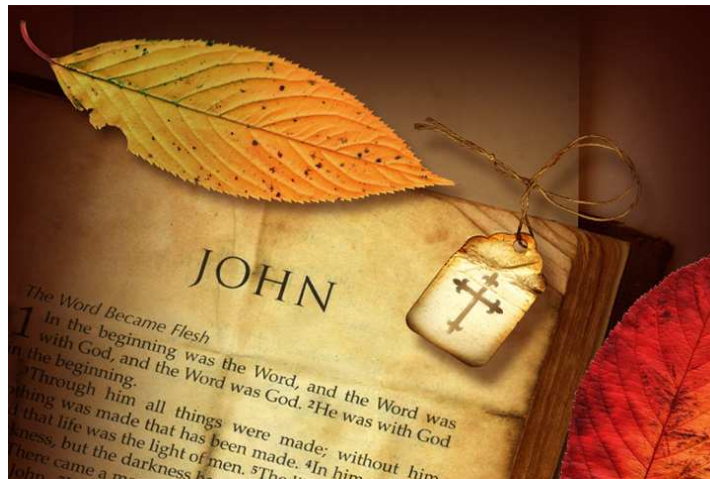


Fall 2010 Sermon Series:

The Gospel of John

Week #3

Discussion Guide



September 25/26, 2010

"Born Again and Again"

Pastor Bruce Humphrey
John 3:1-16, Numbers 21:5-9

<http://www.rbcpc.org/about-us/sermons/>

Next week: October 2/3
"Jesus as our Mentor" Pastor Bruce Humphrey
John 13:3-15

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Scripture References

Read and reflect on the following scripture:

John 3:1-16

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ² He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." ³ Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" ⁵ Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶ What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' ⁸ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." ⁹ Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" ¹⁰ Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹ "Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

Notes:

Numbers 21:5-9

The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." ⁶ Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷ The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸ And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." ⁹ So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

Notes:

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Discussion Guide

Scripture

1. Read the John 3:1-16 scripture. For what purpose do you think Nicodemus came to Jesus?
2. Why is new birth, not just a righteous lifestyle, necessary for entering God's kingdom?
3. How is God's spirit like ordinary wind?
4. Jesus had barely begun his ministry. According to vs. 3:14-15, what did Jesus already know about his mission?
5. Read the Numbers 21:4-9 scripture. Describe the visual imagery that connects this passage to John 3:14-15.
6. In speaking to Nicodemus, why do you think Jesus compared himself to a serpent upon a pole?
7. What do these scriptures say about the divinity of Jesus?

Sermon

Key Words: ***born – categories – dynamic – relationship - journey***

8. When he came to visit Jesus, in what category do you think Nicodemus had put Jesus? Why?
9. What tools did Jesus use to prove his divinity?
10. Do you think Jesus was effective in changing Nicodemus' way of thinking about Him? Why or why not?

"Being born again happens over and over throughout our lives. Being in a dynamic, vibrant relationship with Jesus means that he constantly breaks out of the boxes we tend to put him in. Just when we think we have him figured out, he surprises us and keeps the mystery alive." Bruce Humphrey

11. What surprises Nicodemus in his conversation with Jesus?
12. Why do you think Jesus chose to reveal himself to Nicodemus?
13. What does this say about the value Jesus places on his relationship with Nicodemus?
14. What does this say about how Jesus values a relationship with you? About how much He loves you?

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Life Applications

Personal:

1. Have you been born from above? How do you know?
2. In his sermon, Pastor Bruce quotes Dr. Scott Peck as he describes four stages of a personal faith journey:
 - (a) Chaotic/anti-social
 - (b) Formal/institutional
 - (c) Skeptic/individual
 - (d) Mystical/communalWhere are you in your journey?

Small Group:

1. What aspects of a person's life demonstrate that he or she has been born again?
2. To what extent does this happen all at once? To what extent does it take time?
3. Review the four stages of the faith journey (see above). Where do you think "small groups" fit into this process? Why?
4. Discuss amongst yourselves how you can present the idea of being "reborn" to your friends so that they will understand and see the value of a relationship with Jesus.

Prayer:

Meditate on John 3:16, *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."*

1. What does this tell you about the Father?
2. What difference does this make in your relationship with Jesus?
3. With others?
4. Is there any anger, fear, resentment, or other blockage, that makes it hard for you to believe this truth? Pray for Jesus to help you overcome that "block."

All praise and thanks to you, Jesus, that you have ushered us into new life with you. Renew in us today that joy of rebirth!



Further resources for study of the Gospel of John:

John – Life Change Series, a NAVPRESS Bible Study.

Book of John, Life Lessons with Max Lucado

Many other resources are available in the RBCPC Library – check it out!