them purposely placing myself between them and the thing or activity that they are engaged in. How do they respond to this? To their credit they don't get irritated with me, it is as if, by the look on their face, they are saying "Oh, Hi grandpa, where did you come from..

Are adults today so wrapped up in what they are doing that God may be having difficulty getting their attention? And I would have to believe that the answer is yes. There are adults so focused on their work, on their families, on their personal interests that God will have great difficulty getting their attention. But it is not as if God is not trying. He is! And perhaps you are one of those people but maybe by God's grace today this will all change for you today. Perhaps this is the day you will find yourself looking into the face of Jesus and you will be able to see clearly what He wants you to do.

This leads us back to the passage we are now studying and to the question that we are now asking. What is that question? "What do we learn about the new birth from John 3:1-15? We have already considered one of those things.

The first thing that we learned about the new birth in John 3:1-15 was the necessity of the new birth (John 3:1-3). Let me read this passage for you, "**Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; (2) this man came to Him by night, and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that you have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." (3) Jesus answered and said to him "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."**

Nicodemus, a Pharisee, a member of the Sanhedrin who certainly was trusting in himself and his good works for salvation, had apparently come to the point in his life where he had become convinced that Jesus was a miracle worker and a teacher sent from God. But he had not yet come to a place in his life that he had recognized Jesus as the Messiah.

In fact, the reason why he approached Jesus was most likely to verify, whether Jesus was or was not the Messiah. But before he could start his interrogation Jesus personally confronted him with this

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

challenge, "**Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**" Or in other words he pointed out to Nicodemus the necessity of the new birth. He pointed out to Nicodemus that he needed a radical change in his life. In fact, the change that was needed was so radical that Jesus refers to it as being "born again."

What is the first thing that we have learned about the new birth from John 3:1-15? We have learned that the new birth is a necessity.

What else do we learn from this passage? The second thing that we learn about the new birth from John 3:1-15 is its basic components (John 3:4-8). In other words, we learn what needs to be in place before a person can be considered born again. We find these basic components in **John 3:4-8.**

Let me read these verses for you, "**Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he? (5) Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (6) "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (7) Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' (8) "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."** Nicodemus was obviously struggling with the phrase "born again." We know this by his response in **verse 4.** Jesus responds to his struggle with the phrase "born again" by outlining its basic components in **verse 5.**

So what is the first component? The first basic component of the new birth is "born of water." And what would Nicodemus have immediately thought of when he heard Jesus speak of being born of water? Based on **John 1:19-25**, as we saw last week, Nicodemus would have immediately thought of the baptism of John. But though he might have immediately thought of the baptism of John, his thinking would not have stopped there.

It would not have stopped there because John's baptism was all about repentance. We saw this last week in **Matthew 3:5-11**, When the Sadducees and Pharisees came out to John for baptism he told them to bring forth the fruit of repentance. Without repentance John's baptism was worthless. When Jesus spoke of being "born of water" Nicodemus would have thought of John's baptism but more specifically he would have linked it with what John's baptism portrayed, which was true *repentance*. What is repentance?

Biblically repentance (METANOIA) always speaks of a change of purpose, and specifically a turning from sin. People cannot credibly represent themselves having been "born again" unless they have experienced a turning from sin.

It is not enough to just want to turn from our sin, we must do it if we are going to experience true repentance. Obviously having experienced true repentance will not result in us becoming sinless, but it will have a dramatic positive impact on the way we live our lives, so much so that we will not practice sin as a way of life.

What is the first basic component of the new birth? The first basic component of the new birth is being born of water, or in other words experiencing what the baptism of John portrayed, which is true repentance. It is not just simply feeling bad about our sin, it is actually turning from our sin. It is not something that we initiate but it is something that God initiates.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Only *God* can produce true repentance in the heart of man (**2 Corinthians 7:8-10**). When God touches the heart of man and convicts him of sin it will produce a Godly sorrow. And the Godly sorrow produces a true repentance that leads to salvation. Yes, it is true that works do not save us but this does not mean that we can continue in our sins with a "business as usual" attitude. Our sins must be turned from.

But there is more to being "born again" than simply being "born of water" or in other words fully participating in all that the baptism of John portrayed, which was true repentance. This leads us to a second component of the new birth.

The second component of the new birth is born "of the *Spirit*" (John 3:5). Let us once again read **John 3:5 "Jesus Answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."**

What would Nicodemus have thought Jesus meant by his reference to be "born of ... the Spirit?" Nicodemus would have thought "born of the Spirit" somehow referred to "the *baptism* of the Spirit."

Why would Nicodemus have thought this? Nicodemus would have thought this because of the *teaching* ministry of John the Baptist. What did John the Baptist teach that would have led Nicodemus to link "being born of the Spirit" to Spirit baptism?"

All four Gospels bear record of the *testimony* of John the Baptist that when the Messiah came He would baptize with the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33). Let me read these verses for you.

Matt. 3:11, "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

Mark 1:8, "I baptize you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Luke 3:16, "John answered and said to them all, "As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

John 1:33, "And I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'"

Certainly it seems reasonable that Nicodemus, who would have been very familiar with the ministry of John the Baptist, would have linked "born of the Spirit" with the "baptism of the Spirit" spoken of by John and associated with the coming of the Messiah. Therefore if we are going to be "born of the Spirit," which is necessary to enter the kingdom of God, we must come to the Messiah so that He might baptize us with the *Spirit*. What exactly does that mean?

