

You Must Be Born Again – John 3 – 30 Oct 2011

Today, is a special Sunday, as mentioned, later on at 1 PM, some 38 of our brethren, from the various congregations here, would be entering the waters of baptism and it is a day for us to rejoice because, all of them are declaring in their lives, they have received Jesus and they have been changed and they have been born again. So, it is a cause for celebration.

One of them, or rather, many of them will be sharing their testimonies and I have included excerpts of their testimonies in a separate sheet of paper that has been given to you. Usually, we give out a newsletter and besides that, we also give this morning a sheet of paper containing the excerpts of the testimonies of our brethren. We want to share this with you so that you may be encouraged to also seek and find the Lord in your life so that you may enter also into salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now, I want to share with you one of them, alright and it is written by a young man named Reuben, and this is what he wrote. He said:

“being born in a Christian family didn’t make me a Christian and it never will. Still, for the first 14 years of my life, I professed to know Jesus Christ as my Savior and claimed to be a Christian. I’ve never done drugs; I don’t smoke, get drunk or even drink alcohol. I have never committed murder or theft.” “But not having done any of these things, it still never made me a Christian – because I was never truly born again.

Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Reuben Tan

The last statement, made by Reuben is taken from the story of the Bible. The story depicts an encounter between the Lord Jesus Christ and a man named Nicodemus and Jesus said to Nicodemus, “You must be born again.” I think Nicodemus, must be quite a senior man. Certainly not a man of my age, a man much older than myself. Yet Jesus said to the senior man, Nicodemus, you need to be born again, you must be born again.”

And that the same thing Reuben realized in his life. I have grown up in a Christian family, my parents are Christians, I am a church goer but I was not born again and Jesus say, I must be born again. And so it is for myself and I said so it is for you. The story we are going to consider between Jesus and Nicodemus is not just a story for

interests sake. The sentence, the statement made by the Lord Jesus Christ is eternally true. You must be born again. So, as we look at this story, this encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus, I hope you will not just be hearing about it, but you will be saying to yourself, this is what God is speaking into my life? This is a message from God to you, "You must be born again."

You know, Nicodemus is a very interesting man. In fact, the Bible does tell us quite some details about his life. The Bible says in John 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

He is quite an impressive man. He's I think, the top dog of Israel in this time. The Bible says, he is a ruler of the Jews. Now in those days, Israel, was ruled by a group of people called the Sanhedrin. It is made up of some 70 wise, respected men and they are the elders, they are the leaders of the nation. So, 70 of them formed the Sanhedrin. Nicodemus, is one of the 70. He's a ruler of the Jews. So, surely he is a man who has standing and stature. He's a man who is respected, he's a man who would be admired, a respectable man. The Bible does tell us also that Nicodemus is probably a rather wealthy man. Later on, in the Bible, you will read of him coming to embalm the body of Jesus with 100 pounds of spices. That's quite a weight to carry a besides being heavy, it is also very costly and it would take someone of quite great means to be able to purchase hundred pounds of spices. Nicodemus could; he's a rich man. In fact, tradition tells us, that Nicodemus is probably one of the three richest men of Israel. So here, is quite an impressive figure, a ruler of the Jews, a man who is rich.

But besides that, he is a very religious man as well. He's religious, the Bible tells us, he's a man of the Pharisees. The Pharisees, are a group of religious people, who set themselves apart from the world to practice their religion. They are the people were very meticulous with the keeping of the law, the way they understand it. They set themselves apart to study the Bible, to study the Scriptures. Ever since young, they will be memorizing the Word of God, they will be taking great care to practice it in their own lives, they would want to be separate from the world, they were a very religious people and Nicodemus is a Pharisee.

I don't think he was rich because he was involved in theft or in murder or in things like that. He's a respectable man, which man and also a religious man. In fact, his name is quite revealing. His name Nicodemus means victor or conqueror. He's like a number one guy in Israel. So, if you think about achievements, accolades, status, standing, Nicodemus has it all.

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But Nicodemus, had a niggling question in his heart. He had all these things, but he had unrest within his soul. The question he has in his life is this, will I go to heaven when I die, will I have a relationship with God, the way He wants, am I really saved, what will happen to me after I die ? Nicodemus, you have all these things, you are a good man, a religious man, probably a moral man. But Nicodemus, why do you think or feel that way?

