

YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN

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John 3:1-3

So, we're not even one month into 2022 and already one website has counted 78 celebrities have passed away this year, 78. So the names include Sidney Portier, comedians like Louis Anderson and Bob Saget, the singer Meatloaf and a man named Peter Robbins who is the voice of Charlie Brown. See, death is the destiny of all of us and yet it's tragic and it's a jarring reality we all deal with from time to time. When a person dies, the question is what happens next? Do they just disappear because all that we are is physical? Are they reincarnated? Do they become like a plant or a bug or an animal or another human or something else? Do they become a ghost and haunt their enemies?

If you were to go to one of these funerals of one of these celebrities, it is inevitable that you would hear somebody say something like, "She's smiling down on us from heaven." Or, "He's making God laugh with his jokes." Or he's surfing the perfect waves or playing the perfect music or having the best time right now. I mean, do people, is that true? Do people go to a place like heaven? What about hell? Is that just a figment of our imagination or is that a real place too? Well, no one talks more in the Bible about heaven and hell than Jesus did. He seemed to think those are one of the two places that is the destiny of every person. So since we're all going to die the question should be, what? How do I not go to hell and how do I go to heaven when I die?

See, the greatest authority on heaven and hell that ever lived is Jesus. He is the greatest authority because he created both places. Right? And he's the greatest authority because he came from heaven, rose from the dead, ascended back into heaven where he is right now. And since he talked about how to go to heaven, as heaven's greatest authority it might be a good idea if we paid close attention to him. Right? So we're going to do that in John Chapter 3. And when we do that, we'll learn right off the bat that to go to heaven you must be born again. You want to go to heaven, you must be born again. There are many good things you don't have to have in order to go to heaven. You don't have to have a lot of knowledge of the Bible, even though it would be great for you to have.

You don't need to be baptized to go to heaven though Jesus himself, the Lord himself said, commanded, "Go be baptized." You don't need to go through confirmation to go to heaven. You don't need to take communion to go to heaven. You don't need to go to church to go to heaven. You don't need to give to your local church to go to heaven. You don't need to go on a missions trip. You don't need to serve in ministry, but you need to be born again or you will not go to heaven when you die. Period. Now, John 3, where we're going to learn this, is the first of many long speeches in the book of John. You can see this, especially if you have red letters, the whole chapter is red letters almost. And this this conversation that Jesus has took place when Jesus was in Jerusalem celebrating the Passover. And it happened after Jesus cleaned out the temple of its corruption. In Chapter 2, verse 23, it says that Jesus is doing miracles and scores of people were believing in him, but not really believing in him.

Oh, they're impressed with him. They admire him. They think he's great. They thought he was amazing, but that wasn't coming to him as savior. That wasn't trusting in him as Lord. It wasn't that at all. They're excited there's a real miracle worker doing real miracles in their midst. And Nicodemus was one of those people. That's why when we started in verse 23, you could see man,

man, man, and then verse 3 there was a man of the Pharisees, this man came. He is one of these people who believe in Jesus, but don't really believe. Who got caught up in all the miracles, all the signs, but didn't quite catch what those signs were pointing to, which is namely that the one who's doing those miracles is the Christ. He's the King of the world and he is the Son of God. He is God in a body.

Let's learn about Nicodemus, look at verse 1. He is a representative of Jewish religion, and really he's a representative of the very best of the best of all of humanity. Verse 1, "Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews." From this text we know that Nicodemus is part of Israel's elite. He lives in Jerusalem, the capital city, he's a Pharisee it says there. There's only about 6,000 of those, this group of men known for their strict commitment to obeying God's law, which is the first five books of the Bible. And not only obeying God's law, but the traditions of the elders, which helps you understand and obey those laws. How do you apply these laws to real life? The traditions of the elders helped with that. And the Pharisees are like, we follow all of it. The word means the separated ones. Guess who they're separated from?

All the riff raff that don't really take God seriously. We take him seriously, not all of you, we're the ones who really follow this we're fanatical about it. Now, if you know the story of Jesus you know that they become Jesus' most bitter rivals, right? But that hadn't happened at this point in Jesus life yet. And they as a popular movement, they have the ear of the people. They're not part of the elite, the aristocracy, most of them came from the middle class of Jewish society which gives them influence with the people. So they have influence with the massive people at the time, but they don't have power. Nicodemus though, he had both, because while being a Pharisee, verse 1 says he's also a what? He's a ruler, right? You see that? Which means that he's likely one of the 70 men on the Jewish Supreme Court called the Sanhedrin. So because he's on that group, he's a ruler, that means he is well off. He's well born and he is very well respected in the community.

