

Throughout Bible, God's family connected regularly to share how they see God working, encourage one another, and turn to God. At Trinity Church, we do this in 'small groups.' You can find a small group to connect with on our website at www.trinityonline.org.

FOR THIS WEEK

We are going to be talking about a famous statement from Jesus: "You must be born again." If you haven't yet, listen to the message from February 7, 2021. You can hear it through our website or on "Youtube."

LEARN FROM GOD'S WORD

We are on a journey through one of the accounts of Jesus' life and mission, "The Gospel of John." In the previous two chapters, we saw an overview of who Jesus is, His connection with a few followers, and some early "signs" that Jesus was ushering in something completely new. We ended the chapter with an assessment from Jesus, that "He knew all people" (2:24) and though people were seeing His miracles and seeming to put their faith in Him, he knew it was at best a tentative faith.

READ JOHN 3:1-13

Summarize the story of verses 1-4 (who, when, what, etc.).

How did Nicodemus initially view Jesus? What do you make of his approach to Jesus? What do you think he was hoping to do or know?

How did Jesus reply? Why might this be? (3)

What is Nicodemus' response to Jesus' statement? (4) What might this reveal about those who were in the "the Jewish ruling council," the 70 men who were most trained and studied in the Mosaic law? (See also 3:10)

NOTE: The word translated as “born again” (anothen) can be translated as “born again” or “born from above.” In this passage, the author uses it to mean both. First, Nicodemus understands it to mean “again” and Jesus doesn’t correct him. Then, in 3:31, Jesus clearly understands it to mean “born from above,” meaning from God. So both meanings apply to this passage.

In verses 5-6, Jesus responds with a statement to explain his statement about being “born again” by providing a parallel statement:

“Be born again” + parallel statement “Be born of water and the spirit”

“See the kingdom of God” + parallel statement “enter the kingdom of God”

“Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.”

Jesus implied that an expert in, professor of, and ruler over the understanding of the Old Testament Scripture should “not be surprised” (vs.7, 10) at the above statements. Read the following Scriptures and summarize what the Scriptures might explain about Jesus’ statements.

Isaiah 44:3-5

Joel 2:28

Ezekiel 36:25-27

Titus 3:4-7

NOTE: We learn from verses 6-7 that “human birth produces people who belong to the earthly family of humankind, but not to the children of God. Only the Spirit gives birth to spirit.” (D. A. Carson, “The Gospel according to John,” p. 196) God through the Holy Spirit can cleanse people and give them a new spirit.

From what you have read or heard in the message on Sunday, how would you summarize what Jesus meant by “born again” and “born of water and the spirit?”

What do we learn about spiritual birth John 1:12 and Romans 8:14?

What eventually happens in Nicodemus life? (See John 19:38-39)

What do we learn about the Holy Spirit from Ezekiel 37:1-5?

What qualifies Jesus to speak about heavenly things? Is there anyone else in history, before or since, who qualifies as He does?

DISCUSS TOGETHER

When was the first time you heard this statement? What did it mean to you then? When did it become significant to you?

What do we learn about Jesus from this week's passage?

How might being steeped in religious tradition be a dangerous thing? How might this distance us from God?

What do we learn about conversion stories from Nicodemus' life? How is this helpful to us?

PRAYERS FOR THIS WEEK

- Pray for your group's adopted global workers who regularly encounter Nicodemuses
- Pray for our elders as they pray and consider next steps at Trinity Church
- Pray for God's insight, strength and wisdom for our Micah House teams