Well, Nicodemus knew deep within his heart, that he still man at best, he is still born a sinner, he knows that there is life after death, he knows that that is God, he knows that he will face judgment one day and so, this question of his heart is important to him, he needs to know, am I going to be saved? He wants to be sure.

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One day, Nicodemus heard about a man, a young man, 30+ years old who have gone around teaching, the Bible, in a way that has never been done before, is it about this man performing miracles like it has never been done before and straight away, in his mind he says “A prophet is now in Israel”

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For 400 years, Israel had not had a prophet from God, and so he says, I need to arise and meet this man named Jesus because, he would show me and assure me, whether I am saved, am I on my way to eternal life to heaven. And so, he mustered sufficient courage, arose one day and went to search for Jesus. The Bible tells us in verse 2

“The same came to Jesus by night”

2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

I think you can understand, why he would have to come at night. He doesn't want others to see him, he needs to come in the cover of darkness, after all he is the ruler of the Jews, he's a teacher of Israel and he wondered, how would others think when the ruler of the Jews will come to meet a 30+ year old man who is known only as Jesus of Nazareth, who is born in the little town of Bethlehem and who is the son of a poor carpenter. A man who has never been to Bible school, a man who has never

been to theological seminary, how would others think and so he said, “I need to come to him, but let me come to him in the cover of darkness.”

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And when he saw Jesus and met with him for the first time in his life, he said to Jesus these words “Rabbi, that is to mean teacher, master, Singaporean vernacular, Sifu, we know, you are a teacher come from God , for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.”

He paid Jesus a sweet compliment. I think, Nicodemus must have been thinking about this day for quite some time and in his mind, the scenario would have been rehearsed over and over again. He would imagine coming to Jesus and paying Him a compliment, coming from the ruler of Jews, he might have thought that Jesus would have appreciated it and said, Nicodemus, thank you very much for your sweet compliment.

And Nicodemus would say, but, Jesus, can you tell me, am I on my way to heaven, am I going to be saved, am I a child of God and he would have probably thought that Jesus would say, Nicodemus, you are a good boy, you have done well, you have achieved so much, you are a man of good standing, you are the ruler of the Jews, you have observe the laws the best you can, you deserve to go to heaven. You are a good candidate for salvation, you are just a little bit more than you need, you’re just so close to heaven, just a little bit more Nicodemus, you are almost there.

I think, that must be the thinking of Nicodemus, just a little bit more, almost there. While all that must be in his mind and so he started by paying Jesus a compliment. But look at verse 3, the Bible says, even before Nicodemus could ask any question, the Bible tells us, Jesus already saw the question in his heart. You see, Jesus is God, He saw right through the heart of Nicodemus and Jesus answered and said unto him, Nicodemus, verily, verily, or truly, truly, most assuredly, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

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You know what, Nicodemus expected the words like, you’re almost there, but Jesus say, you are nowhere near, you are not even close. But, but, but, my whole life has

been spent obeying God, my whole life has been seeking Him, from a child I have studied the Scriptures. Jesus said, you are nowhere near, you are not even close, you've got to start all over again, you've got to be born again.

The Bible doesn't tell us, how Nicodemus looked that day, but, if I could, I wish I could have a camera that would focus on his face. I think his jaws would drop and his eyebrows would go right up to the hairline, he would be absolutely shocked. I mean, he came expecting some compliment from Jesus, you are Nicodemus, you are a victor, you are the conqueror, you are the number one top dog in Israel, you must be the one who will be saved. But Jesus said, you are nothing, you are nowhere close, you've got to be born again. Are sure Jesus? Yes, verse 5, he repeats almost the same thing,

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

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So, Jesus is saying, in your life right now, if you die right now, you cannot see, you cannot enter the kingdom of God. You are not fit for the kingdom, your life is so wrapped up in sin, your life is so anti-God that you cannot appreciate God, you cannot serve Him, you cannot worship Him and you are not fit for heaven. Nicodemus, don't you know that you're born altogether in sin, the life that you have is inherited in the sense of Adam and Adam sinned, and the whole of humanity lives in sin. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way. We are all at odds, enemies to God and Nicodemus, no matter how hard you have tried, no matter how hard you have lived your life, you are not fit for the kingdom of God, you cannot see, you cannot enter. Nicodemus, do you understand this? This life, physical life, first life that you have naturally, is not fit for heaven.