To be a ruler means that unlike most of the Pharisees, he is part of the elite. He is an aristocrat, part of a noble family line, part of the elite inner circle of Jewish society at the time. Then add to all that, 3:10. Look at 3:10. Jesus, notice, calls him the teacher of Israel, the teacher. So he may have been the best known, most gifted, most admired Bible teacher of his day. So this is a real man, Nicodemus. He's a good man, a moral man, a religious man, a devout man, he's influential and even powerful. He is in all respects the very best of the best at the time. He represents Jewish religion at its best and really could just be the very best of men. However, based on what Jesus says to him in verse 3, it is clear that when it comes to going to heaven when you die, you must admit your resume of good works is useless. Admit your resume of good works is useless. Why? Nicodemus had an incredibly impressive resume of good works, right?

On top of that, he's got this pedigree and accomplishments, and none of that meant anything for going to heaven. And in the same way, our accomplishments, the things that we are told to be proud of, things that distinguish you from other people, the stars next to your name, the good deeds, the good intentions, the good feelings about yourself, all of it is useless, meaningless, worthless, less than nothing. The things we admire, the things that we stand in awe of, things we put people on a pedestal for, all of that contributes nothing for going to heaven. Galatians 2:6 says quote, "By the works of the law," by obeying the law as strictly as a Pharisee even, "By the works of the law, no one will be justified." Not a single person will be made right with God by their obedience. Titus 3:5 puts it even more clearly, "God saved us not because of works done by

us." Let me say that again, God saved us not because of works done by us. I remember saying that to my grandma and she goes, "That's not true."

I'm like, "Yeah, it is Grandma. It's in the Bible. It's right there. It's true." "No, no, you've got to be baptized. You've got to go through confirmation. You've got to do all of these things." I said, "No, no, no, what does it say? He saved us not because of works done by us, but because of his mercy." 2 Timothy 1:9, "God saved us not because of our works." Well, how many people are trying to be saved by their works? How many people are there that try to show God their resume of good works as this is just obvious proof, God, that I deserve to be in heaven. A couple hundred people alive right now, a couple thousand? Let's try a couple billion, right? This is the major idea that most people have. I've got my resume of good works. I'm just going to show God that as he standing there letting... And see God, I should be here because look at how good I am.

God has given them life and breath and everything else, including every good thing they have ever experienced. The amount of blessing human beings, every human has experienced is enormous. And in the face of all that blessing we try to pay God back with our good works. That's not a good idea. I mean, if we're going to give a dollar amount to all of God's blessings, all of them, what kind, what dollar amount would you give for that? 20 bucks? Probably a little more, right? A 1000 bucks? Like all of God's blessings, put it together, a dollar amount, a 1000 bucks? Nah, probably not. Probably closer to like 20 billion bucks. Right? For all that we've experienced, every good thing, put it all together, 20 billion. Every time your heart beat and it's good, right? That's more goodness that he gives you. Wow.

So God gives us 20 billion in blessings, and it's a good idea if we slip him a nickel of our good works to say, "Hey, thanks for those. Thanks for that." I mean, that's not good. Can you imagine somebody gifts you 20 billion dollars? Somebody like you've been rebellious against them, you have not followed them, you've not done anything that he said, but out of his kindness gives you 20 billion and you're like, "Wow, that's amazing. You know, I've got a nickel right here. Hey, thanks so much for that. That's just so nice of you. Here's a little something to say thanks." That's not a good idea. Right? That's a really bad idea. That's gross. That's offensive. So can we admit that our resume of good works, all our accomplishments, all the good things that we've done are useless when it comes to impressing God so that we can go to heaven.

I mean, if we can't admit this, if you can't admit this, it's either because you've got a very low view of your sin or a very low view of God's holiness or you've got a very inflated view of yourself. Either way you're in need of this admission. Your resume of good works may make you feel good about yourself, but it is useless for getting you into heaven when you die. Listen, good works are always the result of salvation. Good works are never the reason for salvation. I'm going to say that again. This is the critical distinction for all human beings on the planet. Okay? Good works are never, I'm sorry, good works are always the result of salvation, they are never the reason for salvation, never. Your resume of good works, your birth, your influence, your bank account, your accomplishments, all of that may be impressive here.

