

BORN AGAIN: WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

John 3:1-17

I. LIVING IN LIMBO

- A. Zoning Out.
 - 1. We live most of our lives on automatic pilot. We *zone out* and forget to focus our lives on that which is truly important.
 - 2. Very few things can make us more aware of the preciousness of life than a life threatening experience. A tornado touches down, a car careens off a cliff, a loved one is lost.
- B. Zooming In.
 - 1. We begin to focus on what is most important, what our lives have meant, whom we truly love, and what we ultimately believe in.
 - 2. We begin to ask the critical questions: “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” “What does it mean to be born again?”
- C. Being Born Again.
 - 1. It is what some churches demand of their members.
 - 2. It only appears three times in the New Testament: 1 Peter 1:3, 1 Peter 1:23, and John 3:3.
 - 3. It may be one of the most misunderstood Christian phrases.

II. BRING ME TO LIFE

- A. What It’s Not.
 - 1. It’s not something physical, but rather it is something spiritual.
 - 2. It is not the same thing as making a decision about Jesus Christ.
 - 3. It is not optional. It is mandatory.
 - 4. It is not something we can do.
- B. It’s Transformational.
 - 1. It is being born from above.
 - 2. God’s plan is not simply to repair *most* of our brokenness. He wants to make us new creatures.
 - 3. Psychologist Aaron Beck says that the single belief most toxic to a relationship is the belief that the other person cannot change.
- C. Pseudo-Transformation.
 - 1. Being Spiritually “inauthentic.”
 - 2. Becoming judgmental or exclusive or proud.
 - 3. Measuring your spiritual life in superficial ways.
- D. Everything Is Fresh and New.
 - 1. It’s not simply changing your mind.
 - 2. Have you ever fish-tailed or hydroplaned while driving a car? How do you get in control of your vehicle?
 - 3. We meet Nicodemus again in John 19:39. This time he doesn’t ask any questions. He simply does what is right.

Prayer Concerns: Members – Burney Biesel, Jeanette Boatright, **Dixie Borden**, Marie Davis, Edie Ford, Beverly Fowlkes, Jack Hatcher, Deborah Hendrix, **Brenda Sentell**, **Moody Sentell**, Gwen Steward, Carol Webb ... **Friends** – **Callie Acred**, Tommy Anderson, **Meryl Broussard**, Lawrence Carolin, Olivia Davis, Ricky Dennison, Molly Kate Duncan, Scott Flowers, Gail Gibbons, Nancy Godsey, Jean Hansford, Shawn Harmon, Dolores Hearn, Jeff Joyner, Anna McDowell, Dewaine Moncier, Jr., Sheena Moore, Jimmy Patterson, **Brenda Sentell**, **Richard Reed**, Lyle Sturgis, **Jim Tyler**, Allen Voss, **Wendell & Joy Walker**, Don Webb, the victims of the tornadoes ...

Christian Sympathy is extended to *the family of Steven Wachtler* who died on Saturday, February 2, and to *Nancy Craig and family* in the death of her sister, **Betty Webb**, who died on Tuesday, February 5 ...

PASTORAL PRAYER

O God, our Father, we come to you today as Nicodemus came to Jesus on that night so long ago. We come with deep respect marveling at your power and might. You are so great and we are so small, and yet you have crowned us with glory and honor. Your name is wonderful in all the earth.

Loving Savior, you are lifted up in worship as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. When we gather our attention is drawn away from ourselves and placed where it belongs, upon you. It is here that we find the grace that covers our sins and our invitation to be born again and enter your eternal kingdom.

Holy Spirit, we know that we can't do anything without your presence and your power. You inspired the Bible to be written, but we have not always read it faithfully. You have given us special gifts to use, but we have sometimes neglected them. You are ready to give us peace and joy, but we have sometimes lived in anxiety and gloom. Forgive us and warm our hearts, enlighten our minds, cleanse our thoughts, comfort our souls, and enliven our wills.

Hear us now as we pray the prayer Christ taught us to pray ...

THE LORD'S PRAYER: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

JOHN 3:1-17

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him." Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born anew.' The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can his be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand this? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen; but you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that he world might be saved through him..."

SERMON SCHEDULE

February 24	<i>The Importance of Being Important</i>	John 4:5-42
March 2	<i>Whose Fault Is It?</i>	John 9:1-41
March 9	<i>Are You Ready to Be Raised from the Dead?</i>	John 11:1-45
March 16	<i>When Everything You've Wanted Isn't Enough</i>	John 26:69-75