I think Nicodemus could understand that, because, every time in Israel, there is always a sacrifice, there is always something being offered to God as a reminder of the sins of the people. Nicodemus could understand the concept of sin. He could understand that he is an unworthy sinner, he could understand that, but he cannot figure out how can he now have a new life. So, when Jesus says, Nicodemus, you have got to be born again, he asked a question that you might be asking right now, how, okay, I've got to be born again, but how, he asked Jesus, how can a man be born

again when he's old, I am an old man, tolong (please in colloquial), I am not young, I am not small, I am an old man, how can a man be born when he's old, can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born.

I am not sure whether Nicodemus' mother is still alive, if he is an old man. But, even if she is, how to go back into my mother's womb and be born again. Aah, Jesus reminds Nicodemus, Nicodemus, I am not talking about physical birth, no matter how many times you are born physically, you are still spiritually dead. I am not talking about physical birth, I am talking about spiritual birth.

In verse 6, Jesus says

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Nicodemus, do you understand I am talking about spiritual birth. You know, the concept of birth, reminds us, that it is really nothing we do to ourselves, isn't it? When Jesus says, Nicodemus, you have got to be born again, Jesus did not say to Nicodemus, get yourself back into your mother's womb all, do something here and there. He is saying this is what someone else has to do for you. Which one of you gave birth to yourself? You didn't give birth to yourself, you can't. Birth, is not something you do to yourself.

I remember the day my son was born and it was a scary time for me. When he was born, he was motionless, he was not moving, he was not breathing. Now, we all know, you slap the feet of the baby and he will cry and that the first time he takes his breath and the whole circulatory system in the body changes, I learned all that a medical school, I knew that it is important to get him to breathe, but, for I think, 5 seconds or so, my son didn't breathe, no matter how hard you slap, not I slap, but the doctor slapped (Laughter in the congregation).

I was concerned, you know, a child, neonatal medicine, they something called the Apgar score. It is a score to assess, how healthy a child or baby is. Shawn is struggling to get near a healthy score. I was concerned. Thankfully, after don't no, spanking his backside or whatever, he began to cry and I was relieved. But you know what, the entire birth process, Shawn was passive. I didn't see him doing breaststroke out of the birth canal. (Laughter in the congregation). I didn't see him kicking, saying mum, I've got to get out, please let me out. He did nothing. My wife did everything. I also did nothing (Laughter in the congregation).

But, birth reminds us, is not something we do, but something, someone else has to do. And when Jesus said, you must be born again, it's not what you do, it's what the Holy Spirit of God does. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. The phrase, born again, is a beautiful phrase. It can be translated, born again in the English from the Greek original, or it can be translated, born from above and in this context, both senses are equally true. You need to be born again and at the same time, it is to be born from above, you ought to be born by the Spirit's empowerment, you are to be born because this is a gift from heaven. It's not what man can achieve, is what man needs to receive from God. You need to be born from above, why? Because, life, and especially spiritual life comes only from God.

I was with my son, yesterday at Jacob Ballas. Those of you who have children, there is a beautiful garden at the botanic gardens called Jacob Ballas's garden. It's a specific portion that is dedicated for children, very, very beautiful, it's free entrance, great place to go. I have been there countless times with my son. He loves trees as I have mentioned to you, he loves to go to the botanic gardens. So, I have been there many times and yesterday was the first time I discovered a new tree and it looks something like this. This is the new tree I am talking about. It's parked in a quiet corner of Jacob Ballas, alright, Jacob Ballas is in the corner of botanic and this tree is parked in a secret, little quiet corner of Jacob Ballas. I first, caught a sight of the sign, I read it, and I said, Shawn, look at this tree.

When my son saw it, he was fascinated, what happened, he said. Good question, I have no more branches, I have no more leaves. What happened, that's a great question. Then I read to Shawn, what is on the sign, it says, trees and lightning, in 2002, a lightning bolt struck the tree and it became dead.

