

An Evening Interview You must be Born again

Reading John 3 v1-9

Lady who said, I'm a Christian but not one of them Born Again Christians

Jesus welcomed all types of people, a few were noble and wealthy but mainly it was the down trodden, the poor, the ordinary workers. He welcomed prostitutes' beggars, tax collectors. His critics derided him as a friend of publicans and sinners.

This man however was different

Nicodemus represented the best in the nation. He was a teacher a Rabbi (v. 10), a Pharisee, and a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council. The Sanhedrin had 70 members who were responsible for religious decisions and also, under the Romans, for civil rule. Two other Sanhedrin members who appear in a favourable light in the New Testament are Joseph of Arimathea (19:38) who begged the body of Jesus and buried him, and the Rabbi Gamaliel (Acts 5:34-39; 22:3). The Sanhedrin put Jesus on trial (Luke 22:66). Nicodemus later rebuked the Pharisees for condemning Jesus without hearing Him (John 7:50-51), and he helped Joseph of Arimathea bury Jesus (19:39-40).

Nicodemus was

- From the Ruling Class
- Well educated
- Well versed in the scriptures – a Rabbi
- Wealthy – expensive spices at his burial etc.

A member of the cabinet!! – The Romans would not let the Jews pass the death sentence but in every other aspect they ruled the country

He was a **good man but totally void of spiritual life**

He was curious about Jesus – came at night Why?

Was it

- Out of fear – of what his fellow rulers in parliament would say?
- To avoid giving public support to this controversial teacher
- Because it was the normal time to visit
- Because he wanted a long conversation with Jesus when the crowds weren't around.
- John doesn't say why.

He said, **we** know you are a teacher come from God – **We** = those in the Sanhedrin who were sympathetic to Christ.

That was the extent of his estimation of Jesus, a teacher from God. He spoke to Jesus as one Rabbi to another.

Jesus didn't fit in to the religious pattern of the day

- He didn't ceremonially wash his hands before eating, he didn't keep the Sabbath in the way the Jews did, he ate with tax collectors and sinners, he spoke to Samaritans, and he denounced the hypocrisy of the religious elite, calling them whitewashed tombs and blind leaders of the blind!!

But it was the miracles that convinced Nicodemus that Jesus was from God. The blind saw, the deaf heard, the dead were raised. So he came to find out.

Jesus hit him with these words

John 3:3

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." NKJV Born from above

John 3:3

Jesus said, "You're absolutely right. Take it from me: Unless a person is born from above, it's not possible to see what I'm pointing to — to God's kingdom." To see Gods kingdom you must be born again TM

The Kingdom of God is the rule of God

These miracles you see are expressions of **the kingdom rule of God**

Jesus spoke a lot about the kingdom

Acts 1:3 for forty days after his resurrection to his ascension his topic to his disciples was about **the Kingdom of God**

The Kingdom is both now and not yet

- **The kingdom is already here**

Luke 17:20-21

Jesus replied, "The Kingdom of God can't be detected by visible signs. 21 You won't be able to say, 'Here it is!' or 'It's over there!' For the Kingdom of God is already among you."

But whenever there is a miracle etc. the kingdom of God has come

Matt 12:28-29

But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. NKJV

We are told to pray that the kingdom would come – The Lord's prayer – not simply future

Matt 6:10

Your kingdom come your will be done NKJV

- **What is the kingdom like?**

Rom. 14:17-18

For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. NKJV

- **Righteousness** right living – A life of goodness

Rom 12:9-21

Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. 10 Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honouring each other. 11 Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically.... 3 When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

14 Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. 15 Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all!

17 Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honourable. 18 Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. 19 Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the Lord.

20 Instead "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads." 21 Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

How would you like to live in a world where this was the norm? This is the Kingdom of God

In churches sadly this doesn't always take place – we say there wasn't much of God's kingdom in that statement!!

- **Peace** – With God and the peace of God – Jesus was always at peace – calmness tranquillity – greeted his disciples with peace be with you. My peace I give unto you – not as the world gives.

Eph. 4:3-4

Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.

- **Joy** in the Holy Spirit – heaven is a happy place!!
 - The joy of the Lord is your strength

- Jesus rejoiced in the spirit

Paul wrote

Col 1:11-14

May you be filled with joy, 12 always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light. 13 For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, 14 who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.

Moved from one kingdom to another

John 3:3

"From above" in is to have a spiritual transformation which takes a person out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God. The kingdom is the sphere or realm of God's authority and blessing which is now invisible but will be manifested on earth (Matt 6:10).

The statement astonished Nicodemus – how can a man be born when he is old etc.

Born of **water and the spirit**

How was I born?

Did I decide to be born? My earliest memory is about two or three. But I was already here.

My birth depended on someone else!

How is a person born spiritually?

- **Water** –is it an allusion to water baptism - no = the Word
 - Heaven is a free gift – not earned or deserved
 - Mankind is a sinner – all fall short of the standard
 - God loves us – for God so loved the world

- God is a righteous judge and must punish our sin and wrongdoing
- Jesus –
 - Who he was - God in human form
 - What he did – he took our punishment –

Isa 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. NKJV

- He offers Eternal life as a free gift
- This gift is received by faith

Rom 10:9-12

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, **you will be saved**. 10 For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved. 11 As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced."

All this is in the bible – the word of God

- **The Spirit** - Applies it personally to you
 - Heaven is a free gift for you
 - I am a sinner – It's not my brother nor my sister but it's me o Lord
 - God loves me – doesn't want me to perish but have everlasting life
 - God must punish my wrong doing – he is fair to everyone, If he judges others he must judge you.
 - Jesus – came and died in my place

“Guilty vile and helpless we spotless lamb of God was he full atonement can it be Hallelujah what a saviour”

My father's old hymn – by John Newton
 I saw one hanging on a tree in agony and blood
 He fixed his loving eyes on me as near his cross I stood

O can it be upon the tree the saviour died for me
My heart is fill my soul is thrilled to think
He died for me

- He offers Me Eternal life – the spirit encourages you to believe and receive

The word and the Spirit come together and you are born from above – born again.

John 1:10-13

He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. 11 He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. 12 But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. 13 They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

It's like the spirit that hovered over the primeval sea the Spirit of God moved upon the waters and God said **let there be light**.

Born of the Spirit

2 Cor 5:17-18

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. NKJV

2 Cor 5:17

this means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

How do we know this has happened?

Change in our behaviour

Rom 8:5-8

Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the

Spirit. 6 So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. 7 For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. 8 That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.

Change in our relationship to God

Rom. 8:15-17

So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." 16 For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children.

Change in our relationship to other believers

1 John 3:14-15

The way we know we've been transferred from death to life is that we love our brothers and sisters.

You must be born again to see the kingdom

Suggested Questions

1. What pressure do you think Nicodemus might have felt from his fellow Sanhedrin members before coming to Jesus?
2. Why do you think Nicodemus didn't understand the idea of the new birth?
3. Paul tells us what God's kingdom is like

Rom. 14:17-18

For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. NKJV

- a. Discuss what the world would be like if we all lived under the rule of God
 - b. What would the universal church look like if we really lived under the rule of God?
4. Jesus said we can only enter this kingdom by being Born from Above (born again)
 - a. Discuss the role of Water – The word of God and -----The Spirit – in the Spiritual birth process. Maybe one or two testimonies.
5. How do we know when someone is really born again? What are the evidences of the new birth?
6. Righteousness, peace and Joy are aspects of the kingdom. Jesus told us to pray that the kingdom would come - in what ways do you need the kingdom power and rule of God to happen in your life?
7. Discuss how we apply or receive the kingdom rule of God in our lives.