But when Nicodemus, the best of the best came to Jesus, he was not impressed. He still, Nicodemus still fell short. He needed something else. Just like he wasn't impressed with Nicodemus' credentials, he won't be impressed with yours if you try to slip him that good work nickel when you stand before him. Admit today, right now, that your resume of good works is useless. It's meaningless. It cannot do a single thing to get you into heaven. Now, let's look next at the respect that Nicodemus pays Jesus. Verse 2, "This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you're a teacher come from God for no one can do the signs that you

do unless God is with him." So let's break down each little chunk here. Notice it says that he came to Jesus by night. There's like, I read like six different reasons for why Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, to try to get into his head, like he was afraid of what people would think about him.

Afraid of the religious authorities speaking against him. He came by night because he wanted to have a long conversation and didn't want to get, like be around all the crowds. Or, John is creating allegory here, like Nicodemus is leaving the darkness of religion and entering the light of truth or whatever. All of that is silly. If it was important, John would've told us why he showed up by night. Now we can't know why he came to Jesus. We can't get into his head, but we know that he came to Jesus and we know it was at night and that's all we need to know. All right? And I notice also the word we in verse 2, "we know that you are a teacher". You notice that? There's somebody online who's like, "I never saw that we before." You see that there? We, that means he's not just speaking for himself. He's speaking on behalf of other people, maybe the Pharisees or the Sanhedrin. Maybe just people in general.

Hey Jesus, the public opinion about you is you're a teacher. Notice he calls him Rabbi and teacher, both titles of respect. Right? But both titles that apply to who else other than Jesus? To him, right? That's who he is. He's the teacher of Israel. He's the rabbi. So it's like he's saying, "Jesus, you're a rabbi. I'm a rabbi. Let's talk rabbi to rabbi." See, I don't think he's being disrespectful, I think he's like the people in Chapter 2 verse 25, he's impressed with Jesus, he even calls him a rabbi when Jesus is a carpenter, right? Jesus didn't go to the fancy rabbi schools. So by him even using this title for Jesus, he's elevating Jesus. He's saying like you're not just a common like carpenter, you, you are a rabbi. There's something special about you.

Unlike the Pharisees we're going to see in the coming chapters, he's gracious, he's kind, he's respectful. He shows Jesus honor as an equal even. He has accurate knowledge of Jesus too. Notice verse 2 again, "You come from God and God is with you." So he has accurate knowledge of Jesus, he has respect for Jesus. One author put it this way, he said Nicodemus is a gentleman. He's paying Jesus a sincere compliment and he's a thinker because he is watching Jesus' life and ministry and going you know what? There's something special about you. There's something different about you. You must be from God and God must be with you. It could be that he even sees Jesus as a prophet. And why he says this about God is, what he's saying is God is endorsing you. God is with you. He's working through you. He blesses your ministry and so I want to know who are you?

And those miracles, notice verse 2 also, "No one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." Translation, I'm an eyewitness of your miracles and they're real. They're legit miracles. When you think about it, Nicodemus knows the Bible so well he's able to examine whether or not miracles are true miracles. He's able to examine whether or not Jesus meets the criteria for a real teacher, maybe even a prophet, but Nicodemus is also part of the ruling elite, the Pharisees and the Sanhedrin, people that may not have been really happy with Jesus, especially after what he did with that temple thing. Right? Cleans that whole thing out. They're probably not thinking, "Jesus, he's great." Here's Nicodemus who knows, who knows the Bible well, who's from a group of people who may not have been super happy with Jesus at this point, and even he says you're the real thing. Again, this is respectful. He shows him honor for his ministry and all of that is great.

But based on verse 3, none of that means a person is going to heaven. Or the way I put it for point 2) Assume respect for Jesus is useless too. Assume respect for Jesus is useless too. It's nice

to respect Jesus. It's great if you're an admirer, if you're a fan of Jesus, but it means nothing at all when it comes to going to heaven when you die. See now, modern people, there are parts of the Bible that modern people read and they're there's no way that that could have happened. I have an iPhone, I have a refrigerator, air conditioning, there's no way that kind of stuff could happen. You know, like demons. Well, according to the New Testament demons are real. And when you watch the way that demons interact with Jesus, you see these demons are very respectful. They call him honorable titles like the Holy One of God. That's an affirmation of deity. They call them the Son of the Most High God, also an affirmation of deity.

