

THE FATHER'S HEART
John 3:1-8, 14-17

SAVED BY THE SNAKE

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so much the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.” (3:14-15)

Whining and Complaining.

It wasn't the first time. It wouldn't be the last time. The people began to whine, gripe and grumble.

“Why did we ever leave Egypt?”

God got tired of all the self-pity.

The Israelites didn't appreciate what they had.,

Just remember: there are a lot of serpents out there!

Jesus became the good snake.

We beat him, whipped him, and lifted him up on a pole.

WHAT IS NEW BIRTH?

Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (3:3)

What new birth is not:

It is not the same thing as making a decision about Jesus Christ.

It's all about change!

If any person is in Christ, he is a new creation. (2 Cor. 5:17)

It is not something physical, but rather it is something spiritual.

Each person is different.

Emerson once said that God enters into the life of every individual by a private door.

There is no one “right” way of being born again.

IS IT NECESSARY FOR EVERYBODY?

There are no exceptions!

Nicodemus was a man of stature in the religious community.

We could understand Jesus saying to Mary Magdalene, Zacchaeus or

Judas that they had to change, but why Nicodemus?

For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God... (Romans 3:23)

HOW CAN WE MAKE IT HAPPEN?

We can't make it happen!

We didn't have anything to do with our first birth, and we don't have anything to do with being “born again.” It's a gift from God.

We can't “make” it happen, but we can put ourselves in a favorable position to be receptive to the Holy Spirit.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus!

When you feel like you are up to your neck in a snake pit, remember there is a power beyond your power that can come into your life and change everything!

Prayer Concerns: *Burney Biesel, Deborah Hendrix, Mac Kerr, Ricky Kirby, Joe McDowell, Anne Miller, Vicki Page, Rachel Parker, Katherine Pickens, Mildred Sentell, Joe Tidwell, Jr., Ray Billings, Cledus Creel, Betty Crenshaw, Jimmy Eubanks, Angela Fisher, Ed Gatlin, Martha Gibbs, Nancy Godsey, Dorothy Huffstutter, Kristi Jackson, Jeff Joyner, Ava Grace Keleher, Joyce Kuhl, Robert Lee, Judy Malaquias, Catherine Mattheus, Margaret Moore, Macy Morgan, Taylor Murray, Judy Owen, David Petrie, Patrick Ramage, Florine Rickeman, Mary Elizabeth Roberts ...*

JOHN 3:1-8, 14-17

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 seem so small, and yet you have crowned us with glory and honor. You let us rule everything your hands have made, and put all of it under our power. O Lord, 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 have inspired the Bible to be written, but we have not always read the word 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, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who 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.

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 ... 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 the world might be saved through him.

SERMON SCHEDULE

In the Sanctuary:

April 2	<i>Glorify Thy Name</i> John 12:20-33	5 th Sunday in Lent
April 9	<i>Now It Begins</i> Mark 11:1-10	Palm Sunday
April 10-14	<i>Services at Noon Each Day</i>	Holy Week
April 16	<i>Speechless</i> Mark 16:1-8	Easter Sunday

On the Radio (1450 AM):

April 2	<i>Spiritual Burnout</i>	Hebrews 10:23-25
April 9	<i>The Week That Changed the World</i>	Luke 19:28-40
April 16	<i>Touched By Life</i>	John 20:1-18