

## **“BORN TWICE?”**

Nicodemus was a member of the strictest sect of the Jews - the Pharisees. No doubt he sought to keep all the man-made rules of his religion, as well as the law of God which was given to Moses. Nicodemus was a religious man, yet he knew within himself, that something was missing in his life.

Until we come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, there is indeed something we are missing in our lives.

Because of his position, and fearing what people may think of him, Nicodemus made his approach to our Lord, secretly, at night, to seek advice from him. (Better that than not at all!)

Now people have all sorts of reasons for coming to church. It may be to give praise and thanks, or to ask for divine help in the troubles and crises of life. It may be out of obedience to parents, or to accompany friends. It may be out of curiosity, or to assure themselves that there can't really be anything so very different about Christianity. It may be to seek after God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever reason brings you here, as with Nicodemus, God is already working in your life!

Nicodemus did not come asking what he must do to be one with God, like the rich, young ruler in the Bible, because, as a good Pharisee, he probably thought he was guaranteed a place in heaven anyway. However, having seen or heard about Jesus - what He was doing and the impact He was having on the people - Nicodemus' conscience was troubled.

“What if I am missing something here?”

“Rabbi,” he said, addressing Jesus with the respect due to a teacher and to a holy man, “We know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him” (John 3:2).

In reply, Jesus declared: "No one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again" (John 3:3).

So, Nicodemus **was** missing something. Like most of mankind, he was presuming upon his own ability to qualify for heaven. Don't be misled - if you think you can get to heaven by your own good works, you will surely fail: "You must be born again." Still this teacher of the Jews faltered.

"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" (John 3:4).

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit" (John 3:5). "That which is born of flesh is flesh", says Jesus (John 3:6), "but we must also be born of the Holy Spirit".

There is a spiritual birth in which God's Holy Spirit adopts us into the family of God, allowing us to become joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

You should not be surprised at our Lord saying, "You must be born again. The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So, it is with everyone born of the Spirit" (John 3:6-8).

The words WIND and SPIRIT, are also used to signify the BREATH of God! God breathed life into the clay which He fashioned into man; He breathed life into the scriptures, and He breathes into His people, the breath of the new life in Christ Jesus.

This is not to the credit of the preacher, nor of the convert to Christianity. It is all to the praise of God Himself!

Poor Nicodemus was still struggling. "HOW CAN THIS BE?" (John 3:9).

Man cannot easily concede that heaven is attained not by his own merit, but only by the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ. We love to think that we are good enough, and no-one, we imagine, would say otherwise.

Let's get away from the notion that we are good enough for God, or that we can co-operate with Him in the mighty work of our salvation from sins. Let us rather learn to turn to Him, wholeheartedly, relying on Him alone for our salvation, trusting not in our own righteousness, but in the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us pray that we may have faith to believe these things, and to put our trust in Him, for without Him we can do nothing!

This morning we will be celebrating the sacrament of Holy Communion. We accept the holy mystery that represents the body and blood of Jesus. It is an outward sign of our inward faith that our salvation depends on the one who died for us – not as a reward for our own accomplishments, but simply because He loves us.

Those who participate in this Eucharistic meal have, at some point in their life, officially accepted Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. In so doing, we have become 'born' for a second time. It is as simple as that!

Let us pray ... Lord Jesus, we acknowledge that you are the Lord of our hearts and this morning we re-dedicate ourselves to your service. AMEN