They don't speak down to Jesus either. They actually beg him to do things. They don't command him, they beg him. If you're going to do something, please do this. And when he says what he wants them to do, they don't resist. What do they do? Immediate without hesitation obedience. Just like your kids, right? Yeah! They know the truth about who Jesus is. They respond to that truth in ways that are exactly accurate to who Jesus is. They are respectful and they will never spend a second in heaven. How many people respect Jesus? But if they're honest, that's where their thoughts about him end. How many people? Again, we're like in the billions, right, in trying to answer that question. People who think he's a great teacher and praise him for being a revolutionary, overturning the status quo, liberating the oppressed, speaking truth of power, all that stuff. They respect his teachings. They respect his example. They respect his conviction, like he's willing to die for what he believes.

Others respect him as a prophet. Right? That's like 1 billion people right there. They say he came from God, who affirm that God is with him, that God is in all that he did and said. Others still, and on top of all that, like the demons they know he is the Son of God. They know he is the Savior of the world. They know that his death takes away sin. They know that he rose from the dead, ascended into heaven is coming back again. They know all of that, all of that respect. And if that's where it ends, there's not a single person in those groups who are saved if respect is all they have for Jesus. Again, think about Nicodemus, very respectful of Jesus. Maybe even calling him a prophet that God himself is helping and empowering and working through, but again, based on verse 3, it's not enough is it? So if we can assume that demons won't be in heaven, can we, like that's like normal, right? We can assume that? It's a very valid assumption.

And if we can assume, we can see in Nicodemus' resume of good works and in his respect for Jesus, that both weren't enough for heaven, which Jesus makes clear in verse 3, then we should also assume that people who treat Jesus with the respect like demons and Nicodemus had for Jesus, that they're not going to be in heaven either if that's all it is. We cannot mistake respect for Jesus with regeneration. Verse 3, "Jesus answered him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.'" There's a lot of truth packed in that verse. So I'm going to try to unpack all of it right now. First, I want you to notice Nicodemus did not ask a question, but what did Jesus do? What does it say? He answered him. Why? Because he knows that Nicodemus has questions. 2:24 says that he knows all people. He reads their minds. He knows everything about everyone.

And a guy like Nicodemus, what do we know about people at this time, Jewish people at this time, we know that they're looking for the Messiah. We know that John the Baptist is stoking the fires of this preaching to all kinds of people, thousands and thousands, the Messiah is coming. And when the Messiah comes he brings with him what? He brings with him the kingdom. And this is what they're looking for, the Messiah to bring a kingdom, the kingdom of God. Let me briefly unpack what does that phrase mean, the kingdom of God, the 3 things really quick. 1.It

means the rule of God. So when it comes to the kingdom of God, it is the rule of God over residents, 2. R Is residents who live in a region of land. So if you have a kingdom, you've got rule over residents and a region. And this is what every Jewish person at the time waited for because that's what the Old Testament says will happen.

God will either do it himself or he will send his servant, which we know in the New Testament, God himself is the servant of YAHWEH. That he will send his servant, the servant will arrive, he will destroy Israel's enemies, establish his kingdom in Jerusalem and the reign from Jerusalem will spread all over the world. This is what Nicodemus and all the Jews at the time were waiting for. And when Jesus was here, he got the kingdom started. How? Because here's the rule of the king, calling people to himself, establishing residents in the kingdom. And then one day when he returns, he will rule over a region of land, which will start in Jerusalem and will spread to the outermost parts of the earth. So between now and then, what happens to residents in the kingdom? Well when they die, they're born again so when they die they go to heaven where they await their resurrection when they return. And then they're resurrected and they enter the thousand year reign of Jesus in his kingdom. Nicodemus believes all of that.

And he says, "Jesus, you're a rabbi and you're a teacher." And Jesus goes, "Okay, I'm going to teach you something right now and I'm going to blow your mind. You're not expecting this at all." Verse 3, "Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." And with those 18 words, Nicodemus' entire theology, his understanding of reality is turned upside down. Why? Because he thinks everyone's going to be in the kingdom who is what? Jewish. You're Jewish then you're in, unless you just completely walk away from God or you are excessively wicked. If you don't fall into those two categories, you are going to be in the kingdom. And Jesus goes, uh, No."