But this is a special tree, because it is a tree that has lived for a 100 years and so, the government decided to preserve that tree and planted it in this obscure corner and it says, you must play hide and seek to find the tree.

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When I said to my son, the tree is dead, my son then said "Daddy, I will fix it, I will give it life." I say to Shaun, you can't give trees life. You know what my son wants to do when he grows up, he wants to be a gardener. It's true, you ask him, Shaun, what do you want to be, I want to be a gardener. Sometimes, he tells you teacher, but he chiefly wants to be a gardener and he thinks that he could give trees life. I have to correct him, and say "Shaun, you can never give life, life comes from God alone. The

tree is dead, no man, no man, no scientist, no brilliant guy could ever get this tree life again. It is dead. Life comes only from God.”

We are all spiritually dead in our sins, the Bible says. When we are born into this world, we are physically alive but we are spiritually dead. No relationship with God, no capacity to know Him. How can we have a relationship with God, how can we be His child, how can we have the hope of heaven, how can we be saved? Well, we cannot give ourselves life, no man can, no pastor can, no great man can, only God can. That’s why Jesus says, you’ve got to be born again and this birth is to be born by the Spirit.

Entirely the work of God and the workings of the Holy Spirit is mysterious. Mysterious in the way, it cannot be predicted by us.

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The wind bloweth where it listeth

The word listeth means it will.

8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

I can picture that the night when Jesus met with Nicodemus. It probably, maybe was a windy night and Jesus says, this is what the Holy Spirit is like, it’s like the wind. It’s like the wind, you cannot predict the wind, you cannot dictate to the wind when it should blow. And the Holy Spirit is like this. He works in humans hearts, not in the way that is predictable by us. He works in humans hearts, in a way, we cannot command or demand, because, the Holy Spirit is sovereign. He has His will, He works in ways unknown to man. Yet, we know that He works. Now, he cannot see Him. I don’t see the Holy Spirit in bodily form. He is a Spirit, just like I don’t see wind but I know that there is wind, I know that there is Spirit because of the effects, the wind and the Holy Spirit produces.

He says, this is the working of the Holy Spirit. He’s mysterious, it’s not demanded by us, He cannot be commanded by us and He is also powerful; you can hear the sound thereof. How do you know that there is wind? Oh, when you hear the rustling of the leaves and grass, when you hear the wind chimes, you know that there is wind.

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How do you know that there is the power of the Holy Spirit in the person's life; see the life change in people, 38 people will be baptized. The greatest evidence that they have come to Jesus Christ is not what they have said or what they professed but is the change in their lives. The mighty workings of the Holy Spirit, gives rise to a new life and it would effect an authentic life change.

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I read a story about a group of people going for a high-class gala dinner and as they went there, they had to sign their names and many of them were people of renowned, people who are well to do, people of status and so their names will be something like Jason Tan, and at the back, they would write there, MBA, something, something, something and then, Steven Lim and you would have a MBBS and then, John Wong and it would have, PhD and so on and so forth. So, everybody had some titles behind their names.

And there was this one man who came, he was this humble guy, not much of a education but somehow invited to this dinner and he saw the accolades that are written behind individual names and so, he decided to write for himself, Tan Ah Kow, BAMA.

"Sie Me Lai A" (Laughter in the congregation). The receptionist asked, "What is this?" And the man says "Born Again, Marvelously Authored (Altered?)." (Laughter in the congregation).

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I think, that is a great description of a born again, child of God. I think that is the best thing to describe my life. Not any accolades or achievements, but the fact that God has given me new life, I am born again, and I am marvelously authored (altered?), by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The candidates, that would be entering the waters of baptism, I believe, will manifest life change if they remain obedient to the Lord. One of them shared his testimony as such "I open up my heart to accept Jesus Christ as my Savior. There and then, I felt the changes in my life which I never felt before I was born again. Something about being born again, it is experiential, it's not just intellectual, it's experiential. Except a man be born again, he cannot see nor enter, so clearly, there is a realm of knowing, seeing, experiencing and brother Edward, he came for the first service this morning, I met him at the door, greeted him at the door, for weeks and months. There had

never been a day, I've seen the Holy Spirit come into him, never. But, by his testimony, I am so glad that Jesus came into his life. The Holy Spirit gave him new life and he could feel, he could see, he could acknowledge the change. Why? Because the Holy Spirit gave him new life.

