



MESSAGE NOTES

PRACTICAL TEACHING FOR EVERYDAY LIVING

Title: **Culture and the Kingdom of God**
Series: **A Tale of Two Cities**
Text: John 3:1-8
Speaker: **Rob Songer** Date: **August 30, 2026**

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. 2 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."

3 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."

4 "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!"

5 Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' 8 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." (Jn 3:1-8).

We all are influenced by the culture around us. That was true in Nicodemus' day, and it is still true today. And we are called as followers of Jesus to be formed in ways where our lives will be an _____ in the culture around us.

In John's gospel account he was writing mostly to Gentiles for one primary reason. That we might _____ **and have** _____!

"Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

John 20:30-31

John also wanted us to understand that as believers in Jesus, we **do our** _____ in our marriages and with our families. We do our believing in our businesses, at school, in the grocery stores and in the neighborhood.

So then, the _____ we live in is the _____ where we do our believing.

Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin. He was a man who had great influence, but who had been greatly influenced by the culture in that day.

Notice the major groups of that day.

- _____ - Middle Class lay scholars who controlled the synagogues and believed in the oral tradition.
- _____ - Aristocratic priests who collaborated with Rome and controlled the temple and the Sanhedrin. Held to the written Torah
- _____ - Dessert Monks who believed that the whole system was corrupt and withdrew from society.
- _____ - political freedom fighters who were set on defeating Rome and had the Sicarii political assassins.

Nicodemus wanted to talk about _____ and _____.

“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.” John 3:2

Jesus wanted to talk about _____ and the _____ in the Kingdom of God.

“Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.” John 3:3

When you are born again it is not that you just believed something new, or thought something new, it was a **miracle of** _____ that was greater than your first birth. We are born into a **completely new** _____.

And when we are born again into the Kingdom of God, we are born into a family. The _____.

“To all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” John 1:12

Doing life together in the family of God is God’s _____ to the culture.

Being children of God, it is God’s design that we should become **people of** _____ in the world and in the _____ all around us.

- **“You are the salt of the earth.”** Matthew 5:13
- **“You are the light of the world... a city on a hill”** Matthew 5:14