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

What does the word baptism mean? The word "baptize" (BAPTIZO) means, "to dip" and was used among the Greeks to signify the dyeing of a garment. There are many different baptisms mentioned in the scriptures. This is just one of them.

Those coming to the Messiah in order to be baptized or dipped into the Spirit will enter into the blessings and the benefits of the Spirit, which of course in this context would include being "born of the Spirit."

How does coming to Christ and being baptized with the Spirit result in us being "born of the Spirit?" When we come to Christ and are baptized with the Spirit, the Spirit makes it possible for us to become *partakers* of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).

How does the Spirit do this? The Spirit baptizes those who come to Christ by placing them into Christ's body which is the church, and therefore joining them to His *life* (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

Let me read for you 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, "**(12) For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body though they are many are one body, so also is Christ. (13) For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.**" Being joined with the life of Christ allows us to pass from spiritual death to spiritual *life* or in other words we are "born of the Spirit." There are two basic components of the new birth.

The first basic component of the new birth is being born of water. When Jesus spoke of being "born of water" He meant that we must participate fully in that which was portrayed by the baptism of John, which is true repentance. We must come to the place in our lives where we are able and willing to see our sin for what it is, and by the grace of God turn from that sin. But being "born again" is not just about what we turn from, but what we move toward. And this leads us to the second component of the new birth.

The second basic component of the new birth is being born of the Spirit. When Jesus spoke of being "born of the Spirit," He meant that we must come to the place in our lives where we, by faith come to Him as He has been revealed in the scriptures so that we might be joined to His life through the baptism of the Spirit.

When we experience the "new birth," when we are "born again," we should expect a life totally different to the life that we had before we were "born again." Being born-again, or in other words "being born of water and the Spirit" is such a radical change that we become a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17). Listen to **2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."**

And hopefully all those who are here this weekend who profess to be born again know exactly what I am talking about.

Because I have been born-again, I am no longer under the condemnation of God for I have by faith received the gift of life made possible through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Because I have been born again, I am no longer a stranger alienated from God but rather I have through faith, become a child of God and a member of His forever family. Because I am born again, I am no longer seeking to live a life for myself but for Him who loved me and gave Himself for me. Because I have been born again, I am heaven bound.

All of these new realities have impacted every part of my life. I am certainly not a perfect husband, but I am the husband that I am because of Christ. I am not the perfect father, but I am the father that I am because of Christ. I am not a perfect pastor, but I am the pastor I am because of Christ.

Before I was "born again" from the standpoint of the world my life was good. But I want you to know that I did not begin living until I was "born of water" and "born of the Spirit." I did not begin living until "I was born again."

Nicodemus needed to be born again. All of his efforts at this point in time had done nothing to secure him salvation. And Jesus wanted to make sure that Nicodemus understood that no matter how long he continued through his own self efforts to become acceptable to God, it would never work. He makes this point in **John 3:6**.

Let us read **John 3:6**, "**That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.**" The radical change Jesus is sharing with Nicodemus that must take place is absolutely impossible through our efforts (John 3:6). It is absolutely impossible through our so-called good works make ourselves spiritually alive. This is what Jesus is saying.

An Arabian Chicken Little story tells of a young Arab who was traveling along a road on his donkey when he came upon a small, fuzzy object lying in the road. He dismounted to look more closely and found a sparrow lying on its back with its scrawny little legs thrust skyward. At first he thought it was dead, but closer investigation proved the bird to be very much alive. The young man asked the sparrow if he was all right. The sparrow replied, "Yes." Then the Arab said, "What are you doing lying on your back with your legs pointed toward the sky?" The sparrow responded that he had heard a rumor that the sky was falling, so he was holding his legs up to support it. The Arab replied, "You surely don't think you're going to hold it up with those two scrawny legs, do you?" The sparrow, after a very solemn look, retorted, "One does the best he can." The response by the sparrow sounds good but sometimes the best that we can do is simply not enough. This is what Jesus is saying in **verse 6**, "**that which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.**"

Jesus is telling Nicodemus in John 3:6 that There is no *evolution* from flesh to spirit! In other words he is telling Nicodemus not to think that his efforts to conform himself to the Law and the tradition of the elders will result in his salvation no matter how hard he works. He then in reinforcing this thought goes back to what he had said in the beginning of his remarks to Nicodemus. Let us read **John 3:7**, "**Do not marvel that I said to you, "You must be born again."**"

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

If we are going to be born again it will happen because we have recognized and responded to the Spirit's sovereign work in our lives. (John 3:8). Let me read for you **John 3:8. "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."** Just like with the wind, though we may not fully understand nor control the Spirit we can know when it is at work and it is therefore up to us, when we recognize that He is working in our lives, to surrender ourselves to Him.

CONCLUSION

Most of the world is looking to themselves and their own good works to secure for a place in heaven. Jesus is telling Nicodemus that is just not going to happen. So he had better stop being so focused on himself and what he was doing so that he might be more responsive to what God was seeking to do in His life

Was God active in the life of Nicodemus in the incident we are now considering in **John 3**? And the answer would have to be yes! He was extremely active in the life of Nicodemus.

Sometimes the wind of the Spirit is a raging power. Other times the wind of the Spirit is simply a gentle breeze. I think the wind of the Spirit was roaring when Jesus, God incarnate, was talking face to face with Nicodemus.

Is the wind of the Spirit at work in your life? Are you ready to be "born again?" Then you will need to turn from your sins, and turn to Christ for salvation.

If you fail to respond in a positive manner to the wind of the Spirit blowing in your life today there is *no* guarantee that He will be blowing in your life tomorrow.