Another brother here, Timothy, he wrote this "Since I became a Christian, my life has been a total change and when I mean change, it's an outrageous change. Being a boy who have stopped smoking, being a boy whose parents could see change, like the blink of an eye. I mean a change is not 100% but at least 75%." (Laughter in the congregation) "My thoughts towards life now are outstanding, I have the thoughts to guide me and to love me and everything that I do, my attitude to us everything changes as I know how to prioritize in a more Christ-like way now."

Being born again is not what you do to yourself, it's what God does in you. That's why it is total, it's radical. It's not incremental in a sense, you do it and you add to it yourself. But God changes the direction of your life. Now, you have spiritual appetite, now you have spiritual desires. You want to know God, you want to worship and to serve Him. Christ, becomes the center of your life. That's what it means to be born again, the Holy Spirit does it powerfully.

It's so total, you see, because it's of the Spirit. Nicodemus understands all this. Wah, so much to absorb in one encounter with Jesus! I think he understood. Please don't underestimate the teacher of Israel or a ruler of the Jews, the people who has been set apart to study the Word of God for years in his life. I think he could figure it out. Why? Because, I think in Ezekiel, which is the passage of Scriptures, he would be familiar with, God had already said "This is what I will do in human hearts, I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean." Clean from what? Your filthiness, from your sins.

In the Bible says, "I will give him a new heart, a new spirit, I would take away the heart of stone and in that place, I will give it a heart of flesh. No more hard resistance, stubborn against God but one that is tender, warm and receptive to the teachings of the Word of God.

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And that is what God is going to do, He is going to give you a new heart, He is going to cleanse you from all sins and Nicodemus, I think could understand this and that's why Jesus could say "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit" refers to the cleansing and the regenerating work of the Spirit of God.

Now, please don't misunderstand, being born of water has been baptized, in water. Some people, erroneously, take this verse and say, "Oh, to be saved, you need to be baptized." No, you don't get baptized to be saved. You get baptized, because you are already born again. The waters of baptism cannot wash away your sins, zero, none of them.

Later on, at 1 PM, 38 of our brethren, and does the waters of baptism, let me tell you where the water is from. (Laughter in the congregation). From Singapore, Public Utilities Board, PUB. It did not come from the holy mountain, we did not import it from Jerusalem. It has no cleansing power with regards to sin, none whatsoever. In fact, I think, I would advise you if you're here and you're going for baptism later on, after you enter the waters, especially when you're the number 34 or 35, (Laughter in the congregation), please do make it a point to bathe.

The waters cannot wash any sins away, it cannot even wash your body. You see, Jesus is not saying, you must be born again by baptism, it doesn't wash away a single sin. This phrase is used to uniquely to represent, the cleansing, the changing work of the Holy Spirit in a person's life.

That's what it said isn't it, in Titus 3:5

...by the washing of regeneration (Added by Pastor : Beautiful word), and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

It's the washing and the renewal.

Tit 3:5

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Coming to Jesus Christ, having the new life in Jesus, is not reformation. You know what is reformation? Reformation, or religion is what man does on the outside. The Bible says, you do not need religion, you do not need reformation, in a sense or what man does on the outside. What you need is regeneration, what the Spirit does on your inside. Regeneration is needed, not religion or reformation.

You see, it's not about changing new clothes on on a dead corpse, it's about a dead corpse coming alive, even though it's in the old clothes. That's what salvation is about, that's what new life is about. And so Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Nicodemus,

you're not almost there, you are nowhere close, you've got to start all over, you have got to be born again, because except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus, I say these most assuredly do you, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God, verse 3, verse 5 and verse 7. Marvel not, and don't be surprised that I say unto you, you must be born again.

John 3:3,5,7

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

I say to you my friends. You say pastor, I have been to church, all my life, I have participated in sacraments, I have listened to countless sermons, I have read the Bible I had even given a lot of money to the church. Jesus says, don't be surprised, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see nor enter the kingdom of God. You must be born again.

Is not about what you do on the outside or what you have done in your life. It's whether God has effected the new life within you by His Spirit.

