



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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A Conversation with Nicodemus!

Lesson Text: John 3:1-21

Focus Verses: John 3:14-15 - ¹⁴And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: ¹⁵That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Truth About Covenant: This new covenant calls us to new life through water baptism and Spirit baptism.

Covenant Context: Not long after Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, He met with an elite religious leader named Nicodemus and introduced the new covenant to him. Despite humanity's constant rebellion, God still wanted to be in covenant with us, and He was revealing what that new covenant would look like: born of water and born of the Spirit. Thankfully God is still inviting us to be born again.

John 3 introduces Nicodemus who was a Pharisee, a ruler, or leader, of the Jews. It seems strange to see a respected religious leader slinking about in the darkness. He was not only walking in **physical** darkness but also in **spiritual** darkness. As a Pharisee, Nicodemus had spent many hours studying the Law, but his intense study still did not prepare him for the message Jesus brought. However, unlike many other Pharisees, Nicodemus wished to learn more of what Jesus taught. His hunger for truth caused him to risk his reputation among the religious elite of his day. Nicodemus had seen the miracles Jesus was performing and recognized they could not have been done without the power of God.

Nicodemus came to Jesus with preconceptions about what it meant to live for God. We are not much different. Often we come before God with our own preconceived ideas. We try to fit God within the confines of what our human minds can comprehend, but God does not fit within our confines. Speaking through the prophet Isaiah, God said: *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, . . . For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways"* (Isaiah 55:8-9). We should not expect God to behave exactly as we think He should. **Instead, we should study His Word and submit ourselves to it.** God will repeatedly extend to us opportunities to trust Him, even when He is turning our deeply held preconceptions entirely upside down.

What did Jesus teach, you must be born again. Jesus explained to Nicodemus that a man must be *"born of water and of the Spirit"* (John 3:5). Without this new-birth experience, no one would be able to enter the kingdom of God. Jesus was introducing the way anyone who believes on Him can enter a new covenant and new life with Him. **Jesus was clear that this new birth of water and Spirit was the only way to enter into this covenant.** Jesus' invitation to experience a new birth still extends to us today. Although we were first born into sin, we can be born again into righteousness. After our new birth, sin no longer has dominion over our lives (Romans 6:14). In 2 Corinthians 5:17, Paul wrote that *"old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."*

Nicodemus defended Jesus to the Sanhedrin (John 7:45-51). He helped bury the body of Jesus (John 19:39-40) and was alongside Joseph of Arimathea at the foot of the cross. As we pursue our own covenant relationship with Jesus, we should draw strength from the passionate and selfless commitment Nicodemus made to Jesus the day of the Crucifixion. Regardless of the cost of the sacrifice, following Jesus is always worth it. Following Jesus is never without resistance and it often comes with persecution. Some may mock us, like many of the Pharisees mocked Nicodemus. However, when we enter into covenant with Jesus and experience the new birth He purchased for us on the cross, we will find joy and satisfaction the world can never give and the world can never take away.

Every day God impacts the lives of men and women across the globe, inviting them into covenant with Him. Many times those who seem the furthest from God find their way into His presence because deep within they have a longing for the things of God. **Even the apostle Paul, who once set out to murder Christians and destroy their faith, stands as testimonies that the new-birth experience is for everyone, if only they are willing to respond in faith-filled obedience.**

Our new-birth experience must not end with us. We should begin to invite others to experience it for themselves. When we are born again, we have the opportunity to share the gospel with others and disciple them into followers of Jesus Christ. Then together we can choose to embrace our lives as new creatures in Christ. Doing so, we build the kingdom of God and experience what it truly means to be and to live born again.