Truly, truly, meaning this is a fact, this is certain, this is essential. Notice, Truly, Truly I say to you, the one you called teacher and rabbi, the one you said is from God, the one you said God is with, the one we know from chapters 1 and 2 is God who became a human being, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, the King of the world, this one says to you unless you are born again you will not see, you cannot see the kingdom of God. Think about that. He says that to the very best of the best of his day. He's got a resume, like the descendant of Abraham, strict follower of the law of Moses, is a Pharisee, this wonderful birth in the Jewish aristocracy, wealthy and justice on the Supreme Court in Jerusalem, the city of God, and none of that will help him. None of it. And don't miss this.

We might approach being born again and think that's for the worst of the worst, right? You know, like the drug addicts and the street walkers, the homeless, politicians, like they need, they need that kind of thing. They need to be born again. But Nicodemus, he's moral, he's spiritual. He's a godly man. He's powerful and wealthy. He just needs like a little push. Like he's right there on the edge, he just needs like, oh, here's a little push, just a couple of minor adjustments, that's all he needs. Right? Wrong. Whether it's the worst of the worst or the best of the best or everyone in between, you must be born again or you cannot see the kingdom of God. He doesn't need, He doesn't need a radical change, just some minor tweaks. No, whether it's the happy and the depressed, the fulfilled and the empty, the satisfied and the frustrated, the healthy and the broken, the religious and the irreligious, you must be born again.

And don't miss those three words in verse 3, the words one, cannot, and unless. Together these words make it clear that to go to heaven, you must, point 3) Accept being born again as heaven's requirement. Point 3) Accept being born again as heaven's requirement. There is one

indispensable reality that must be true for you if you're going to go to heaven when you die, you must be born again. It is essential. It is required. It is mandatory. And there are no exceptions whatsoever. You must be born again. Your good works don't cause this. Respect for Jesus doesn't cause this. According to John 1:13, it has nothing to do with your ancestry, has nothing to do with your choice, your desires, or your abilities. It has nothing to do with what you want or what others want for you.

Like your first birth, you contribute nothing to this. To be born again is to be born from God, to be born from above, born by the spirit, born anew, all of which means it's born a second time. This is a supernatural act of God's grace. This is not something done by you, this is done for you. This is an act of God's grace where he does two things. He purifies the sinner from sin's corruption. And number two, he gives the sinner spiritual life. This is a total renovation because sin has totally infected every part of us. There's no part of us that remains unaffected by sin. So there's nothing in us that is not sinful. So we need more than minor surgery, a few slight corrections, we need an utterly new birth, and that makes you a different person. Just like you received your life and your human nature from your parents, so you receive God's life, and 2 Peter 1:4 says you receive God's very nature when you're born again. We'll talk more about the details of that next week.

Today is about the necessity of the new birth, that it happens for you, happens for me, is essential, or there is no heaven. Let's go back to those three words. One, cannot, and unless. From these three words we learned 3 truths about being born again. Notice the first word, one, from that word we learned that being born again is, has an unlimited application. Verse 3, "Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." In other words, that word ONE points to the fact that this applies to all people at every time in every place in history. There are no exceptions whatsoever. Jewish people and not Jewish people, men and women, rich and poor, every ethnicity. People in the city of Jerusalem that day to the outermost parts of the earth, everyone, everywhere must be, has to be, it is absolutely required that they be born again or they cannot experience or even see the kingdom.

2) from the word CANNOT, we learn that without being born again heaven is a complete impossibility. Notice what it says, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. The word cannot speaks to ability. No one has the ability to see the kingdom without first being born again. And this is the issue, right? Having the ability by my good works, having my, the ability by my respect for Jesus. That's enough to get me in right? Wrong. You must be born again. 3) from the word UNLESS we learn that being born again is a mandatory requirement. Verse 3, "Unless one is born again." This must happen first. Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom. In order to see the kingdom, he must be born again. Look at verse 5. He says the same thing in a different way, "Unless one is born of water and the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

And then look at verse seven, Jesus says, "Do not marvel that I said to you," You what? You what? Must be born again. This is a mandatory requirement. This condition must be met or there is no heaven. A has to happen before B. Being born again must happen before entering the kingdom. It must happen or there is no kingdom. This reality must be a reality of yours or you will not enter. You must be born again. And by the way, this means that there are no Christians who aren't born again. So calling someone a born again Christian is like saying something is a round circle. It's like, duh, yeah, it's round. Circles are round. Calling someone a married spouse. It's just redundant. So to be born again is to be a Christian. There are no unborn again Christians.