George Whitfield, is a famous preacher in the 18th century in England and he was often criticized for having preached on the message of being born again too many times. They asked him "Sir, why is it that you always, so frequently preached about being born again. George Whitfield's answer is, sweet and simple. His answer "Because you must be born again." (Murmur n the congregation). This is the message the world needs because the world is always looking for some form of religion that I can do to get right with God. No, it's about what God has to do in your life is what the Spirit of God has to do.

You know, a verse in the Bible helps us, it says in

1Pet 1:23

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God. (Added by Pastor : The Holy Spirit uses His Word, His inspired Word to effect birthing in a person's life.)

1Pet 1:23

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever

The Holy Spirit uses the Word and specifically in 1 Peter 1:25, it's about the Good News, it's about the Gospel, it's about the message of salvation and so the Holy Spirit takes His Word, uses it to effect a new life in sinners.

Have you heard about this song, "You must be born again." Those who have been in church for long enough, there is an old traditional hymn called "Ye must be born again".

I tried singing it in the first service , it was disastrous and so, I will stop doing that here. It goes like this.

A ruler once came to Jesus by night To ask Him the way of salvation and light;
The Master made answer in words true and plain, "Ye must be born again."
"Ye must be born again, Ye must be born again, I verily, verily, say unto thee, Ye must be born again."

(Added by Pastor : Someone at the back, our worship team wrote, I Valerie, Valerie, one of our instrumentalist is called Valerie, no, no, no. It's not Valerie, it's verily, truly, truly, most assuredly, plainly, I say unto you, you must be born again.)

Ye children of men, attend to the Word, So solemnly uttered by Jesus the Lord;

And let not this message to you be in vain, "Ye must be born again."

(Added by Pastor : God takes His Word and uses it to effect new birth in a man's life)

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Know what you're going to look at in the following slides are important words because, Jesus not only tells Nicodemus, you must be born again, He is going to tell Nicodemus about a response he has to make in the process of this new birth.

Now, we are not borne by our efforts, but God does command us to respond to Him and this is what Jesus said to Nicodemus, this is the message of salvation, this is the Good News.

Nicodemus, let me tell you this story.

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Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, straight away, the mind of Nicodemus should spend more than a 1000 years before him, remembers that story found in the book of Numbers where Israel, murmured, complained, grumbled, moaned and groaned against God, they were rebellious, they were stubborn, and God's wrath was stoked and incurred and in God's anger, holy righteousness, He sent forth, vipers, snakes, poisonous ones, venomous snakes into the camp of Israel and everyone who is bitten off the snake will die, but God in His mercy provided a way out, a way of salvation and life.

He said to Moses "Moses, take or fashion for yourself a bronze serpent and place it at the end of the rod and lift it high up.

And let all Israel know that whosoever would turn and look at that bronze serpent will be saved. But the venom of the serpent and the snake will not cause him to die. But Israel needs to look at the serpent in order to be saved.

So, Nicodemus is familiar with the story, but this is going to be new for Nicodemus. Nicodemus, the story is not just for Moses or for the people of Israel then, it's for all. Because, he went on to say, "Even so, must the Son of Man be lifted up." This, He spake regarding Himself. I, the Son Of Man, I, the Son of God, by both, God-Man, God who became man, in order to be like that bronze serpent, I will be lifted up."

And in this beautiful pictures, somewhat vaguely, you could see the image of Jesus Christ, hanging on that cross. Jesus, the God of the heavens, came to be man, so that He may die on the cross to bear our sins, so that He may be like that bronze serpent, who is the only way to salvation and life.

You see, the wages of sin is death. The people had to die because of their sins, but in God's infinite mercy and love, He decided to spare us. But God would not just spare us by saying it's alright, you just come into heaven and I would just forget about all the sins. No, He is too holy, He is too just, He is too righteous to do that. And so, in order to satisfy the holy wrath of God, God has to say, "The price has to be paid, the punishment for sin and has to be meted out and I would give my only Son, He would be lifted up on that cross, He would die for your sakes, He who knew no sin, would become sin for us, so that we, who are dead in our sins, might be made righteous in Jesus Christ and upon that cross, that most unfair transaction ever, took place, that sinners are totally freed of their sins, and the sinless One was made to be sin for us and suffered for our sakes.

