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John 3:1-21

Message title: Born From Above

Big Idea: A second birth is required for God's kingdom.

3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. **2** 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."

Pharisees were zealous & disciplined regarding the Law.

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."

Anōthen: Greek meaning a 2nd birth or to be born from above.

4 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?" **5** Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Ezekiel 36: 25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. **26** I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. **27** And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

This new birth involves a cleansing & the gift of God's Spirit.

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.'

Desires & motives are different when we are born again.

8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

9 Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?" **10** Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?

11 Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. **12** If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

13 No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, *that is*, the Son of Man who is in heaven.

Salvation is totally dependent on God coming down to save us.

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, **15** that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

Numbers 21:**5** So the people spoke against God and Moses: “Why have you brought us up from Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we are disgusted with this miserable food.” **6** Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. **7** So the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, because we have spoken against the Lord and against you; intercede with the Lord, that He will remove the serpents from us.” And Moses interceded for the people. **8** Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery *serpent*, and put it on a flag *pole*; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, and looks at it, will live.” **9** So Moses made a bronze serpent and put it on the flag *pole*; and it came about, that if a serpent bit someone, and he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

God doesn’t remove the deadly snakes, but He does provide a remedy from the consequences of their sin & death.

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

God’s motive & mission all starts with His love.

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

18 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. **19** And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. **20** For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. **21** But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

3 Personal Applications

1. Stop thinking that God’s kingdom is for good people.
2. Practice personal conversations about love, truth & Jesus.
3. Don’t hide your sin. Confess & be healed.

LIFE Groups

General Timeline Guide: (Adjust as appropriate for your group’s needs.)

5-10 minutes connecting personally with how everyone is doing.

45 minutes going over message with discussion questions and life applications.

5-10 minutes praying for each other

Discussion Questions

Look over these questions before your group time. Write down your answers or ideas for at least a few questions if not all. You may not get to every question during your time but speak up if you want to talk about one of them in particular. Always try to start with question #1.

1. What stood out to you and/or what do you think God might be speaking about from this message?
2. How does Jesus's statement that we must be 'born again' challenge the idea that being a good person or having a religious heritage is enough to enter God's kingdom?
3. Why do you think Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, and what does this reveal about the barriers people might face when seeking Jesus?
4. How is the story of Moses and serpent similar or different from your experience coming to Jesus?
5. John 3:17 says Jesus came not to condemn but to save. How can we help others recognize their spiritual need without coming across as condemning? How should this truth shape the way we interact with non-believers? Where do Christians sometimes get this wrong?