Oh, there are lots of people who think they're Christians who aren't born again, but there's not a single born again non-Christian.

To be born again is to be a Christian is to be saved. And this also means born again is not a type of Christian. Like there's Christians and then there's these wacky born agains. Right? You've heard that right? That's why you're laughing. Oh, I'm a Christian. I'm not one of those born agains, though. If you're not born again, you're not a Christian. Born again is not a type of Christian. You're either born again or lost. So, do you accept this as a, as heaven's requirement? You should automatically accept it, right? Why? Because Jesus said it. Right? See, my job is to simply tell you what Jesus said so you can take what he said and examine your life and see if those things match or if your life and his words are in conflict. And if we don't like it, if we don't agree, that kind of doesn't matter. Right?

Why? The text here does say we're talking about a kingdom and Jesus is talking about a kingdom because he's what? He's a King. And if we kind of don't agree with the King, well, you're wrong. Right? Well, I don't really like that. I want there to be some other way to go to heaven. Well, when you're a King, you go ahead and make new rules. You make another way to get to heaven, but you're never going to be King because this King is all mighty. He has all might all power, which means he can't be overthrown. And heaven is his home. And as his home, he sets the terms for what he makes it clear, here's what it means. Here's what it takes. Here's the requirement to get into heaven and it is mandatory. There are no exceptions.

It's like this. Imagine there was an assassination attempt on our president and that day there is a new law passed that only people born in the United States can see the president. Okay? So I mean, we don't trust anybody else. We only trust people who are born in the US and because of that, only US born citizens can see the president. Well, imagine you're born in China, but you want to see the president and you're told what? You weren't born here. You're not going to see the president. Well, what if you respond I love America. I'll change my name to an American name. I'll get rid of my accent. I will speak a hundred percent like an American. I'll stop dressing like a Chinese person. I will wear the clothing of Americans. I will learn your history backwards and forwards. I'll become a citizen. I will have plastic surgery so you could not even tell that I'm from China. You will think this is an American.

If the law is you must be born in the US to see the president, what will the answer to all of that be? You will not see the president because you were not born here. The law, the requirement, is absolute. So you want to go to heaven when you die, you must be born again. But I'll change my sinful ways. You must be born again. I'll stop looking and acting like the world. I'll act like a Christian. I'll speak like a Christian. You must be born again. Well, I'll learn the Bible. I'll know it backwards and forwards. I will memorize the whole thing. You must be born again. I love Jesus though. I respect him. He's the best. He's the greatest. You must be born again. Listen to me. Are you born again? If you're not or you're not sure if you've been transformed, if you're not sure that you can say I was this person but I'm different now, I'm not the same person I used to be. If you're not sure if God himself lives inside of you and is changing you, please talk to somebody here.

Talk to me. I'll be here. Talk to somebody next to you. Make sure that you can answer this question with an affirmative because there is no eternal life, there's no salvation, no heaven when you die, no returning with Jesus, no kingdom in the future, unless you are born again. This is one of, if not the most important chapter, in the entire Bible, because the theme is nothing less than eternity and how to make sure your eternity is a good one, and it won't be even for one second

unless you are born again. So are you born again? There's no more important question to ask. There is no more important question to answer. And there is no more important question to answer with a yes than that one. So are you born again? Let's pray.

Jesus, it is critical, like I prayed at the beginning, that you help us not only understand your word, but understand how our lives should respond to your word. A message like this blitz people into those who have been born again and those who have not. So Jesus, for those who have been born again, I pray that a text like this will cause gratitude and worship because you, in the words of John 1:12, you've given us the right to become children of God. We were born again. We will truly spend all of eternity thanking you for that gift. And so, may the gratitude of eternity fill our hearts as we reflect on our own testimony and see that we were dead and we were made alive. We were lost and we were found. We were, we became a new creation by your grace when we were born again.

And for any in the sound of my voice who hearing a message like this are not sure if they're born again or know for a fact that they are not, would you please, would you please be gracious to them and help them see this? Not to push it away, but may it be something that they are obsessed with, that doesn't leave their mind, that torments them until they come to you and beg you for your grace. Throwing themselves at your mercy. Be merciful to me, the sinner. Jesus, this is fact, you said it truly, truly. What is written here is fact from the God of the universe, you. Give us the grace that we need to see ourselves in light of these truths for the glory of your name. Amen.