

TIME OF REFLECTION

“A Christian should be an Alleluia from head to foot.”

“He was before His own flesh; He created His own mother. He chose her in whom He should be conceived, He created her of whom He should be created. Why do you marvel? It is God of whom I am speaking to you: The Word was God.”

~St. Augustine (354-430), North African theologian and leader on Jesus Christ

“It is significant that God does not present us with salvation in the form of an abstract truth, or a precise definition or a catchy slogan, but as story. . . Story is an invitation to participate, first through our imagination and then, if we will, by faith, with our total lives in response to God.... When we submit our lives to what we read in scripture, we find that we are not being led to see God in our stories, but our stories in God’s. God is the larger context and plot in which our stories find themselves.”

~Eugene Peterson (1932-2018), pastor, scholar and author

“Christ was sent not to mend wounded people or wake sleepy people or advise confused people or inspire bored people or spur on lazy people or educate ignorant people, but to raise dead people.”

~Dane C. Ortlund in his book *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers*

“By opening our lives to God in Christ, we become new creatures. This experience, which Jesus spoke of as the new birth, is essential if we are to be transformed nonconformists. . . Only through an inner spiritual transformation do we gain the strength to fight vigorously the evils of the world in a humble and loving spirit.”

~Martin Luther King, Jr (1929-1968), slain civil rights leader

“This world is a great sculptor’s shop. We are the statues and there is a rumour going round the shop that some of us are some day going to come to life.”

~C.S. Lewis, Oxford scholar in *Mere Christianity* (1952)

“When we are powerless to do a thing, it is a great joy that we can come and step inside the ability of Jesus.”

~Corrie Ten Boom (1892-1983), writer, survivor of a Nazi concentration camp

SERMON – “Born from Above” – *Pastor Don Willeman*

SERMON PASSAGE – *John 3:1-9 (ESV)*

John 2

²³ Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. ²⁴ But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people ²⁵ and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

John 3

¹ Now 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.” ³ Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” 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, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 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.’ ⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

⁹ “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

¹⁰ “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? ¹¹ Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not

accept our testimony. ¹² I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. ¹⁴ Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. ¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

John 1

¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.