

Series: "Believe"

Message #9

"You Must Be Born Again"

**Text:** John 3:1-15

**Intro:** We have read a portion of one of the most beloved and quoted passages of Scripture. It is here that Jesus has a personal encounter with a man named Nicodemus, one of the elite in all of Israel. Nicodemus was a man of power, wealth, and influence. He seemed to be on top of the world. By the standards of society, Nicodemus had it all; he had reached the pinnacle of success. But, with all that he had achieved and acquired there was emptiness in his life. He knew that something was missing.

This encounter with Jesus would open his eyes to the wonderful and gracious offer of salvation. In their conversation Jesus shares the truths of being born again. The fundamental truths that Jesus shared with Nicodemus reveal how sinners are saved and cleansed by the saving power of Christ. I want to look in on their conversation as we consider the truths of the proclamation Jesus made: Ye Must be Born Again.

#### 1) The Condition of Nicodemus –

- a. He was a **Religious Man** (1) – Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews. The Pharisees were devoutly religious. No doubt he had spent years studying the Scriptures and living according to the Mosaic Law.
- b. As a ruler of the Jews, Nicodemus held a position of authority in the synagogue. He knew religious traditions and how they were to be carried out, but sadly he had never met the Christ of the Scriptures.
- c. Nicodemus may have been religious, but he wasn't saved. All the religion in the world can never provide salvation. You could study the Bible and even quote it word for word, but if you have never been saved all you will have is knowledge of God, not a relationship.
- d. Being involved in church services and activities are good, but they cannot save!
- e. He was a **Respected Man** (1, 10) – There is little doubt Nicodemus would've been a man who was admired and respected. Jesus referred to him as a master of Israel, or a teacher. Nicodemus must've been an educated man with a lot of influence on those around him. He was likely envied by many who would love to have the opportunity to serve in the position he held.
- f. Nicodemus would've been a fine, outstanding citizen among the Jews. He lived a life that was admired and respected by those who knew him, but even that couldn't bring salvation. There are many today who live a good, moral life. They abide by the laws of the land, work hard and refrain from an immoral lifestyle; they are good to help with social causes and issues, but they are lost in sin because they have never trusted Christ. Simply living a respectable life will never bring salvation or acceptance to God.
- g. He was a **Restless Man** (2) – Nicodemus had it all as man would think, but there was something within his heart that wouldn't let him rest.

- h. The Spirit of God was working in the heart of Nicodemus. This wasn't just curiosity, this was conviction!
- i. Many today are like Nicodemus. They have found success in this world, but they are miserable in their souls. If you constantly find yourself thinking of what will happen when you die, or wondering if you have made the necessary preparations to stand before God, it is likely the Spirit is dealing with you as He did Nicodemus.
- j. He was a **Reluctant Man (4; 9)** – We will deal with the words of Jesus in a moment, but we find that Nicodemus had trouble with the words of Jesus. The Lord had laid out the plan of salvation, but Nicodemus couldn't yet believe. It is likely that his education and the influence of the Pharisees clouded his vision.
- k. How many have heard the gospel but are reluctant to receive it? Maybe the Lord has dealt with you, maybe you know that you are lost, and yet you are unwilling to believe. I thought of the words of King Agrippa as Paul stood before him, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." The Lord had sent conviction, but Agrippa would not believe.

## 2) The Conversation of Jesus (v.5-7)

- a. Jesus reveals there is only one way to enter into the Kingdom of God. A man must be born again. The word except is an imperative revealing "there are no other options;" Jesus is the only way! We must be born again. The word must is also an imperative which means "to be absolutely necessary." He was telling Nicodemus that if he wanted to be forgiven of sin and acceptable to God, he must be born again!
- b. This was hard for Nicodemus to comprehend. How can a man enter his mother's womb the second time and be born again when he is old? Jesus isn't referring to a physical birth. The word again has the idea of "coming from above." Man must be born of the Spirit of God. It is the only way.
- c. – Jesus reveals to Nicodemus there is a fundamental difference in the flesh and the Spirit. Those who have never experienced the spiritual birth remain in the flesh. There has been no change in their lives.
- d. Read from Anne Graham Lotz (see attached)
- e. When we are born again, we are born of the Spirit. The Lord makes a change within the heart, old things have passed away and all things become new. There will be a noticeable difference in the lives of those who are born again.
- f. **2 Cor.5:17- Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.**
- g. **The Miracle** of Salvation (8) – Nicodemus was an educated Pharisee but he couldn't grasp the truths of salvation. It is beyond our ability to grasp all the Jesus has done for us and continues to do in us.
- h. Jesus gives a simple illustration: The wind blows where it wishes; we hear the sound of the wind and can even see its effects, but we cannot tell where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with our salvation. We feel the conviction of the Spirit and we visibly see the effects of a changed life, and yet we have no idea all that the Spirit is doing in our lives or where He is leading us.

### 3) The Confidence of Salvation (13-15)

- a. The Provision of the Savior (13-14) – Jesus wanted Nicodemus to realize all of his education and upright living were not the source of salvation. It is impossible for man to ascend into heaven of himself.
- b. Just as Moses lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness to provide for those who were bitten by the venomous snakes to be made whole, Jesus had to be lifted up for those who had been poisoned by sin to be made whole. Were it not for the death and resurrection of our Lord, there would be no hope for us to ever be saved. Jesus secured the means of our salvation as He died upon the cross. We have the hope of eternal life because He rose again. Salvation is in Christ and Christ alone!
- c. The Promise for the Sinner (15) – Everyone couldn't have the position that Nicodemus held, but that wasn't what was required. It isn't about who we are; it is all about what Jesus has done! Jesus makes a promise that all can receive, whosoever can come to the Lord and receive salvation if they will only by faith believe. He came that all people might be saved. Jesus came for you! If you have never trusted in Him, He stands waiting for you to come. He wants you to come, just as you, are in faith. If you can believe that Jesus has the power to save, He will save you today!