When God sees us know in Christ, He see Jesus and when God sees Jesus on the cross, He sees our sins- that great exchange took place. And that is all necessary, because Jesus is the only One who could save us from our sins. You see, salvation is not so much found in what I do, but in what Jesus has already done.

Time stamp in audio 0:43:18.3.

Even so, must the Son of Man be lifted up.

And so, what must Nicodemus do, what must be to, how should we respond? Jesus said, “Whosoever believes in Him, in the Son of God, in Jesus Christ, should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Believe. You say pastor, what is believe. Very chim (deep in colloquial language) concept, very obscure, belief.

Time stamp in audio 0:43:46.1.

Let me tell you, it’s very simple. It’s not complicated. How did the Jews get saved from the venom of the poisonous snakes? They merely had to? Give me a word, a four letter word. Look, they merely have to look.

And what does it mean to believe in Jesus? Let me tell you, as simply as I can, it’s looking to Jesus.

Years ago, there was a young man, 16 years old, like Reuben, grew up in a Christian home. His father is a preacher, his grandfather is also a preacher, but he was not saved, he was never born again and he knew it. So, one day, Sunday morning, he decided to visit a church. It was snowing, and he braved the snowstorm and stumbled into a small little Methodist church where there will 15 to 20 people gathered. He was the only guy who was new there, he supposed. Everyone seems to be friends and had been there for some time.

The service started, but the preacher did not arrive. He probably was caught in the snowstorm. And so, an elderly man stood up. This young man said, he’s probably a tailor or shoemaker, but he is an elderly man and he had to preach in the place of the pastor.

And the elderly man open the Scriptures to Isaiah 45:22, that says, “Looked to me and be saved, all ye ends of the world, for I am God and there is none other.”

Looked to me and be saved, all ye ends of the earth. And those words were like an arrow into the heart of this 16-year-old teenager. This preacher is not skilled. He stumbled, he couldn't even pronounce the words properly, but he did make a very simple point. He says, the first word is so important, look, just look. Doesn't even tell you to lift a finger, nor lift a toe. Just look. A poor man can look, an educated man can look, a rich man can look. Anybody can look and all God is saying, is "Look to Me."

Time stamp in audio 0:45:59.9.

Something clicked within the heart of this 16-year-old teenager. He looked to Jesus that very thing and he said, "It was as if the floodgates were opened and a stream of forgiveness flowed into his life."

16-year-old boy, his name, Charles Spurgeon, now known to be one of the greatest preachers that ever lived. Why, because it is that simple. Look to Me and be saved, all ye ends of the earth, looking to Jesus, recognizing that you cannot pay for your sins, recognizing that Jesus paid it all.

If the wind of the Spirit is willing in your life, you need to respond to Him today by believing in Jesus Who died for your sins and I close with the last verse, verse 16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Time stamp in audio 0:47:14.4.

Yes some 31,373 verses in the Bible. This stands out as probably the most famous and well known of all, because, in a nutshell it tells you what you need to know today.

Do you know why God sent His Son? He loves you and if you do not believe in His Son you reject His love and sit under the condemnation that we deserve for our sins. But God so loves us that He doesn't want us to suffer the punishment and the consequences of our sins and therefore He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him, should not perish but have everlasting life.

My friends, Nicodemus heard those words, "You must be born again" and God, if He is working in your life today, which you respond by believing in His only Son.

Let's bow, for a word of prayer.

Time stamp in audio 0:48:29.7.

Heavenly Father, we humble ourselves before You today, we are encountering deep truths, so foreign to our human thinking, so foreign to that concept we have always had that salvation is by what we do, by our works, by our achievements. But Lord, we thank You that salvation is not achieved but received no, because You gave Your Son and we are to believe in Him.

I pray today that, according to Your pleasure and to Your will, would You by Your Spirit, call us, many here today to salvation and life in Jesus Christ.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Lord, we recognize that there is nothing man can do today to bring about spiritual birth, only You can and so, as You work in hearts today, we would be careful to give You that the glory and praise when men turned from sin unto everlasting life.

Turn our eyes Lord this morning to look to Jesus, look to Him and be saved. Bless our brethren, bless our friends, we ask this humbly in Jesus name, amen. God bless.