

SERMON SLIDES

#1

John 3:1-8

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him." Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."

"How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

#2

1. Explanation of the passage
 - Setting of the story
 - What does Jesus mean by "born again"?
 - Why is a "new birth from God" necessary?
2. Thoughts for those not yet born by the Spirit
3. Thoughts for Christmas
4. Thoughts for New Years

#3

What does Jesus mean by "born again"?

"again" is the translation of anōthen

Anōthen = "again"

Anōthen = "from above"

#4

Ephesians 2:1-5 - The radical nature of the second birth

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now

at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

#5

John 1:12-13 – the divine source of the new birth

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

#6

Ezekiel 36:24-27 – God's New Covenant

For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. 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. 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. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

#7

1. Explanation of the passage
2. Thoughts for those not yet born by the Spirit

#8

1. Explanation of the passage
2. Thoughts for those not yet born by the Spirit
3. Thoughts for Christmas

#9

Born that man no more may die;

Born to raise the sons of earth;

Born to give them second birth.

(Charles Wesley, "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing")

#10

1. Explanation of the passage
2. Thoughts for those not yet born by the Spirit
3. Thoughts for Christmas
4. Thoughts for New Years

#11

"The war creates no absolutely new situation: it simply aggravates the permanent human situation so that we can no longer ignore it."

C. S. Lewis in "Learning in War-Time"

#12

John 3:14-15 – our Hope for 2021

"Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him."

GROUP DISCUSSION

- 1) Even as a Christian, what might be some ways you can relate to Nicodemus?
- 2) Is "born again" an expression that you use? In what kind of settings? Explain.
- 3) What do we learn about the new, spiritual birth from other NT passages (e.g., 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; 1 Pet 1:3,23; 1 Jn 3:9; 4:7; 5:1,4)?
- 4) Some Christians can point to a day which is their "spiritual birthday". Others can't, though they know they have been "born again". If "born again" implies radical transformation, why do you think that some might not be able to recognize a single point in their lives when this transformation occurred?
- 5) "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). What do you think that Jesus means?

- 6) What has been your greatest disappointment of 2020? What do you most look forward to in 2021? How does this message influence your perspective on 2020? On 2021?
- 7) If you were to pray for one thing in 2021, what would it be?